

Marianas Covenant

To the Editor:

Several weeks ago the United States signed a covenant with the representatives of the people of the Northern Marianas for the establishment of a commonwealth along the lines of Puerto Rico. This little-noticed event is before our Congress and will soon be put to the vote in the Northern Marianas. It is interesting that the Nixon-Ford Administrations pressed their suit upon the people there only after the U.S. opened relations with mainland China, our position in Taiwan and Indochina became untenable, Okinawa reverted to full Japanese control, and our position in the Philippines became hostage to continued support for the Marcos regime.

For more than two decades the pleas of the people there for some form of intimate American connection went

In order to insure that the people there vote the right way, the Administration has indicated that we will not relinquish our trusteeship over the entire former Japanese mandated islands until this issue is settled—our way. We have put the Northern Marianas under an intolerable burden. If they refuse us, then the rest of the islanders will have to continue as wards of the United States. We mean to have control over Tinian Island. No one, who has studied the situation objectively, denies that the majority of the people there want some form of relations with this country. But if the covenant is studied with as much objectivity, no one can deny that it commits violence upon the rights of the people there.

If the people want us, then let them seek sovereign independence, establish a free government, and undertake a formal treaty of alliance with provision for updating and termination. Anything less will not preserve the sovereign rights of the people there and the right of the American people to be free from ruling subject peoples.

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unheeded by our Government. Now that we are being forced off the Asian landmass and back toward Hawaii, the Pentagon wants a safe base in the western Pacific. It wants something more than just Guam. If the covenant is accepted by Congress we will have pulled off the strategic landgrab of this century.