

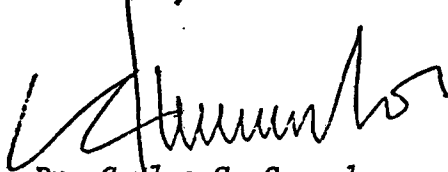
PRESS RELEASE - SAIPAN POPULAR PARTY
NOV. 17, 1976

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The members of the Northern Marianas Popular Party are instrumental throughout the last two decades in their pursuit for a close political relationship with the United States of America. The concept of a close union with the United States involved first with the re-integration with our brothers and sisters in Guam. This appeared at the time to be the most feasible and realistic in view of our proximity and that of our cultural and other similarities. Through public referenda and adoption of other official legislative petitions and resolutions, the Popular Party membership were successful in letting the United States, the United Nations and the entire world know of our intention, our hope and desires for a close political affiliation with the United States. Locally, we know that the majority of our people were sympathetic and cognizant of this dream and desire. There were others both locally and in Guam who were not fully knowledgeable of the concept of reintegration. As a result, an identical plebiscite on the reintegration issue held in 1969 on Guam was defeated. The final outcome of months of research, consultation, studies by local leaders resulted in a proposal for Commonwealth Government for the Northern Marianas. The Popular Party membership felt this to be ideal, practical and feasible. Furthermore, that it fully accommodates our people's desire for a closer tie with the United States and still provides for some degree of option in the event changes in the future are ~~destroyed~~^{incurred}. It is then that the concept of a Commonwealth status is borned and vigourously pursued. The initial important step was the creation of the Marianas Political Status Commission to negotiate the political aspirations of our people. The Status Agreement, a product of years of negotiations, subsequently was approved overwhelmingly in a district wide plebiscite held in 1975 throughout the Northern Mariana Islands but not without strong opposition. The Covenant was then the subject of careful reviews by the United States Congress and once again it withstood a well-organized

opposition. The Administration further reviewed the document and subsequently President Gerald R. Ford signed the Covenant on March 24, 1976. The current Northern Marianas Constitutional Convention is another important step toward completing and achieving the dream and aspiration so long desired by our people in the fulfillment of their political destiny. Until now, there remains opposition to the Covenant and the Commonwealth status. The opposition, however, have not been able to come up with an equivalent or better political alternative except to confuse the issue, create suspicion and finally maintain the status quo. The Popular Party which represents the majority common people continues to pursue vigorously this objective, and with increasing popular support and approval from the population. The progress of the current Constitutional Convention and subsequent accomplishment is consistent with the aspirations, desire, hope and dream of the majority of the people of the Northern Mariana Islands. The delegates of the Popular Party who constitute the minority, have tried to maintain so far an equilibrium and are attempting to safeguard the interest, desire and hope of the majority of the people. The Constitutional Convention is far from completion, but we are satisfied and happy with the progress so far made. We cannot, however, say that we are happy about the officials of the Con-Con and the way the majority manipulate the convention to ensure dominance. It is obvious from the beginning that there is an attempt by the majority to utilize the convention toward advancing individual and Territorial Party delegates political aspirations and further to protect specific minority interests and not that of the majority of the people of the Northern Marianas. From the outset it was obvious that delegates of the majority Party in the convention (From Saipan made offers to Tinian and Rota delegates far beyond their means to deliver. This is obvious in that they were able at every level to elect Territorials and with no regard to capability and abilities of delegates from the minority group. They

even amended many provisions of the rules of procedures to satisfy their objective. As the convention progresses it became increasingly clear that the Saipan majority Territorial Party delegates will not be able to accommodate or comply with their previously made commitment to the satisfaction of Rota and Tinian delegations. We can see and feel the disappointment, irritations, it not the frustrations, not to mention breach of faith. Fortunately, Rota and Tinian delegations are men of honor, flexible, hardworking and persistent. The interesting aspect of the convention now is that there continues to exist power plays, the arrogance among the majority Saipan delegates and an attempt to turn the convention into a political arena for the advancement of their own selfish personal ambition. Hopefully, the majority Territorial delegates will wake up and face the fact that now they are representatives of all the people and not just for a few selected persons. It should be noted that the final result of this constitutional convention will still have to be approved by three-fourths of all the delegates and thereafter the people. It will be most unfortunate, sad, and a waste of time, money and energy if the constitution is not approved due to the shortsightedness and selfishness of some of the delegates. Let us hope and pray that the minds and hearts of all the delegates be enlightened with heavenly guidance and non-partisan, non-personal interests so that a decent, equitable and practical constitution will emerge for benefit of all our people in the many years to come.



Dr. Carlos S. Camacho
President Delegate

PREAMBLE

We the people of the Northern Mariana Islands ordain and establish this Constitution to serve as the fundamental law for our Commonwealth. As we establish a government in political union with the United States, we reaffirm our respect for the Constitution of the United States of America. We recognize the duties and obligations of self-government as well as its privileges and opportunities. We desire to preserve and enhance our personal liberty and social equality, our Chamorro and Carolinian culture, our land and its resources, and our Northern Marianas heritage and traditions. We implore the blessings of Almighty God as we strive in unity to achieve these objectives and to uphold the dignity and promise of our island Commonwealth.

PREAMBLE

We the people of the Northern Mariana Islands, grateful to Almighty God for our freedom, ordain and establish this Constitution as the embodiment of our traditions and hopes for our Commonwealth in political union with the United States of America.

PREAMBLE

We the people of the Northern Mariana Islands grateful to god for our islands and proud in uniting to form our own government that can preserve our past and open the road to our future, ordain and establish this Constitution for our Commonwealth.