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**Introduction and Summary**

Biennial elections for the Congress of Micronesia, the legislative branch of the Trust Territory (TT) government, will be held on November 5. At stake are all twenty-one House seats and half of those in the twelve-man Senate. TT-wide political parties do not exist. However, in those districts where parties do exist (the Marianas and Palau), they enjoy considerable influence in elections for public office. In addition, there is also keen interest in the elections in terms of personalities and in the policy implications of the campaigning and its outcome. It is anticipated that for these reasons the congressional election will be especially hard fought, and noisy, in the Marianas.

At the moment the future political status of the Trust Territory is not an overt issue, but it may well become one in the course of the campaign which formally opens October 5. Whether or not status becomes an overt issue, its impact on the campaign will be closely watched, and the positions of individual candidates carefully analyzed, by those politically-minded residents of the Trust Territory who are seeking to gauge public opinion with respect to Micronesia's -- and the Marianas' -- future. This initial report concentrates on the Marianas.

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Political Parties in the Marianas

Relative strengths of the two parties in the district, the Popular and Territorial Parties, can be judged by the fact that, of the three House incumbents, two were elected as Popular Party candidates. Both of the Marianas' Senators are from that party, as are the Marianas District Legislature President, the majority of the legislature, all members of the Saipan Municipal Council, and the Mayor of Saipan. The Territorial Party has one member in the Congress and controls the Tinian and Rota Municipal Councils. The mayors of these communities are also from the Territorial Party. (Eighty-five percent of the people of the Marianas live on Saipan). Of the two Senate seats representing the Marianas, that held by Edward DLG Pangelinan will be contested in November.

The Issues

Territorial Party Chairman Francisco T. Palacios, speaking candidly and privately on October 1, said that the sole difference between the two parties is that "they are in and we are out." He stated that the campaign would focus on the high cost of living -- inflation -- as this was the subject which most interested the electorate. Asked if political status would be an issue, he said it did not have the same mass appeal as inflation. He added that while he would feel a need to speak occasionally on the subject, he did not anticipate that status would be an issue. His party had used the future status issue in 1970 and 1972 for lack of something better, he said.

Representative Herman Q. Guerrero, who is Popular Party Chairman, told the reporting officer on October 1 that he thought status negotiations would be an issue, at least indirectly, in the campaign. His party, under the leadership of himself, Senator Pangelinan and District Legislature President Vicente N. Santos, is committed to Commonwealth status, but Guerrero considered the Territorial Party's position less firm. Guerrero said that the Territorial Party's primary source of funds is Jose C. Tenorio, the Marianas' leading businessman and owner inter alia of Saipan's major department store. Joeten, as he is known, is said to be unenthusiastic about Commonwealth and Guerrero argued that the Territorial Party reflected his views. He went on to say that Pedro A. Tenorio, prominent member of the Marianas Political Status Commission (MPSC) who is contesting Senator Pangelinan's seat, is a relative of Joeten's and was "hand picked" to reflect his views.

The fact that party discipline does not bind all the members of the Popular Party was exhibited in a speech delivered to the Saipan Municipal Council by Councilman Egredino M. Jones on September 19. Jones questioned whether "the Americans want us because we want to become Americans, or do they want our land for their military" and went on to express doubt about "what side effects Commonwealth will have on our people." As noted above, the Territorial Party has made an issue of future status in past years; it is likely that this will carry over to some degree in the present campaign. One Territorial Party

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candidate, Oscar C. Bass, has a reputation as the "local radical" and it would not be surprising if he should speak critically on the subject, although Chairman Palacios appeared confident that Bass would respond to his leadership.

#### The Candidates

All three Popular Party incumbents who are up for re-election have taken public positions with respect to the status negotiations. Senator Pangelinan, Chairman of the Marianas Political Status Commission, is the most prominent advocate of Commonwealth status for the Marianas. Congressman Guerrero shares the Senator's views on the subject and has spoken frequently in favor of Commonwealth. As members of the Congress of Micronesia's Joint Committee on Future Status (to which they continue to belong, although they are not active members), Pangelinan and Guerrero jointly requested separate negotiations for the Marianas, a request which was accepted by the United States in 1972. Representative Felipe Q. Atalig, whose district includes Tinian, is not considered an opponent of Commonwealth, but his public positions are frequently less positive than those of his two colleagues. Atalig, whose personal reputation as a womanizer is paralleled by a political reputation as an opportunist, failed to receive his party's nomination for re-election. Strongly supported on the island of Rota as a native son, Atalig also has some support from Tinian, but not enough to offset the negative votes from that part of his district which extends to Saipan. His response to being dumped by the Popular Party (in favor of Herman T. Palacios) was to establish a party of his own, confusingly christened the "Popular Party for the First District," and his maverick position may lead him to headline-seeking pronouncements. In his most recent statement concerning relations with the United States, as reported by the Micronesian News Service on September 27, Atalig criticized the U.S. for its failure to "immediately terminate the moratorium on homesteading on Tinian" and charged that the U.S. is "apparently only interested in acquiring lands in the Marianas and not interested in the rights of the people." He added that "the Americans see us as unsophisticated islanders, but we have heard about the American Indians, about Bikini, Kwajalein and Ebwetak. We know and understand how little our rights mean to them." The Popular Party has selected Herman R. Guerrero, a local businessman and Executive Director of the Marianas Islands Community Action Agency, to challenge the Territorial Party congressional incumbent, Pedro P. Tenorio.

The choice of the Territorial Party to oppose Senator Pangelinan is Pedro A. Tenorio, a local businessman. As leader of the Marianas' side in the Joint Land Committee negotiations, Pete Tenorio has been deeply involved in

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negotiations leading toward Commonwealth for the Marianas. The party's choice for House seats are the incumbent Pedro F. Tenorio, Police Captain Jose P. Mafnas and sometime journalist Oscar C. Raza. Congressman Tenorio is the junior member of the Marianas congressional delegation and the single minority member. He has contented himself with working behind the scenes in the Congress and appears to cooperate with the rest of the delegation. On October 1, Representative Herman Q. Guerrero stated that in his opinion Tenorio's views on matters of interest to the United States were "no problem." The same cannot be said for the opinions of Oscar Raza, who is contesting Guerrero's seat. Raza is known as a "radical" and is considered unsympathetic to close ties with the United States. Police Captain Mafnas is a political unknown who has not previously run for public office.

#### Outlook

No one is claiming to have the election wrapped up. Territorial Party Chairman Palacios predicted a close race for Senator Fungelinan's seat and it is a matter of record that Oscar Raza (who has just started a new weekly, Free Press, reportedly to further his political ambitions) gave Senator Borja a good race in 1972. Of the two remaining seats, one is held by a Territorial Party member who appears competent and seems to be respected by his colleagues and the electorate. The remaining seat is the object of a three-way race, with Popular Party loyalties split; the election could well go to the Territorial Party candidate. Popular Party Chairman Guerrero offered no prediction about the outcome of the election but he commented that should Pedro A. Tenorio or Raza be elected -- which he conceded was a possibility -- this would be a setback for the present status negotiations. At the moment, it appears that the results of the elections are unlikely to have a serious effect on the status negotiations except that the Marianas' principal negotiators are heavily involved in local political activity.

  
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