

Micronesia Can Be The Largest Pacific Nation

Interdependence may be the name of the game in Micronesia's future, a senator from Saipan told participants in the All-University Seminar held Friday to discuss political status of Guam and Micronesia.

Senator Edward Pangelinan of Saipan said that the Marianas Political Status Commission seeks the best of both possible worlds. They want security in close association with the United States.

"For the first time in U.S. history, a society wants to come under the U.S. administration voluntarily, rather than by force.

"The benefits of closer relationship with the United States are evident to the Marianas people, including Tinian and Rota," he said. "The shortcomings of our earlier relationship can be avoided. The Marianas also wants to avoid the lack of controlled development which plagued Guam and the Virgin Islands."

"We want a long-term assurance of economic support of the Marianas people and are willing to lend land to the military on Tinian and Saipan.

"Many factors can work against Micronesian unity, but the Congress of Micronesia is a most potentially unifying force," said Pangelinan. "Development of regular and frequent air service; attendance by students at a central school; using English as a common

language and the Micro Olympic Games all help to unite the varied districts of Micronesia."

"If Micronesia is independent, it could be the largest single nation in the Pacific," said Pangelinan.

In response to a question by Panelist Joe Murphy, editor of the Pacific Daily News, about how an independent Micronesia would defend itself from aggression, Johnson Toribiong of Palau said, "An independent Micronesia could declare neutrality and enter into treaties with large nations. There might be some fear of pillage by small groups but we accept our fate as helpless little people."

After much discussion about the sincerity of negotiations by the United States, it was agreed that all negotiations between the U.S. and Micronesia or Guam would be based on what would be mutually beneficial to both.

Sen. Paul Bordallo of Guam said that if Guam and Micronesia were associated, it would lead to an increase in credibility in dealings with the U.S. government or any government for that matter.

Bordallo suggested that Guam and the islands form a Council of Micronesia which would be a loose association for economic benefits, such as operation of fishing fleets, canneries, shipping lines, postal services, and communication and transportation facilities.