

November 3, 1976

DRAFT PROPOSAL ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT

I. Establishment of Position of Mayor for Rota, Tinian, Saipan and the Northern Islands.

A. Term: Popularly elected for a term of four years.

B. Powers: The Mayor shall have the following powers:

- 1) Membership in a governor's council of mayors;
- 2) Consultation re formulation of Commonwealth budget;
- 3) Ensure that services are being provided pursuant to Commonwealth law and appropriations;
- 4) Receive and investigate complaints re Commonwealth services and submit findings to the Governor and executive department concerned;
- 5) Conduct public hearings; and
- 6) Adopt rules and regulations on local matters with authority of Commonwealth law pursuant to authority of the Commonwealth legislature.

C. Compensation: To be provided by law from Commonwealth revenues.

D. Staff: To be provided by law and to be paid out of revenues from local taxes designated for this purpose.

II. Enactment of Local Legislation Applicable to Less Than The Entire Commonwealth

A. Authority of Commonwealth legislature to pass local laws through normal legislative process.

- B. Provide for enactment of Commonwealth laws applicable to a single island by two-thirds vote of the delegation to the Commonwealth legislature from the island involved.
- C. Issuance of rules and regulations by Mayor under authority granted by legislature which limits such authority to exclusively local matters.
- D. If either of three above approaches is followed, the laws or regulations adopted are laws of the Commonwealth to be enforced by the governor and other officials of the Commonwealth.

III. Decentralized Delivery of Services.

- A. Mandate in the constitution that services be provided on a decentralized basis and reflect the different needs of the separate islands.
- B. Enforce the above undertaking as follows:
 - 1) Require sub-departments and discretionary authority in such sub-departments as desired when establishing by law the departments of the executive branch;
 - 2) Exercise the confirmation power through Senate to insist on appointees who will implement this program and are sympathetic to Rota, Tinian and the Northern Islands; and
 - 3) Exercise the appropriations power so as to make certain that funds are equitably distributed among the islands, sufficient personnel are assigned to each island, bureaucracy is at a minimum, and services are being provided in a responsive and flexible manner.

- C. Empower the Governor's Council of Mayors to implement this constitutional mandate and give the council sufficient authority to do so, through direct access to department heads, power to issue periodic reports, and involvement in budgetary process.

IV. Local Government Units

- A. Present chartered municipalities, including councils and all other elected officials are abolished on effective date of this constitution.
- B. Tax revenues presently used by municipal governments shall go to the Commonwealth treasury for appropriation pursuant to law for the benefit of the island involved.
- C. No local government unit other than authorized in this constitution shall be instituted in the Commonwealth for at least five (5) years after the effective date of this constitution.
- D. After five (5) years, the legislature may establish local governments with such powers and officers as are determined by law provided, however, that such local governments be financed by local taxes and be approved by two-thirds of the qualified voters voting in the areas to be serviced by the local government.
- E. Before authorizing any local governments, the legislature shall authorize and consider a study that evaluates the provision of services by the Commonwealth government, analyzes the desirability and utility of establishing local governmental units within the Commonwealth, and addresses the functions and costs of these units.