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STATEMENT BY MR. JAMES MURRAY, CHAIRMAN OF THE
UNITED NATIONS VISITING MISSION : 20 JUNE 1975

Tomorrow, Saturday, the United Nations Visiting Mission will be leaving the Marianas. As Chairman, I have asked the courtesy of radio and television to say goodbye.

As we explained in the statement which we made on our arrival, we came here on the invitation of the Administering Authority and at the direction of the Trusteeship Council to observe the plebiscite, including both the campaign and the voting, and to report our findings.

The first part of our task is completed. We have indeed observed the plebiscite. At the outset we said that we wanted to hear all sides of the question. I hope we succeeded in this. We ourselves had the opportunity to see those whom we wanted to see. We hope that all those who wanted to speak to us were able to do so. We did our best to make ourselves available, both at formal meetings and in private.

There remains the second part of our task - our report. You will, I am sure understand why I cannot indicate to you now what our findings will be. There are two reasons for this. Firstly, we have learnt a great deal in the last week. We would wish to reflect ^{on it all} before we attempt to pass judgement. This reflection is perhaps best done away from the seductive and agreeable atmosphere of Saipan. Secondly, it would be wrong to discuss our views publicly before we have communicated them to the Trusteeship Council and the Administering Power. But when our report has been communicated to the Council - and we hope to do this without unreasonable delay - it will be published, and those of you who wish to do so, will be able to read it, and to judge for yourselves how well or badly we have done our job. Some of you on both sides will no doubt find something in it with which you disagree. But please remember that the other man has a point of view too. We very much hope that your conclusion will be that we did indeed do our best to be objective. Meanwhile let me say that when, during last Tuesday, the mission visited at least twice every polling station in Saipan and Tinian, we were all impressed by the courtesy, friendliness and political maturity with which the voting procedures were being carried through.

The plebiscite was one decision about the future. More decisions will be required of you before you reach your goal of self-government. These decisions will require no less careful consideration than that which was expected of you in the recent plebiscite. They will determine the way in which you will govern

yourselves. The arrangements you make must be fair, both on paper and in practice, to all the inhabitants of the Marianas alike. This is something that the Trusteeship Council will be looking out for. Moreover, whatever the final political arrangements for the Marianas, it is only sensible that the closest links be maintained with the rest of Micronesia. The ties between you are close. The benefits - political, economic and social - to be derived from the closest co-operation are considerable. This too is something to which the Trusteeship Council attaches importance. I know that many of you are already giving thought to these problems. Indeed, over the past few days, we have discussed them informally with some of you. What we have heard gives us reason to believe that however complex and delicate the problems you face in your progress towards self-government, the people of the Marianas^{and of Micronesia} will find some special "islands" way to overcome them.

I am sure that my colleagues on the Trusteeship Council would wish me to assure you that the Council will continue to take the closest interest in the affairs of the Marianas. You may sometimes wonder how much can possibly be known in New York about your distant islands. You might perhaps be surprised. Over the years your islands have sent a series of able^{representatives} petitioners to present their varying views on your political future; and the administration has reported fully on matters of economic and social development. Thus, we know not merely about the proceedings of the District Legislature but about efforts to eradicate the great mail.

As the mission prepares to leave, we owe thanks on many sides and would wish to express our gratitude:

To Mr. Canham, the Plebiscite Commissioner and Mr. Craley, the Executive Director, Mr. Maratita, Mr. Torres and the other members of the Commissioner's staff. They provided us with the fullest information about the organization of the plebiscite. They put us in touch with people who we wanted to see. They accepted with unfailing good humour the careful scrutiny to which we submitted their activities;

To the High Commissioner of the Trust Territory, the Honourable Edward Johnston and his staff whose administrative support facilitated our task of observation;

To the District Administrator, Mr. Ada, and his staff who provided us with much useful background on conditions in the District;

To the authorities on Rota and Tinian who looked after us so efficiently and hospitably during our sojourn on their islands;

To the leaders of both the "yes" and "no" campaigns for the unstinting effort they made and the time they spent in trying to ensure that the mission knew what the plebiscite was really about;

To the ordinary people of the Marianas for the warmth and friendliness of their welcome.

Finally, a special word for our drivers. To them we are grateful not merely for getting us safely about our business - on the assumption that they repeat the good work on the way to the airport tomorrow - but for acting as informal advisers on many aspects of local life that might otherwise have escaped our attention.

I end with a personal expression of view which goes far beyond the mandate of our mission. You have beautiful islands. I know that you won't spoil them or let anyone else spoil them. I hope you will find ways forward which equally will preserve what is best in your local traditions, will enable visitors from abroad to enjoy your beaches and your hills, and will provide for the sensible development of your own natural resources.

On behalf of Mr. Melhuish, Mr. de Lataillade and myself, and of our staff from the United Nations Secretariat, I express our thanks for the hospitality of your islands. We are all determined to find some reason for coming back soon.

Goodbye and good luck.