

June 23 1975  
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CHRONOLOGY OF ACTIVITIES  
of the  
PLEBISCITE COMMISSIONER

(Including a special supplement, summarizing the use of radio and television and the publishing of booklets and pertinent documents in the Plebiscite Education Program)

April 10, 1975

Secretarial Order No. 2973 and Proclamation defining the authority and procedures for holding the Plebiscite and setting June 17, 1975, as the date for the Marianas District Plebiscite. (copy attached)

April 11

Erwin D. Canham appointed as President Ford's Special Representative to conduct the Plebiscite.

April 15

Mr. Canham leaves Boston, Massachusetts, for Saipan.

April 18

Mr. Canham arrives on Saipan  
N. Neiman Craley, Jr., Special Assistant to the High Commissioner for Legislative Affairs, appointed as the Executive Director.

April 21

Plebiscite Commissioner's headquarters established at Hamilton's, Garapan Heights, carefully separated from the site of the Trust Territory Government on Capitol Hill.

George T. Callison, Special Assistant to the Director of Public Affairs, appointed as Publications Coordinator, and Ms. Azalea Weaver as Secretary.

April 22

Regulations drafted for the use of radio and television in the Plebiscite campaign. (copy attached)

April 23

The Plebiscite Commissioner met with members of the Marianas Political Status Commission and discussed regulations for radio and TV use, problems of voter registration, etc.

April 24

Began preparations for voter registration and for the formation of the Plebiscite Voter Registration Board and the Plebiscite Advisory Committee.

April 29

Taped a 30-minute interview for the radio program, "Dialogue for Micronesia." The program was duplicated at Broadcast Center and distributed to all six Trust Territory radio stations for broadcast.

Met with members of the United Carolinian Association, chief opponents of the Covenant, at their Garapan Ut.

Page 2 April 30

Members of the Plebiscite Advisory Committee appointed.

May 1

First meeting of the Plebiscite Advisory Committee, representing a wide range of Marianas leadership. The Committee held further meetings on May 2, 5, 9, 16, 20, 27, and June 3 and 10. (Minutes of all meetings attached)

Met in the evening with the Saipan Women's Association and invited them to designate a member of the Advisory Committee.

May 2

Invited a prominent opponent of the Covenant, Congress of Micronesia Representative Jose Mafnas, to join the Advisory Committee. He informed the Plebiscite Commissioner he would soon resign from the Congress and abandon politics, so he declined appointment to the Advisory Committee, which already included in its membership some opponents of the Covenant.

Also on May 2, the first meeting of the Plebiscite Voter Registration Board was held. Subsequent meetings were held on May 5, 12, 20, 21 (two meetings), 22 (three meetings), 23 (three meetings), 26, 27 and June 2 (two meetings). (Minutes of all meetings attached)

May 5

Completed plans for total registration process. Forwarded to all District Administrators information and materials regarding absentee registration. Met with registration clerks concerning a three-day "crash" registration drive. Used radio and TV extensively to encourage registration.

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May 6

The three-day "crash" registration program began. On the first day 1,982 persons registered. A crucial point was the inclusion on the registration form of the exact quotation from the Covenant and the Secretarial Order concerning "domicile". Continued to use radio and TV extensively to encourage registration.

May 6, 7 and 8

Accompanied by the Executive Director, the Plebiscite Commissioner visited all registration places on Saipan.

May 8

Completed the special three-day registration drive with a total of 4,392 voters registered. This compares with 2,714 total municipal registration and 5,762 total district registration. Both figures represent registration lists which had built up cumulatively over years.

May 9 and 10

Sent registration team to Guam: Friday at the University of Guam and Saturday at the Guam Legislature Building, a central location in Agana.

May 12

Completed staffing of the Plebiscite Commission Office: Radio-TV Officer, Registration Secretary and Finance Officer.

May 14

Forwarded to Honolulu Trust Territory Liaison Officer information and materials regarding absentee registration. Also met with leadership, members and staff of the Congress of Micronesia to discuss the Plebiscite and related matters.

May 15

Forwarded absentee registration information and materials to the Director, Micronesian Occupational Center (MOC) and the Director, Community College of Micronesia (CCM).

Sent chartered ship with officials to register voters in the Northern Islands of Pagan, Alamagan, and Agrihan, directing the officials to return with registration forms for the inhabitants of those islands.

May 16

Program of Plebiscite Education well under way. (See Supplement for list of publications and accounting of use of radio and TV.)

May 19

Registration challenges flowing into the Plebiscite Voter Registration Board, which, as a committee, carefully scrutinized both challenges and the registration lists.

