

Congress of Micronesia

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MARIANA ISLANDS

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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SPEAKER

EDWARD HENRY

April 14, 1975

VICE SPEAKER

EDWARD HENRY

Dear Members of the Senate and House of Representatives:

FLOOR LEADER

LUKE TIMAN

The purpose of this letter is to inform you of certain actions now being contemplated by the executive branch of your Government, the Department of the Interior and the Office of Micronesian Status Negotiations in particular, to partition the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands prior to termination of the United Nations Trusteeship Agreement. We also wish to share with you the sentiments of the people we represent in our national legislature, the Congress of Micronesia, concerning the Marianas District status question.

MARIANA DISTRICT

JOHN MATHEI
MARIANA GUERRERO
D. J. FEA

Following an announcement in 1972 that then President Nixon's representative to the Micronesian Status Negotiations would initiate separate future political status negotiations with the Mariana Islands District, a report by the 1973 United Nations Visiting Mission to Micronesia stated:

MARIANAS DISTRICT

JOHN E. LOS
DANIELS DOMINICK
DANIELS SIEGEL
EDWARD HENRY

"We wish to emphasize here, that although the Micronesians themselves must work out for themselves what kind of future links they wish to have with one another, the administration (U. S.) is still at this state obligated to promote national unity in every way possible."
(emphasis added)

PALAU DISTRICT

EDWARD HENRY
WILLIAM W. MURPHY
EDWARD HENRY

Yet, contrary to this recommendation, plans are now being formulated to issue an executive order to divide our islands from our brothers and sisters in the other districts of Micronesia before your Congress will have the opportunity to review the proposed Covenant for a Marianas Commonwealth.

POWELL DISTRICT

EDWARD HENRY
JOHN MATHEI
MARIANA GUERRERO
D. J. FEA

Part of Senate Bill No. 326 now before the House of Representatives includes the authorization of \$1.5 million to finance transition costs of converting the Marianas into a commonwealth, similar to Puerto Rico, separate from the

TRUK DISTRICT

EDWARD HENRY
JOHN MATHEI
MARIANA GUERRERO
D. J. FEA
EDWARD HENRY

YAP DISTRICT

EDWARD HENRY
JOHN MATHEI

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cc: Smith

Members, Senate and House of Representatives
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rest of Micronesia, and separate from nearby Guam, an "unincorporated" U. S. Territory. The result: three separate and distinct political entities in the Micronesian islands, each financed by American taxpayers.

A plebiscite is scheduled to be held here in June with only 55 percent approval required to permanently link the Marianas to your country. If accepted by the Marianas voters, the majority of whom lack formal education, an executive order will be issued immediately to cancel Marianas participation in our national Congress of Micronesia, and in the Micronesian Constitutional Convention which will convene on Saipan, July 12, 1975. It should be mentioned at this point that every vigorous pro-separatist representative in our national congress was tossed out of office during our November 1974 congressional election, including the chairman of the Marianas Status Commission. Unfortunately, our "state" legislature, the Marianas District Legislature, which created and determined the membership of our status commission, holds elections only every four years and, therefore, has not yet been affected by the rapidly changing sentiments of local voters, which, in my opinion, have drastically changed since the provisions of the proposed status agreement have become public knowledge. Yet, before victorious representatives-elect, who advocated a "go slow" approach in our negotiations, were sworn into office and new members appointed to our status commission, the status negotiations were suddenly concluded.

As the newly elected representatives of the Marianas people, we strongly believe that the executive branch of your Government would be committing a very grave injustice by separating our islands before your Congress has reviewed the covenant agreement. If you decide to reject part of that agreement after we are separated, such as that part guaranteeing exclusive ownership of land only to U. S. citizens of "Marianas descent", for example, what alternative will our people have then? In short, we condemn any and all actions that such as an executive order by the Secretary of Interior, which will result in division of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands and cancel Marianas participation in our national Congress and Micronesian Constitutional Convention before the United States Congress has ratified the commonwealth covenant agreement.

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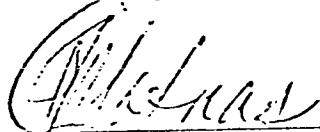
Members, Senate and House of Representatives
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We firmly agree with the words contained in the Charter of the United Nations Declaration Regarding Non-Self Governing Territories which state:

"Members of the United Nations which have or assume responsibilities for the administration of territories...recognize the principle that the interests of the inhabitants of these territories are paramount, and accept as a sacred trust obligation to promote to the utmost...the well-being of the inhabitants of these territories..."

Because of these obligations, we believe that your responsibilities to the people of Micronesia, and the Marianas, are greater than your obligations to your own citizens at home in America because we do not enjoy full political and economic freedom. Likewise, we strongly believe that the present agreement between the Marianas Status Commission and your executive branch will be unacceptable not only to your Congress, but to the Marianas people as well. We welcome any agreement whereby the interests of both sides are protected, including your strategic interests in the Western Pacific, but we feel that the present status agreement should and must be renegotiated.

Sincerely,



Congressman Jose P. Mafnas
First Representative District
Mariana Islands



Congressman Oscar C. Rasa
Third Representative District
Member, Marianas Status Commission

cc: United Nations Security Council
United Nations General Assembly
United Nations Trusteeship Council
United Nations Special Committee of 24 On Decolonization
President of the United States
United States Secretary of State
United States Secretary of Interior

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