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WASHINGTON, MARCH 25 (MNS)---PRESIDENT FORD HAS SIGNED A RESOLUTION MAKING THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS A COMMONWEALTH TERRITORY OF THE UNITED STATES.

AS A COMMONWEALTH, THE PACIFIC OCEAN ISLANDS WILL HAVE A LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND A CONSTITUTION AND ITS PEOPLE BECOME UNITED STATES CITIZENS.

DURING A WHITE HOUSE CEREMONY THURSDAY MORNING, SAIPAN TIME, PRESIDENT FORD SAID THE MOVE SHOWS HOW STRONGLY AMERICA FEELS ABOUT THE RIGHT OF PEOPLE TO DECIDE THEIR OWN FUTURE. HE NOTED THAT A GREAT MAJORITY OF THE CITIZENS OF THE NORTHERN MARIANAS VOTED LAST YEAR TO BRING THE ISLANDS INTO A COMMONWEALTH TYPE OF GOVERNMENT.

AMBASSADOR F. HAYDN WILLIAMS, CHIEF U.S. NEGOTIATOR TO THE MARIANAS POLITICAL STATUS COMMISSION (MPSC) HOSTED A RECEPTION AT THE STATE DEPARTMENT IN WASHINGTON AFTER THE SIGNING.

SEVENTEEN MARIANAS POLITICAL AND GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS WERE ON HAND TO WITNESS THE SIGNING CEREMONY. THE OFFICIAL DELEGATION INCLUDES PETER T. COLEMAN, TRUST TERRITORY DEPUTY HIGH COMMISSIONER; FRANCISCO C. ADA, MARIANAS DISTRICT ADMINISTRATOR; VICENTE N. SANTOS, LEGISLATURE PRESIDENT; EDWARD PANGELINAN, CHAIRMAN OF THE MPSC; VICENTE D. SABLAN, MAYOR OF SAIPAN; FELIPE C. MENDIOLA, MAYOR OF TINIAN; ANTONIO ATALIG, MAYOR OF ROTA AND OTHER POLITICAL LEADERS.

MOST OF THE DELEGATION IS TO RETURN TO SAIPAN SUNDAY, (MARCH 28), AND A CEREMONY IS BEING PLANNED FOR THE PRESENTATION OF THE SIGNED COVENANT TO THE PEOPLE OF THE MARIANAS.

THE DISTRICT LEGISLATURE WILL HOST THE FESTIVITIES ON SUNDAY, ALONG WITH THE POLITICAL STATUS COMMISSION, MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENTS AND THE DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION.

SEVERAL DIGNITARIES ARE EXPECTED FROM WASHINGTON TO PARTICIPATE IN THE PRESENTATION.

(BUDGET HEARINGS PLEASE COM LEADERS). SAIPAN, MARCH 25 (MNS)---CONGRESS OF MICRONESIA (COM) LEADERS HAVE RETURNED HOME PLEASED WITH BUDGET HEARINGS IN WASHINGTON, HARRY BROWN, COM BUDGET OFFICER SAID ON SAIPAN THIS WEEK.

ACCORDING TO THURSDAY'S PACIFIC DAILY NEWS, BROWN SAID THE PROPOSED COM BUDGET WAS WELL RECEIVED BY BOTH THE ADMIN INTERNAL USE ONLY

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