

OFFICE FOR MICRONESIAN STATUS NEGOTIATIONS

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SOME REASONS WHY THE U.S. GOVERNMENT SHOULD APPROVE  
COMMONWEALTH STATUS FOR THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

- Fulfills international obligations under U.N. Charter and Trusteeship Agreement to promote self-government and give people choice as to their future political status.
- Honors principle of self-determination. For 25 years leaders and people of the Northern Mariana Islands have taken lead in seeking political union with the U.S. Negotiations to this end entered into in good faith by USG after consultation with U.S. Congress. Commonwealth Covenant approved locally in U.N. observed plebiscite by 78.8% majority. The Covenant has also been approved by the U.S. House of Representatives and by the U.S. Senate Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs.
- Unites the peoples of the Marianas with a common citizenship under one flag. Most of small population of Northern Mariana Islands (14,000) are related by common culture, religion and blood to families on nearby Guam which has been U.S. Territory since 1898 when it was separated by an accident of history.
- Promotes cause of peace and stability in Pacific Ocean area by leading to a termination of Trusteeship Agreement in a manner which will preclude these strategically located islands from becoming possible objects of international rivalry in the future.
- Strengthens U.S. security interests in the Western Pacific and increases security of nearby Guam which is major U.S. defense center by denying the Northern Marianas to military forces of other countries and by providing U.S. access to these same islands as may be needed for defense purposes. This access will add to U.S. military's flexibility in Western Pacific without involving U.S. in any foreign agreements, further international commitments, or foreign restrictions on base use.
- Increases confidence and credibility of USG. Approval of Covenant after more than two years of negotiations, conducted in full consultation with Interior Committees of Congress, will increase confidence of people of Northern Mariana Islands in U.S. and strengthen our credibility in future negotiations with other districts of TTPI. Failure to approve would undermine U.S. credibility.
- Finally, the Covenant is mutually beneficial. The people of the Northern Mariana Islands clearly believe their best interests will be served in achieving self-government by voluntarily bringing their islands permanently under the American flag. The consolidation of American sovereignty over all of Marianas is equally advantageous to U.S. in terms of fulfilling its international obligations while, at same time, serving its national interests.

