

Tinian Not 100% Aye On Military

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Tinian—Recent statements by Tinian Mayor Antonia Borja that "the people of Tinian are 100 per cent in favor of the military coming to Tinian" have generated opposition among some members of the island's municipal council.

At a recent Tinian Municipal Council meeting, Speaker Felipe Mendiola countered remarks made by Mayor Borja to a DAILY NEWS reporter last month and said his statements were "wholly untrue."

The island of Tinian, located about 180 miles north of Guam and two miles south of Saipan, was singled out as the U.S. military's major land base requirement during the Micronesian status negotiations held in Hawaii in October. About two-thirds of the island's 25 square miles is military retention land, including numerous airstrips leftover from World War II.

Municipal Speaker Mendiola voiced concern that the people

will not be able to cope with an infusion of outsiders unless something is done to help them. "There are so many things to be done before the military comes, and very little time."

The leaders of Tinian feel they should be involved in any planning that will take place prior to the coming of the military. Many people fear, according to Congress of Micronesia Representative Felipe Atalig, who also attended the meeting, misuse of their land and loss of culture.

The council members appear to be thinking beyond possible public works improvements and economic benefits, as previously outlined by Mayor Borja to the overwhelming cultural effects that a large number of Americans coming to the island would have on the island's present 730 inhabitants.

If the military is coming, the people feel, the Trust Territory Government should begin an immediate education program for Tinian residents. According to Atalig, the people do not know what to expect.