

BACKGROUND PAPER FOR THE DELEGATION  
FROM ROTA

The delegation from Rota has met and discussed several issues of concern to the people of the municipality, who desire to secure adequate representation in the new government of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. For the purpose of background and as prelude to further discussion and deliberation on topics of critical importance to the people of Rota, tentative decisions on the following issues have been reached:

I. EXECUTIVE BRANCH OF GOVERNMENT

A. Structure

In pursuit of the goal that is shared by the outlying municipalities of taking a firm role in the conduct of the new government of the Northern Mariana Islands, the delegation from Rota proposes the following executive branch structure: an elected governor (elected at-large, Commonwealth-wide); one elected vice-governor (elected at-large, Commonwealth-wide); two elected lieutenant-governors (elected at-large, within the respective outlying municipalities, Rota and Tinian). It is the view of the Rota delegation that since the governor shall exercise general supervisory power over the Commonwealth, and because the vice-governor shall succeed as governor in the event of a vacancy in that office during the term of the incumbent, both the governor and the vice-governor should be elected from the qualified voters of the entire Commonwealth. Accordingly, since the lieutenant-governors shall represent the interests of the outer municipalities within the Commonwealth government, they should be elected from the qualified electors of their respective municipalities.

The delegation from Rota desires that, in order to ensure that the interests of the outer municipalities are fully represented in the executive decisionmaking process, the lieutenant-governors be accorded a position in the governor's council or cabinet. The accessibility to the governor will enable the views of the people of Tinian and Rota to be presented effectively within the Executive Branch of the Commonwealth.

B. Budget

The delegation from Rota, in furtherance of their desire to allow the outlying municipalities a degree of autonomy, proposes that the lieutenant-governors be allowed to participate actively in the preparation of the budget and its presentation to the legislature of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. It is the view of the delegation that one method of achieving this objective would permit the lieutenant-governors to submit to the governors budgets for services to be delivered on Rota and Tinian for coordination with all other budgetary matters in one executive budget that will be submitted to the legislature. Upon legislative approval, the responsibility for supervising one implementation of the financial programs approved by the legislature for Tinian and Rota shall lie with the lieutenant-governors.

**II. LEGISLATIVE BRANCH OF GOVERNMENT**

The delegation from Rota proposes the following with respect to the legislative branch of government:

- (a) 4-4-4 combination in the upper house;
- (b) the system presently in use in the lower house;
- (c) appropriations originate in the lower house and are approved in the upper house;
- (d) governmental appointments with the advice and consent of the upper house.