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REMARKS BY SENATOR EDWARD DLG. PANGELINAN
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"THE FUTURE POLITICAL STATUS
OF MICRONESIA, GUAM AND ANY
INTER-RELATIONSHIP OF THE TWO"

February 1, 1974

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, IT IS INDEED A PLEASURE AND AN HONOR TO JOIN THIS AUGUST ASSEMBLAGE GATHERED HERE TO "OPEN AVENUES OF COMMUNICATION" CONCERNING "THE FUTURE POLITICAL STATUS OF MICRONESIA, GUAM AND ANY INTER-RELATIONSHIP OF THE TWO." TO FACILITATE THIS GOAL, I HAVE DISTRIBUTED TO THE MEMBERS OF THE SEMINAR A BACKGROUND MEMORANDUM ON THE U.S. MARIANAS STATUS NEGOTIATIONS, WHICH, AS YOU KNOW, I CONSIDER TO BE ONE POSSIBLE ASPECT OF SUCH A FUTURE POLITICAL STATUS IN MICRONESIA.

MORE THAN ANY OTHER TIME IN HISTORY, THE PAST DECADE HAS REVIVED THE AGE-OLD QUESTION OF WHETHER MAN CAN GOVERN HIMSELF. FACED AS WE ARE WITH INCREASING TENSIONS AND CONFLICTS, LACK OF OR DIMINISHING RESOURCES, AND THE UNAVOIDABLE INTERACTION WHICH TAKES PLACE ON A WORLD STAGE BECOMING INCREASINGLY SMALLER DUE TO TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCES, ONE MIGHT ASK HIMSELF WHETHER THE POLITICAL SKILLS THAT ONCE SEEMED ADEQUATE ARE SUFFICIENT TODAY FOR SELF-GOVERNMENT AND INDEPENDENCE. RECOGNIZING SUCH LIMITATIONS BUT RECOGNIZING AT THE SAME TIME THE NEED FOR MAN TO DETERMINE HIS OWN DESTINY, IT HAS BEEN THE DECISION OF THE MARIANAS POLITICAL STATUS COMMISSION TO, ONE MIGHT SAY, SEEK "THE BEST OF BOTH POSSIBLE WORLDS": A DEGREE OF SELF-GOVERNMENT NEVER BEFORE ACHIEVED BY THE PEOPLE OF THE MARIANAS AND FOR THE FIRST TIME, AS A RESULT OF THE FREELY-EXPRESSED WILL OF THE PEOPLE, TO BE COMBINED WITH THE STRENGTH AND SECURITY MADE POSSIBLE BY A CLOSE WORKING AND POLITICAL RELATIONSHIP WITH THE UNITED STATES.

IT IS OUR CONSIDERED OPINION THAT THIS IS THE BEST POSSIBLE STATUS AT THIS TIME FOR THE 14,000 PEOPLE OF THE MARIANA ISLANDS DISTRICT IN THE U.S. TRUST TERRITORY.

AS JUST POINTED OUT, IT WOULD BE THE FIRST TIME IN RECENT U.S. HISTORY THAT A SOCIETY WOULD HAVE COME UNDER THE AMERICAN FLAG AS A RESULT OF ITS FREELY-EXPRESSED WILL RATHER THAN BY PURCHASE OR CONQUEST. IN THE VAST AREA CALLED MICRONESIA, RANGING ACROSS THOUSANDS OF MILES OF OCEAN AND DOTTED WITH HUNDREDS OF ISLANDS, ARE INCLUDED A PEOPLE OF MARKEDLY DIFFERENT CULTURAL AND ETHNIC HERITAGE, AND PERHAPS THE MOST MARKEDLY DIFFERENT OF ALL FROM THE REST ARE THE CHAMORROS, WHO ARE LARGELY SETTLED ON THE THREE MAIN ISLANDS OF SAIPAN, TINIAN AND ROTA. THE BENEFITS OF AN EVEN CLOSER RELATIONSHIP WITH THE UNITED STATES HAVE BECOME CLEARLY EVIDENT TO THE PEOPLE OF THE MARIANAS FROM THE PROGRESS MADE BY NEIGHBORING GUAM TOWARD LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT AND ECONOMIC SELF-SUFFICIENCY. ACCORDINGLY, OVER THE YEARS THE MARIANAS PEOPLE HAVE PERSISTENTLY EXPRESSED THEIR DESIRE FOR CLOSER AND MORE SECURE TIES WITH THE UNITED STATES. SUCH EXPRESSIONS HAVE COME IN THE FORM OF RESOLUTIONS PASSED IN TOWN MEETINGS, MUNICIPAL COUNCILS, THE DISTRICT LEGISLATURE AND THROUGH REFERENDA OF THE PEOPLE.

