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11th Rota Municipal Council  
First Regular Session, 1975

[Date 1/20/75]

Resolution No. 11MC-27-1975

Introduced by: Council of the Whole

A RESOLUTION STATING THE POSITION OF THE PEOPLE OF ROTA,  
THROUGH THEIR ELECTED OFFICIALS, RELATIVE TO THE FUTURE  
GOVERNMENT OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

- WHEREAS, the people of Rota fully recognize that the future of Rota as well as the future of the rest of the Northern Mariana Islands will be greatly affected by decisions made during the Fifth Regular Session of the Mariana Islands District Legislature; and
- WHEREAS, the Rota Municipal Council, speaking on behalf of the people of Rota, seek to have its views heard and heeded by the members of the Mariana Islands District Legislature; and
- WHEREAS, the Council cannot overemphasize the importance which it attaches to the following Position Statement and will closely observe to what extent it is recognized and acted upon by the Mariana Islands District Legislature; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED by the 11th Rota Municipal Council in its First Regular Session 1975, that the following Position Statement is hereby set forth for consideration by the Mariana Islands District Legislature and other interested parties:

"The People of Rota are concerned over the proposed "Covenant to Establish a Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands in Political Union with the United States of America" which will most probable be signed by the Mariana Islands Political Status Commission and the United States delegation during the early part of February, 1975. That proposed Covenant provides for the establishment of a Constitution for the Future Government of the Northern Mariana Islands.

The concern felt by the people of Rota stems from both a disenchantment with the past and a guarded optimism about the future. Under the present Trust Territory Administration, Rotanese have consistently been treated as the poor cousins of our Saipan neighbors. We have submitted budget requests which have been ignored, while the approved budget affecting Rota is controlled and administered by the District Administration on Saipan. We have sought financial assistance from the District Legislature for our Municipal Operating expenses and the response has been unsatisfactory. Unfortunately, these requests were made necessary by a combination of factors including the limitations placed on our municipal taxing powers under the Trust Territory Code. Recommendations made by our District Administrator's Representative and his department heads, our Municipal Council, and our Mayor have been consistently disregarded.

The People of Rota wish to be a part of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. However, the people of Rota cannot approve a form of government which will perpetuate the discrimination practiced in the past against our island community. To clearly indicate our intentions, we submit the following four proposals which must be adopted if Rota is to participate as a political part of the future government of the Northern Mariana Islands.

1. Equal Numbers of Constitutional Conventions Delegates From Each Municipality.  
Each municipality must be provided an equal number of delegates to the constitutional convention provided for by the Mariana Islands District Legislature. In making this proposal, the Rota people are concerned most with creating a fair, representative, and harmonious constitutional convention. Any variation in the number of delegates from any single municipality should be made only after receiving the approval of each municipal council in the Mariana Islands District.

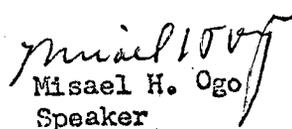
2. Bicameral Legislature.  
The central government legislature must be bicameral, with a Senate composed of equal representation from each of the present municipalities and a House of Representatives based on population figures and traditional voting patterns. This plan will help protect the interests of Tinian and Rota while ensuring Saipan a healthy majority in the House of Representatives. A bicameral Legislature is indispensable to the fair and equal treatment of Tinian and Rota. In addition it would be in keeping with the proposed covenant which specifically permits "distribution of the Legislature's membership on the basis of appropriate considerations in addition to population..." (see section 203 (c). )

3. Local Budgetary Controls.  
Any governmental framework created by the future constitution must provide for local control and disbursement of those monies made available to, what are now, the municipalities. Both during the transition period and after the termination of the trusteeship agreement, each municipality must be given full authority over the administration of funds provided by the central government legislature.

4. Plebiscite on Covenant and Referendum on Constitution to be Held Simultaneously.  
The Covenant and the Constitution, by their nature, will be closely related, interdependent documents. We feel strongly that the people of the Northern Mariana Islands should be given the opportunity to accept or reject them at one time. This will permit a longer period of political education and a smaller financial burden for our District Legislature; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that certified copies of this resolution be transmitted to the Chairman of the Marianas Political Status Commission; to the President's Personal Representative for Micronesian Status Negotiations; to the President of the Mariana Islands District Legislature; to the Rota Representatives of the Mariana Islands District Legislature; to the District Administrator, Marianas; and to the District Administrator Representative, Rota; also to the Secretary of the Department of the Interior; to the High Commissioner of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands; and to the Rota Representatives to the Marianas Political Status Commission.

Duly adopted this 20th day of January, 1975.

  
Misael H. Ogo  
Speaker

Attested by:   
Jesus A. Songsong  
Council Secretary