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Q. How do you know that the people in the Marianas support the work of your Commission?

A. The Commission was created by the Marianas District Legislature in 1972. The members of the Legislature are fully representative of all the people in the Marianas. We have reported regularly to the District Legislature and to the people directly in numerous public meetings. We are confident that the District Legislature and the overwhelming majority of the Marianas people support the efforts of the Commission to negotiate a close and permanent relationship with the United States.

Q. When will the results of your negotiations go before the people for their approval?

A. We are hopeful that our current negotiations with the United States will result in a formal Status Agreement before the end of this year. It is our current thinking that this agreement will be placed before the people four or five months after the agreement is signed. During this period we will have a program of political education in the Marianas regarding the proposed new status as a Commonwealth. This plebiscite should take place in the spring or summer of 1975.

Q. Why are the Marianas people ready to have a military base located in the midst of their peaceful islands?

A. The people of the Marianas are ready to accept their responsibilities as part of the American political family, just like any one of the 50 States or other Territories within the United States. We are prepared to entrust full responsibility for national defense and foreign affairs to the United States. ~~The Marianas people defer to the United States as to whether such a base is required in the Marianas.~~ The people of the Marianas, including those most directly affected on Tinian, generally support the use of our land by military personnel. We are hopeful also that the Tinian base will provide employment opportunities for our citizens and help contribute to our future economic development.

Q. Do members of the Commission still sit as members of the Joint Committee of the Congress of Micronesia?

A. Yes. Two members of the Commission are also members of the Joint Committee. The Joint Committee is still involved in negotiations with the United States on behalf of all six districts of the Trust Territory. The Marianas representatives on the Joint Committee, however, have made it clear that the Marianas are interested in a status different from that being negotiated by the Joint Committee. Since there has been no guarantee that the separate Marianas negotiation would be successful, we believe that the Marianas should continue to participate in the work of the Joint Committee.

*cont. until
(restoration by people)*

06041

Q. What are the principal differences between the status which the Marianas is negotiating and the status being negotiated by the Joint Committee?

A. The Marianas are negotiating to become a commonwealth under the sovereignty of the United States, a relationship which can be terminated ^{only} by mutual consent of the parties. The Joint Committee, on the other hand, is negotiating a compact of free association which either party can terminate unilaterally ~~in accordance with the procedures set forth in the compact.~~

In addition, there are other important differences, under the proposed status the people of the Marianas will be eligible to become United States citizens, they will have representation in Washington, they will be eligible for numerous Federal programs and services, and most United States laws will be applicable within the Marianas. The people of the Marianas are persuaded that the political and economic benefits of this permanent association with the United States are far more desirable than the benefits of free association.

political stability

RIGHTS
CUSTOMS
IMMIGRATION

Q. Are you prepared to put other alternatives besides commonwealth status before the people in a plebiscite?

A. A final decision on this subject will have to wait until we have negotiated a formal Status Agreement with the United States. As a matter of principle, we are fully prepared to put any other status alternative before the people so long as the alternative has been fully spelled out to the same degree as our proposed commonwealth status. It is uncertain at this time whether any other such alternative will have been negotiated by the time we are prepared to present our formal Status Agreement to the people of the Marianas.

06043

Q. Are you prepared to have United Nations observers involved in the plebiscite of any formal Status Agreement negotiated between the Marianas and the United States.

A. The Marianas has no objection to any such participation by the United Nations. We believe that this is a matter which should be raised with the appropriate United States representatives to the United Nations.

Q. Are the Marianas going to participate in the Constitutional Convention for all six districts for Micronesia now scheduled for 1975?

A. Representatives from the Marianas were elected for this purposed this past Tuesday, June 4. The extent to which these representatives participate in the Constitutional Convention will depend upon events during the next year. If the people of the Marianas have approved a separate status with the United States before the Constitutional Convention takes place it is unlikely that the Marianas will participate in the Convention. Otherwise, it is very likely that the Marianas will participate in the Convention.

In Majuro atoll, there are two councils, one whose headquarters is located on Majuro Island on the west end of the atoll, and one located at the east end. The Majuro Council is the regular atoll council, while the Darrit-Uliga-Dalap Council was formed to govern the group of people (approximately 2,500 in number) who are for the most part Trust Territory employees, or working for the main trading companies. This group is made up of about ninety percent non-Majuroites.

Six councils have been chartered by the High Commissioner. These councils, besides an elected magistrat, also have elected councilmen. They have appointed treasurers and policemen.

MARSHALL ISLANDS CONGRESS

The first Marshall Islands Congress convened in regular session on July 4, 1950. It was a bicameral body consisting of the House of Iroij and the House of Assembly.

From 1950 until 1958 the congress met annually as a bicameral body, but in 1958 a new constitution was instituted and the congress was changed to a unicameral body. Membership in this unicameral assembly was to be composed of Iroij Laplap (literally, "big chief"), and at least one representative from each municipality, with those of over 250 having an additional representative for every 250 inhabitants. This new constitution also gave the congress increased legislative powers which the former congress did not have.

Due to lack of funds the congress was unable to meet in 1958 and the Ninth Marshallese Congress met in 1960. This was the first session held under the new constitution, and the first order of business was to admit by majority vote 19 Iroij Laplap to their seats in congress. This membership is for life and upon death the heir

may be admitted to membership upon majority vote of the congress. Qualifications for the representatives include that one be a citizen of the Trust Territory, be at least 25 years of age, and a resident of the Marshall Islands for the five years immediately preceding the election.

In 1963 the membership of the congress was reduced by a resolution of that session. It was enacted that for every 500 citizens one representative would be allowed, but no municipality was to exceed three regardless of how many persons in excess of 1500 lived there. This measure was adopted because of the unwieldy size of the congress. During this same session the term of office for a representative was extended from two to four years.

LAND MANAGEMENT

When the United States first entered the Marshall Islands in 1944, it was discovered that all land records, with the exception of a charred German Grundbuch had been destroyed. It thus became necessary to hold hearings, which are still in session, to determine the extent of public lands in the district and the status of private lands. When property is determined to be public land it immediately becomes available for homesteading. This in itself presents problems since culturally the Marshallese insist that land be returned to the descendants of its original owners.

Settlement of the major land claim in the Marshalls, concerning the use and occupancy of certain lands on Kwajalein, Ebeye, and other islands in the Kwajalein and Majuro Atolls, was reached on Feb. 11-12, 1964. Agreements were signed by landowners granting certain use rights to the Trust Territory government. One thousand dollars per acre was agreed upon as compensation for past and future use of the lands involved.

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*continue until
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MARITIME
CUSTOMS
IMMIGRATION

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