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# DOUBT IS Heard On TT Status

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WASHINGTON — The question of the Mariana Islands going separate ways from the rest of the Trust Territory looms as a major problem in the continuing TT status talks, a Congressional subcommittee was told here.

Rep. Jonathan B. Bingham, a New York Democrat and former U.S. representative to the United Nations Trusteeship Council, warned "it is going to be difficult to sell" the council on approving separate status for the Marianas.

"I think we're in pretty deep difficulty" of getting U.N. approval of negotiation results especially if the Marianas made their own deal with the U.S., Bingham said.

His remarks came at a hearing of the House Territories Subcommittee in which President Nixon's hand-picked ambassador to the TT status talks also sounded pessimistic notes about their progress.

The ambassador, Franklin Haydn Williams, testified that disagreement and confusion among TT residents in general is a puzzling barrier to determining their future relationship.

"It is not easy to determine what the people of Micronesia really want," Williams said. "There are wide differences of opinion on the future political status questions within Micronesia."

He added: "I'm going to have to confess that from what I've been told a very large segment of opinion in Micronesia doesn't know very much about the issue." The hearing was held to inform committee members of the talks between Williams and TT representatives. Williams has separate negotiations set to begin with the Marianas this spring.

Delegate Antonio B. Won Pat of Guam, a subcommittee member, said that the people of the Marianas are "confused" about American policies and are "becoming alienated from our American way of life" because of the "military impact on the natives, and then the civilian government workers, the Peace Corps and all kinds of people representing the United States...I can understand why the people are confused."

When the Marianas voted once before to join Guam and Guam voters rejected that in a plebiscite, Won Pat noted, "only one-third of those registered to vote in Guam voted...I am sure that if a referendum were instituted today the people of Guam would be in favor of it."

And Rep. Robert Kastenmeier, D-Wisconsin, asked Williams about the military factor in the status talks and how it figured.

Williams said he believes that "the press and others have tended to exaggerate and make incorrect statements about our military presence."

He said that on four of the five major island groupings in the TT there is no U.S. military property and that the military had returned some 21,000 acres to the civilian populace in Micronesia in recent years.

But he also again outlined what options the U.S. seeks for military land and sea areas when —and if—the TT goes to a "free association" status: continued activities at Kwajalein Missile Range, Bikini and Eniwetok atolls; and acquisition or rights at Malakal Harbor and Bebelthaup Island in Palau.

Rep. Patsy T. Mink, D-Hawaii, sounded an optimistic note in the hearing, praising Williams for his work and saying, "Instead of being far from completion of your work, indeed are now extremely close."

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