IN MAY 1972, THE MARIANAS DISTRICT LEGISLATURE CREATED THE MARIANAS POLITICAL STATUS COMMISSION TO CONDUCT NEGOTIATIONS LOOKING TOWARD A CLOSE AND ENDURING POLITICAL RELATIONSHIP WITH THE UNITED STATES FOLLOWING TERMINATION OF THE TRUSTEESHIP.

AS THE NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN THE JOINT COMMITTEE ON FUTURE POLITICAL STATUS FOR MICRONESIA AND THE UNITED STATES NEGOTIATING TEAM PROGRESSED, IT BECAME INCREASINGLY CLEAR TO THE MARIANAS REPRESENTATIVES THAT THE UNPRECEDENTED RELATIONSHIP OF "FREE ASSOCIATION" COMBINED WITH UNILATERAL TERMINATION OF SUCH AGREEMENT WOULD NOT AFFORD TO THE MARIANAS THE "CLOSE AND EDURING POLITICAL RELATIONSHIP" WHICH THEY DESIRED. DESPITE OCCASSIONAL CRITICISM FROM SOME MEMBERS OF THE JOINT COMMITTEE ON FUTURE STATUS AND THE CONGRESS OF MICRONESIA, IT IS CLEAR THAT THE SEPARATE NEGOTIATIONS ARE ESSENTIAL TO PRESERVE THE RIGHT OF PEOPLE OF THE MARIANAS FREELY TO CHOOSE THEIR OWN POLITICAL DESTINY. REPRESENTATIVES FROM THE MARIANAS HAVE EXPRESSED THEIR VIEWS ALONG THESE LINES TO THE UNITED NATIONS TRUSTEESHIP COUNCIL ON JUNE 6, 1972 AND ON JUNE 12, 1973, AND APPARENTLY MANY MEMBER NATIONS ON THE TRUSTEESHIP COUNCIL HAVE RECOGNIZED THE LEGITIMACY OF AND THE NECESSITY FOR THE SEPARATE U.S. MARIANAS NEGOTIATIONS.

HOWEVER, THIS DOES NOT MEAN THAT THE MARIANAS COMMISSION HAS ANY DESIRE TO UNDERCUT OR HAMPER THE NEGOTIATIONS OF THE JOINT COMMITTEE, ESPECIALLY IN VIEW OF THE FACT THAT IT IS PRESENTLY THE VIEW OF THE U.S. THAT TERMINATION OF THE TRUSTEESHIP CAN ONLY OCCUR SIMULTANEOUSLY FOR ALL DISTRICTS OF MICRONESIA. THEREFORE, DESPITE THE MORE RAPID PROGRESS MADE BY THE MARIANAS NEGOTIATING TEAM, IT WOULD SEEM THAT WE ARE STILL CLOSELY TIED TO THE REST OF MICRONESIA BEFORE ANY ULTIMATE FULFILLMENT OF OUR GOALS CAN BE ACHIEVED.

NEVERTHELESS, WE HAVE MOVED FORWARD TOWARD ACHIEVING OUR PRIME OBJECTIVES IN THREE AREAS: POLITICAL STATUS, ECONOMIC, FINANCE AND LAND.

IT IS INTERESTING TO NOTE THAT, CONCURRENTLY WITH THE MARIANAS NEGOTIATIONS, EFFORTS ARE UNDERWAY TO IMPROVE THE STATUS RELATIONSHIP PRESENTLY IN FORCE IN GUAM, THE VIRGIN ISLANDS, AND PUERTO RICO.

RECENTLY THERE HAS APPEARED IN THE PACIFIC DAILY NEWS SEVERAL ARTICLES BY SENATOR FRANK G. LUJAN, CHAIRMAN OF THE GUAM POLITICAL STATUS COMMISSION, IN WHICH "THE HARSH REALITIES OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND PUERTO RICO" ARE CONTRASTED WITH THE APPARENTLY UNFOUNDED PRAISE OF THE COMPACT OF 1951 AS EXPRESSED IN "SCHOLARLY JARGON AS A NOBLE EXPERIMENT INTO NEW POLITICAL DIMENSIONS, A SINGULAR CONTRIBUTION TO THE CONCEPT OF FREE ASSOCIATION." (PDN, WED., JANUARY 30, 1974, p.19) ALTHOUGH THE JOINT COMMUNIQUE DESCRIBES THE FUTURE STATUS OF THE MARIANAS AS THAT OF A "COMMONWEALTH", THERE IS NO INTENTION OR DESIRE TO IMITATE THE PUERTO RICO EXPERIENCE AND ALTHOUGH THE TERRITORIAL FRAMEWORKS AS NOW EXIST IN GUAM AND THE VIRGIN ISLANDS HAVE BEEN EVOLVING AND IMPROVING OVER THE YEARS, THEY FALL SHORT OF LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT REQUIRED BY THE MARIANAS. THE TERM "COMMONWEALTH" IS MERELY A GENERAL FRAMEWORK WHICH WILL DERIVE ITS SUBSTANCE AND MEANING FROM THE TERMS OF THE FORMAL STATUS AGREEMENT ITSELF. IT IS OUR FERVENT HOPE AND INTENTION THAT THE UNNECESSARY SHORTCOMING OF EARLIER STATUS RELATIONSHIPS CAN BE AVOIDED AND THAT THE UNITED STATES WILL RECOGNIZE THAT IT HAS "A SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITY TO LEAVE THE MICRONESIANS IN A SITUATION OF PROMISE AND DIGNITY." (WASHINGTON POST, EDITORIAL, JULY 23, 1973).

