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REMARKS OF EDWARD DLG. PANGELINAN  
CHAIRMAN, MARIANAS POLITICAL STATUS COMMISSION  
AT THE CLOSING PLENARY MEETING  
OF THE  
FIFTH SESSION  
OF  
MARIANAS STATUS NEGOTIATIONS

December 19, 1974

Ambassador Williams, members of the U. S. Delegation,  
members of the Commission, honorable guests, ladies and gentlemen.

On behalf of the Marianas Political Status Commission,  
it is my pleasure to report regarding the progress made during  
this Fifth Session of Marianas Status Negotiations.

As the Joint Communique makes clear, this has been  
an historic session. In essence, the parties to these negotiations  
have reached agreement on all outstanding issues. We have agreed  
to recess this session until February 3, 1975, at which time  
we plan to review the final language of the Covenant and to  
proceed to sign it. At that point, the Commission will have  
completed its work--and the final judgment on the proposed  
new status will be in the hands of the Marianas people.

What has the Commission accomplished in the past  
two years? We believe that the Covenant made public today  
answers this question fully and clearly. The Commission has

12709

accomplished what the Mariana Islands District Legislature requested it to do: to negotiate on behalf of the Marianas people a close and enduring political relationship with the United States of America. The exact terms of this new political relationship are set forth in the Covenant to Establish a Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands in Political Union with the United States of America.

This is not the time or place to summarize the detailed provisions of the Covenant. It covers a wide variety of topics in its ten articles: the Political Relationship, the Constitution of the Northern Mariana Islands, Citizenship and Nationality, Judicial Authority, Applicability of U. S. laws in the Marianas, Revenue and Taxation, U. S. Financial Assistance, Property and Land Requirements, and Washington Representation and Consultation. The Commission and the U. S. Delegation anticipate that all possible efforts will be made to explain the Covenant to the people in a revitalized and creative political education program. The members of the Commission have pledged themselves to such an educational program--so that the final decision of the people will be a fully informal exercise of their right of self-determination. The Commission is confident that, after review of our work, the people of the Marianas will approve the Covenant.

I would like to take this opportunity to express in public my deepest admiration and respect for each member of this Commission. As I said in my remarks at the opening

plenary session, the members of this Commission represent a wide variety of interests. At times, we have taken very different positions on important issues in these negotiations. I suppose it can now be said that, from time to time, these differing views have been expressed frankly and emphatically. Throughout our discussions, however, we have remained friends and colleagues. Throughout our negotiations, the members of the Commission have remained united in their determination to represent the people of the Marianas to the best of their ability. And I believe that each of them has done so. I would like to thank the members for their dedication and the personal privilege which I have had of serving as their chairman.

To the members of the U. S. Delegation, I would like to express, on behalf of the Commission, our best wishes for the holiday season. We have negotiated as friends to achieve a mutual objective. The Covenant released today shows that we are very close to our goal. We look forward to seeing you again early next year.

12711