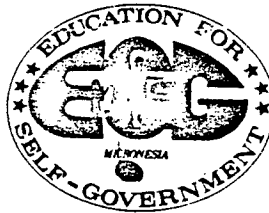


ESG

DIALOGUE
FOR
MICRONESIA



Summary of an interview
with Sen. Edward Pangelinan

Recorded in Saipan

Date December 24, 1974

Program no. 21

TASK FORCE ON EDUCATION FOR SELF GOVERNMENT, SAIPAN, M.I. TTPI

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Panel: Sam McPhetres, Moderator
Abed Younis, Marianas Variety
Paul Savercool, MBS
Derson Ramon, MNS

After wishing a Merry Christmas to the listeners, Chairman of the Marianas Political Status Commission was asked to define the word Covenant as it applies to the Commonwealth agreement recently nearly completed at the fifth round of negotiations between the Marianas Political Status Commission and the United States. Pangelinan pointed out that it is different from a treaty which is an agreement between two sovereign nations, such as a treaty between Japan and the US. The Compact of Free Association is also a type of agreement which is similar but can be terminated unilaterally after a certain period of time. The Covenant, a word which has its basis in the Bible, is an agreement which can be terminated only by mutual consent. In other words, it is a more permanent agreement than a treaty or compact. The Chairman also pointed out that at the end of 10 years the covenant is to be reviewed for possible changes but it is to be considered a permanent relationship with the US. No other US territory or state has this possible right to change the basic relationship with the central government.

Concerning the timetable of events leading up to the beginning of a commonwealth status, Pangelinan stated that at their next meeting with the US, beginning on February 3, 1975, when final agreement with both parties is reached concerning the wording of the covenant, it is expected that the Marianas District Legislature will sign it and an intensive political education campaign will then be mounted with a possible plebiscite a few months later still in 1975.

Although the US policy is that the Trusteeship Agreement will not be ended until all of the territory is ready, Pangelinan stated that separate administration could begin with nearly all of the provisions

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of the covenant taking force as soon as the people of the Marianas and the US Government have made it official. The only exception would be citizenship. The government of the Marianas would be set up according to a Marianas constitution.

The Marianas constitution would have to be republican in form but it would not have to be modeled after the US constitution. There would also be some important exceptions to the US constitution as it applies to the Commonwealth. For example, there is a provision in the covenant which would prohibit ownership of land by people not of Marianas descent and there is the possibility of regulating immigration locally until the US immigration laws are made applicable to the area.

The Covenant would be the supreme law, says the Chairman of the Marianas negotiating team. There would be internal autonomy and even some rights to operate in the international areas with the exception of foreign policy and defense.

Mixed feelings about the delay of base construction exist admitted Pangelinan, but the delay in the construction has worked in the favor of the Marianas. More land was made available than expected for lease back to agricultural businesses because the US would not need as much for the time being as they had originally requested.

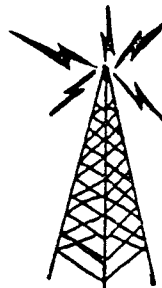
The reactions of the US Congress cannot be predicted, said Pangelinan, but if there are problems in getting approval for the covenant, he is prepared to go to Washington and pleats for approval for the agreement.

It would be mutually beneficial to the US and the Marianas, not just for defense purposes, but in other ways as well Pangelinan stated.

Because of the nature of the discussion, it was decided to stop the Program at this point and take up the interview in a second installment recorded immediately after the close of this half hour period. Part II of the interview will be handled as a separate program.

The Task Force wishes to extent best wishes for a very Merry Christmas and a happy new year to all of the listeners.

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In continuation of the interview with the chairman of the Marianas Political Status Commission heard earlier, Mr. Savercool inquired about the land situation on the island of Tinian. Pangelinan responded by saying that they had convinced the US that there would be no sale of land, only lease and that the government of the Marianas would be the lessor and the US would lease the land from that government. Unused land included in the lease would be re-leased back to the people of Tinian for agricultural and related activities. Because of the recent change in US Base plans and a possible delay in construction of about 5-10 years, 600 acres more than expected will be made available for private lease.

The return of public land by executive order was raised by Abed Younis and the Marianas Political Status Commission Chairman indicated that the manner of the return was not as important as getting it back as soon as possible. Congressional action has failed twice and there was no indication that the Congress of Micronesia would succeed another time. Therefore, executive action seems to be the fastest.

The lease price for the land on Tinian, according to the covenant, will be \$17,500,000 for the 17,800 acres to be held by the US government for military use. In a related question, the chairman indicated that land in the northern islands, all public land, was not of great concern. It is the land on Saipan, Tinian and Rota where military interests are concerned.

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Under the new status, the land will not become US property as in Guam. Because of the negotiations all US land in the Marianas will be leased from the Government of the Marianas which will control it in trust for the people.

After January 1, 1975, it is expected that an accelerated homestead program will be instituted to resolve the problems which have existed on Tinian for many years. Tinian will have priority.

As far as continued participation in the Joint Committee on Future Status, Pangelinan stated that he was not sure about the status of the committee since Senator Salii had indicated that he felt the negotiations with the US for the Congress of Micronesia should stop until the lands were returned in an acceptable manner. A decision could not be made about the Marianas representation on that committee until it was decided whether negotiations will continue. The Marianas would continue to participate in the Congress of Micronesia until a plebiscite indicates a firm and final decision by the Marianas people to separate and become a Commonwealth.

Citizenship was discussed at length and differences between US citizen and National were described. A Marianas born citizen or other qualified person will become a US citizen automatically upon approval of the Commonwealth and termination of the Trusteeship. If a person should not want to become a US citizen, he will have to make a declaration in court within about 4 months after the covenant becomes effective. Pangelinan stated that the differences between the two status were small. Within the Marianas a national would have all rights except certain federal employment such as the post office, which requires US citizenship. If a person moves out of the Commonwealth, a US citizen will have full citizenship rights in the US while a national will not be able to vote for Congress or President. The Chief Mariana negotiator recognized that there may be some people who would prefer not to become US citizens and that some option had to be provided for them.

According to the covenant, the commonwealth will be represented in the US by a non voting delegate or representative to the US Congress. However, the US Congress must decide the nature of that representation in the Congress. Pangelinan noted that the arrangement was better than Guam or West Samoa or the Virgin Islands, other US Territories, in that the Commonwealth would be able to participate in various international activities.

In response to a question about the name of the people in the Commonwealth, the chairman hoped that someone would help. Guamanians, Hawaiians, Samoans had names, but it was difficult, because of the

different ethnic groups to come up with a single descriptive name.

Other Micronesians will receive maximum protection under the laws, claimed Pangelinan. Most of them are government employees and some would qualify for citizenship if they so desire. However, talks between leaders of the other districts, the TT and the Marianas should take place to resolve some questions in this area.

Because of economic considerations, the capital of the TT should remain in Saipan, in the chairman's opinion, but he recognized that this question would have to be discussed and settled. It is both a political and an economic decision that will eventually have to be decided.

In conclusion, Senator Pangelinan listed the titles of the ten articles in the Covenant and explained that as soon as possible, copies would be made available to the general public through his office and by contacting any member of the Marianas Political Status Commission.

Dialogue for Micronesia has produced this interview in recognition of the importance of events in the Marianas to the rest of the Territory. It is not to be understood as promoting the Commonwealth status over any other alternative on the part of the ESG Task Force. For further information on the subject, please contact your local task force. On behalf of the ESG Task Force, we wish all of our listeners a very happy new year.