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MARIANAS VARIETY N

# A Personal View

By: JON A. ANDERSON

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The Mariana Islands District should not take part in the Micronesian Constitutional Convention!

That is, I realize, an unhappy conclusion. But events of the past two weeks have led me to feel that it is also an inescapable conclusion. The participation in the con-con of a district that is as far down the path toward a separate status as the Marianas would be highly inappropriate, and I believe that the sooner this fact is faced up to by Micronesia's other leaders the better.

I have just finished reading, for the third time, the Joint Communique issued at the end of the fourth round of Marianas status talks last Friday. It is a fascinating document, representing agreement in principle on nearly every major point remaining in the plan to make the Marianas a U.S. commonwealth. It is, I strongly feel, a virtual blueprint of what the final draft covenant will look like. Barring some unforeseen snags, the end of this year should see a final agreement reached.

Meanwhile, as this is being written returns from the constitutional convention election are coming in, and four citizens of the Marianas have won themselves voting seats in a body that is charged with drawing up the framework of the future government of Micronesia. The incongruity of these two events--the Marianas talks and the con-con election in the Marianas--is obvious. By next April, when the constitutional convention is likely to be held, the participation of the Marianas will be, if anything, even less appropriate than it now seems.

What is surprising here is not that the Marianas fielded a slate of candidates. The district is, after all, included in the law. But it is surprising that the leadership in the other districts has not protested the participation of this district that is clearly marching to the beat of a different drummer. The Joint Communique should be read and considered very carefully by the leadership in the other districts, particularly by the members of the Congress of Micronesia. Then perhaps they will ask themselves whether the time has not at last come to admit what has been fairly evident for some time--that it is far too late to entertain even a faint hope of bringing the Marianas back into the fold.