THE CRITICAL NEED FOR CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN THE MARIANAS PRESENTS A UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF AN OVERALL PLAN FOR THE ISLANDS.

THROUGH SUCH PLANNING AND THE ORDERLY IMPLEMENTATION OF THOSE PLANS, THE MARIANAS COULD MOVE QUICKLY TOWARD ECONOMIC SELF-SUFFICIENCY WHILE AVOIDING THE PERILS OF UNCONTROLLED GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT THAT HAVE PLAGUED GUAM AND THE VIRGIN ISLANDS. ACCORDINGLY, THE MARIANAS COMMISSION HAS REQUESTED THE UNITED STATES TO FINANCE A MASTER PLANNING EFFORT FOR THE ISLANDS WHICH WOULD SERVE TO IDENTIFY AND DEFINE THE NEEDS OF THE FUTURE MARIANAS GOVERNMENT IN THE AREAS OF CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS AND ORDINARY GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS. WE HAVE FURTHER REQUESTED THAT THE UNITED STATES COMMIT ITSELF TO PROVIDE SUCH SUPPORT OVER AN INITIAL PERIOD OF YEARS AT GUARANTEED FIXED LEVELS SO THAT THERE IS NOT THE USUAL DEPENDENCE UPON THE ANNUAL BUDGETARY REVIEW PROCESS OF THE U.S. GOVERNMENT. THE U.S. DELEGATION HAS ALREADY AGREED IN PRINCIPLE TO SUPPORT SUCH A MASTER PLANNING EFFORT TO SEEK CONGRESSIONAL APPROVAL OF A MULTI-YEAR COMMITMENT REQUIRED TO IMPLEMENT THESE PLANS. THUS, IT IS HOPED HERE, TOO, TO AVOID THE PITFALLS OF PREVIOUS ARRANGEMENTS WITH THE UNITED STATES FOR A COMMONWEALTH STATUS.

LAND IN THE MARIANAS, AS IN ALL OF MICRONESIA, IS THE MOST SCARCE AND PRECIOUS RESOURCE OF THE PEOPLE. NEVERTHELESS, RECOGNIZING THAT AS PART OF THE AMERICAN POLITICAL SOCIETY AND IN RETURN FOR A LONG-TERM ASSURANCE BY THE UNITED STATES OF ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL SUPPORT, THE MARIANAS HAS A RESPONSIBILITY TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE U.S. DEFENSE ROLE IN THE WESTER PACIFIC, THE PEOPLE OF THE MARIANAS ARE PREPARED TO MAKE LAND AVAILABLE TO MEET U.S. MILITARY NEEDS. IN THIS CONNECTION, THE UNITED STATES HAS PROPOSED A MAJOR MILITARY BASE THAT COULD OCCUPY TWO-THIRDS OF THE ISLAND OF TINIAN AND HAS ALSO REQUESTED THAT ADDITIONAL LAND ON SAIPAN BE RESERVED FOR "CONTINGENCY" PURPOSES.

THESE QUESTIONS ARE STILL UNDER NEGOTIATION AND MUST BE FREELY DECIDED
BY THE PEOPLE OF THE AREAS CONCERNED.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

WE ARE ALL FAMILIAR WITH THE MAJOR DIVISIVE FACTORS AFFECTING
POLITICAL MODERNIZATION AND UNITY IN MICRONESIA, SOME OF WHICH HAVE BEEN
MENTIONED: THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE ISLANDS DUE TO HISTORICAL
ACCIDENT, THE GEOGRAPHICAL DISPERSION OF THE ISLANDS, THE SEVERAL EXISTING
LOCAL LANGUAGES AND THE ETHNIC DIVERSITY, TO MENTION ONLY A FEW. BUT
STILL ANOTHER FACTOR, NOT TO BE OVERLOOKED, IS THE LEGITIMATE ASPIRATION
AND DESIRE OF ONE ETHNIC GROUP WITHIN THE "POLITY" WE CALL MICRONESIA
TO SEEK ITS OWN POLITICAL DESTINY UNDER CONDITIONS WHICH MAY NOT BE
APPROPRIATE OR ACCEPTABLE TO THE OTHERS.

