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# Ponape Urges Status-Talks Halt

PONAPE (UPI) — A resolution introduced in the Ponape District legislature this week charges the United States with deliberately attempting to disunify Micronesia, according to the Micronesian News Service. (MNS)

It charges that by negotiating separately with the Northern Marianas the United States is disunifying the Trust Territory (TT). Officials of the Marianas and the United States already have signed a commonwealth covenant which, if approved during a plebiscite scheduled for early June, would lead to separation of the Marianas District from the rest of the TT. The resolution accuses the

United States of "promoting its own territorial and military interests in the Northern Mariana Islands" and states that the United States' action "has unwittingly encouraged various interest groups within the other five districts of Micronesia to exploit the possibilities of asserting the right of separate status negotiations at a time when the Trust Territory is faced with political and economic crises."

Former Sen. Edward DLG Pangelinan, chairman of the Marianas Political Status Commission, said in Guphm recently that the covenant is "the 20-year dream, come true for the people of the Northern Marianas." Pangelinan explained that for the past 20 years the people of the Northern Marianas have been asking for a political association with the United States. The U.S. government six years ago offered to the entire TT a commonwealth covenant similar to the one recently signed in Saipan. The Congress of Micronesia, led by Ponape, Truk and Palau delegations, voted down the offer. The Marianas

was the only affirmative vote. It was after that action that the Marianas opted to negotiate separately. The rest of the TT still is holding out for what is called "free association" with the United States. That arrangement has been described as one in which the TT would receive grants and protection from the United States, but could unilaterally terminate the association without notice at any time. The United States has refused the proposal.

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