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SUBJECT

Political Education: TTPI and Marianas Programs

HIGHLIGHTS

Political Education programs have been begun in the past two months by both the TTPI Administration and the Marianas Political Status Commission. The programs are very different in premise and approach. The TTPI territory-wide program of education for self-government is relying principally on the media - radio programs, brochures, etc. and is attempting to discuss all aspects of self-government and status alternatives. The MPSC program is in the form of public meetings restricted primarily to Saipan with the members of the MPSC and centering almost entirely on the pros and cons of commonwealth and MPSC objectives in its status talks with the U.S.

The programs do share the appearance of being strictly trial and error thus far. Their impact on their respective audiences is unknown.

DISCUSSION

Political education has been, until recent weeks, something everyone in the TTPI discussed but did nothing about. The Hawaii meeting last October between principals of the TTPI Administration, DOTA, COM and OMSN fixed responsibility for organization of a political education program with the High Commissioner. In the five months that have passed since that conference, the TTPI has pulled together elements of a political education program under the tag, "education for self-government". However, to date, no long-range plan detailing objectives and substance has yet been submitted. What the TTPI has done thus far, is launch a number of hastily prepared programs, including a radio series, brochures an essay contest, and a status questionnaire. These early efforts have been aimed at all parts of the TTPI including the Marianas.

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The Marianas Political Status Commission, has for its part, made it clear that the TTPI political education program is not relevant to the situation in the Marianas. Accordingly, it has organized political education activities of its own. MPSC Chairman Pangelinan has stated his belief that a political education program must center on the status alternative that the Marianas has chosen, i.e., commonwealth. Further, he feels that the only persons qualified to conduct such a program are the members of the MPSC themselves. Following this conviction, the members of the MPSC have held numerous public meetings, mainly on Saipan, during which they have discussed the objectives of the MPSC in the status talks and progress to date. Mary Vance Trent reports that attendance at these meetings has gradually increased and the audience has been further expanded by broadcasting the tape recordings of the meetings over the local radio station. Discussions at the meetings are held mostly in Chamorro though Felix Rabauliman has been on hand to translate proceedings into Carolinian dialect when necessary. Pangelinan has also stated that he would like to see a "bilateral" political education program, involving the participation of a full-time U.S. citizen, begin once a commonwealth agreement is signed.

What we do not know at this point is what reaction the MPSC has been getting to its presentations; what it has been doing, if anything, on Rota and Tinian; and what effect the TTPI's political education program has had in the Marianas.

RECOMMENDATION

You should ask Senator Pangelinan for a progress report on the MPSC's political education efforts. It would be useful to know what efforts have been made in other parts of the Marianas and what sentiments by the Saipan populace, particularly the Carolinians, have been expressed at the meetings

held thus far. You might also ask Pangelinan if his long-term plans for the transition period have evolved any further.