INTERESTINGLY ENOUGH, THE DEMOCRATIC POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT WHICH
HAS TAKEN PLACE UNDER THE AEGIS OF U.S. LEADERSHIP MIGHT BE CONSIDERED,
FOR PURPOSES OF THEORETICAL ANALYSIS, A DIVISIVE RATHER THAN A UNIFYING
FORCE. AS THE WAR ENDED AND CONDITIONS IN MICRONESIA WERE IN CHAOTIC
CONDITIONS, AMERICAN CIVIL ADMINISTRATORS, UNDER WHAT CONTINUED TO BE FOR
YEARS -- WHETHER BY DESIGN OR DEFAULT -- MERELY A CARETAKER ADMINISTRATION,
DID NOT SERIOUSLY INTERFERE IN THE TRADITIONAL SOCIAL ORDERS OF MICRONESIA.
ALTHOUGH THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT CONTINUED FOR YEARS TO CONTROL ALL CENTRAL
ADMINISTRATIVE FUNCTIONS, WITH THE ADVENT OF THE TRUST TERRITORY CODE
EARLY IN 1953 AS THE BASIC LAW OF MICRONESIA, THE U.S. WAS COMMITTED TO
WORK TOWARD STRONG LOCAL AND REGIONAL GOVERNMENTAL UNITS, AND THE
GRADUAL CHARTERING OF MUNICIPAL AND DISTRICT GOVERNMENTAL ENTITIES BEGAN.

DISTRICT LEGISLATURES WERE ESTABLISHED, MUNICIPALITIES WERE CHARTERED, AND DESPITE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE CONGRESS OF MICRONESIA AS THE LEGISLATIVE BRANCH OF THE TRUST TERRITORY GOVERNMENT IN 1964, THERE HAS RECENTLY BEEN A RETURN TO DECENTRALIZATION -- OR WHAT SOME OBSERVERS CALL "FRAGMENTATION" -- OF RESPONSIBILITY IN MICRONESIA BY A GREATER EMPHASIS ON LEADERSHIP AND DECISION-MAKING AT THE DISTRICT LEVEL.

DESPITE THE MANY FACTORS, HOWEVER, WHICH WORK AGAINST MICRONESIAN UNITY, THERE ARE OTHER POWERFUL FORCES WHICH TEND TO BRING MICRONESIANS TOGETHER: THE CONGRESS OF MICRONESIA, AS THE LEGISLATIVE BRANCH OF THE GOVERNMENT, IS PERHAPS MORE THAN ANY OTHER SINGLE FACTOR, THE MOST POTENTIALLY UNIFYING FORCE. IT COULD BE A COMMON DENOMINATOR, A FORUM AND A SYMBOL OF MICRONESIAN UNITY WITH WHICH MICRONESIANS CAN IDENTIFY. STILL OTHER ASPECTS OF UNITY MIGHT BE MENTIONED -- THE DEVELOPMENT OF A REGULAR AND FREQUENT AIR SERVICE TO AND FROM THE DISTRICT CENTERS WHICH BRINGS PEOPLE FROM ALL OVER MICRONESIA INTO FREQUENT CONTACT. ATTENDANCE OF MICRONESIAN STUDENTS IN COMMON INSTITUTIONS OF LEARNING BOTH WITHIN AND OUTSIDE OF MICRONESIA, THE USE OF ENGLISH AS A COMMON LANGUAGE OF COMMUNICATION, AS WELL AS THE MICROLYMPIC GAMES, HAVE ALL CONTRIBUTED TO THE PAN-MICRONESIAN IDEAL.

BE THAT AS IT MAY, IT REMAINS TO BE SEEN WHAT EVENTUAL POLITICAL DESTINY AWAITS THE VAST AND SPRAWLING OCEAN-ISLAND AREA CALLED MICRONESIA, WHICH, IF IT WERE ONE DAY TO BECOME "INDEPENDENT", WOULD SURELY BE THE LARGEST NATION-STATES IN THE PACIFIC AREA, CONSISTING OF A GREATER NUMBER OF DIVERSE PEOPLES IN A SINGLE NATION THAN EXISTS ANYWHERE ELSE IN THE PACIFIC.

AT THIS JUNCTURE, IT MIGHT BE USEFUL TO ASK OURSELVES THE QUESTION WHETHER ANY NATION, EVEN LONG-ESTABLISHED AND POWERFUL ONES, ARE ANY LONGER REALLY "INDEPENDENT". THAT IS, CAN ANY NATION OR OTHER ASPIRING POLITICAL ENTITY BE ECONOMICALLY INDEPENDENT TODAY, OR IS "INTERDEPENDENCE", NOT ONLY ECONOMICALLY BUT PERHAPS ALSO POLITICALLY TO BE THE NAME OF THE GAME IN THE FUTURE?