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May 20

Secured the services of John C. Craft, Esquire, of Kansas City, to assist and advise the Office of the Plebiscite Commissioner on legal matters.

May 21

Met with leadership and members of the United Carolinian Association at their Garapan Ut to discuss problems of Carolinian translation of Plebiscite educational material.

May 23

Alfonso C. Rasa resigned as a member of the Plebiscite Voter Registration Board.

May 24

John C. Craft, Esquire, reported in at the Office of the Plebiscite Commissioner, having arrived on Saipan the evening before.

May 26

Initial voter registration list certified by the Plebiscite Voter Registration Board - 5,279 persons. Previous letter amended to show 5,344 persons.

May 28

Plebiscite Commissioner and Executive Director visited Rota to confer with officials about registration and voting procedures.

May 30

Plebiscite Commissioner taped four radio programs, two on the booklet, "The Covenant...Explained," and two from the booklet, "The Plebiscite Commissioner Answers Some of Your Questions about the Plebiscite, the Covenant and Commonwealth."

June 2

Plebiscite Voter Registration Board held final meetings to complete its attestation of voting lists. Certified 5,470 persons.

June 4

Plebiscite Commissioner and a member of the Plebiscite Advisory Committee visited Tinian, conferred with the Mayor and the District Administrator's Representative about registration and voting problems, including absentee voters.

June 5

Special Plebiscite Appellate Court began hearings on challenges and appeals.

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Special Plebiscite Appellate Court began hearings on challenges and appeals. (Appeals Nos. 1, 2 and 3)

June 5 and 6

Plebiscite Commissioner appeared on television - one program (30 minutes) on the Questions and Answers; the other summarizing the booklet, "The Covenant...Explained."

June 7

Plebiscite Commissioner and Registration Officer visited Pagan, only Northern Island with an air strip, for Plebiscite education meeting with the Mayor, District Administrator's Representative and local citizens.

June 10

Decisions of the Special Plebiscite Appellate Court were handed down.

On May 29, 1975, two appeals were filed with the Special Plebiscite Appellate Court contesting decisions of the Plebiscite Voter Registration Board. Herman Q. Guerrero, Manuel A. Sablan, and Joaquin Pangelinan filed Appeal No. 1, a copy of which is attached, and Martha Rechucher filed Appeal No. 2, a copy of which is attached.

June 4, 1975, Abel R. Olopai filed Appeal No. 3 with the Court with respect to 74 individuals, a copy of which is attached. No hearing was held on this challenge.

On June 5, 1975, a hearing was held before the Special Plebiscite Appellate Court, Chief Justice Harold W. Burnett presiding, at which time the Court heard oral testimony in Appeal No. 1 and Appeal No. 2.

On June 10, 1975, the presiding judge of the Special Plebiscite Appellate Court, Chief Justice Harold Burnett, rendered his opinion on the three appeals. A copy of the opinion is attached. In summary, the judge denied the appeal of Martha Rechucher; granted the appeal of Abel Olopai; and granted the appeal of Herman Q. Guerrero.

June 11

Plebiscite Commissioner appeared on television to explain the Plebiscite ballot and voting procedures.

June 12

The United Nations Trusteeship Council delegation arrived on Saipan.

June 13

The United Nations Mission met with the Plebiscite Commissioner and staff at Hamilton's for full briefing. Documents were provided on June 12 for their study. In the afternoon, U.N. Mission met with leader of pro- and anti-Covenant groups. Plebiscite Commissioner appeared on television to explain ballot and voting procedures.

June 14

U.N. Mission visited Rota and Tinian and held meetings with leaders, officials, and interested individuals.

June 15

Met with poll workers and judges to issue instructions and regulations. Two poll workers and two alternates, two judges and two alternates, are provided for each polling place from lists furnished by pro- and anti-Covenant groups so that each side is equally represented at each voting place.

June 16

Meetings at Plebiscite Commissioner's headquarters for U.N. Mission with Advisory Committee and Plebiscite Voter Registration Board. Extensive and vigorous discussion held and questions asked. In the evening voting materials are prepared at P.C. headquarters. Each ballot box is locked in its inner compartment where votes go, in an outer compartment are ballots which must all be accounted for, voting lists, and other materials.

June 17

Began issuing ballot boxes from P.C. headquarters at 6:00 a.m. Chairman Murray of U.N. Mission observed procedures. Visited all polling places. Supervised counting of ballots at Court House from 7:00 to 10:00 p.m. and announced results. (Tabulation attached)

June 18

Absentee ballots opened and tabulated.

June 19

Met with U.N. Mission Chairman Murray and Member Melhuish for a general post-mortem discussion.

June 22

Received ballot boxes from Northern Islands and certified the final results of the Plebiscite.

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