

Guam Reaction Is Mixed

Bordallo, Sekt Split On Whether It's Good

Reaction on Guam to news of a proposed U.S. military takeover of Tinian Island ranged yesterday from an official "no comment" by Navy and Air Force spokesmen here to Sen. Paul Bordallo's outrage at the proposal.

Major Wayne Goodson, director of information at Andersen Air Force Base, told The Daily News that "it is not in our purview to speak about" the Tinian proposal. He said his office would release a statement about the situation "when we can speak from knowledge rather than from speculation." He said that any information on the proposal would have to come from high-level Defense Department sources in Washington.

Regarding the feasibility of building an Air Force base on Tinian, he said "Our engineering people are not even aware of what the facilities are over there, and what would be feasible." He said any such planning would occur at "senior levels," and that personnel at Andersen would not be in a position to participate in such planning.

Lt. Dale Wilkinson, public affairs officer for Comnavmar, said that the Navy could not comment on the proposal, and that the proper channel for information would be Franklin Haydn Williams, the U.S. ambassador to the Marianas status talks now in progress.

Sen. Paul Bordallo, who has long been embroiled in the Sella Bay controversy as both landholder and legislator, said that "for the entire island of Tinian to be delivered to the military with no restraints would be the greatest wrong that could be committed."

He did say, however, that he would not oppose the re-location of certain military

facilities to Tinian — "It would be a very fine thing," he said, "for the entire Naval Ammunition Depot to be moved to Tinian."

He explained that this would release the embattled Sella Bay area, the Fena Valley and Fena Lake for use by the people of Guam. He said that the 4,400-acre Sella Bay area "is the keystone" to another 10,000 acres in the Fena Valley.

"That 10,000 acres is the breadbasket of Guam," he added, noting that at present land values the whole area represents about \$840 million in real estate value.

He said its value to Guam would primarily be in recreation, agriculture, water resources, and "some minimal development" for tourist and residential facilities.

Bordallo also stated that the "greatly reduced activity" of the ammo depot since the winding down of U.S. involvement in the Vietnam war does not justify "tying-up" a near-billion dollar asset.

Bordallo said that even if the military leaves Guam, he doubts that it would release any of the land it now controls here, even though "it can release 60 per cent of its land holdings on Guam without depriving one single person of employment." He said he "would love to see" the military presence on Guam reduced or frozen at present levels, because any expansion of the military here would cause Guam to "go broke."

At the other end of the local argument was Sen. Allen Sekt,

who said a complete military move to Tinian would wreck havoc on Guam's economy.

"We've got to face the fact," he said, "that Guam is a military economy. If the military pulls out, it will hurt like the devil."

He noted that the military presently employs between 5,000 and 6,000 people at various bases on Guam, and that it puts about \$385 million a year into the island economy. He said that those legislators and others who have been advocating the reduction of the military presence here "are going to have a lot of egg in their faces" if the military does in fact move off the island.

"Tourism won't sustain Guam," Sekt predicted, "and neither will manufacturing — labor and shipping costs are simply too high here." He also ruled out agriculture as a potential economic replacement for the military.

Asked if the disclosure of the Tinian proposal might force local legislators to revise their positions on the Sella Bay agreement, Sekt said, "I don't think there will be any changes.... this Legislature will not go along" with the sale or transfer of Sella Bay to the Navy for use as an ammunition wharf site.

He said the Tinian proposal is

a very serious one, and that it is not just a tool to pressure the Legislature to see Sella Bay the Navy way.

"I think the military is simply tired of fighting the Guam Legislature and sick of the political climate on Guam," he said — adding that he does not blame the military for considering a massive move into Tinian.

No official spokesman for the Government of Guam could be reached to comment on the Tinian disclosures. Lt. Gov. Kurt Moylan was unavailable throughout the day.

Ken Jones, president of Jones and Guerrero Enterprises, was also not available for comment yesterday. His Micronesian Development Corporation is currently leasing 7,500 acres on Tinian for cattle grazing, and he has extensive plans for hotels and other developments on the island.

Analysis:

Irony For Guam

By John Walter
Daily News Managing Editor

There is substantial irony for Guam in the news that the American buildup in Tinian may be bigger than anybody knew.

Irony in some of the reasons people perceive the Tinian plan may have been developed.

Irony in the reaction it is getting here. The Tinian move, it is suggested by people watching the military here, may in part represent a kind of rebuke to Guam, where, the argument goes, the military has been made to feel increasingly uncomfortable.

If you're going to fight us every step of the way (this argument would have the military saying), then we'll show you: We'll build our bigger base 100 miles away, and maybe even take our Commander there, and downgrade the importance of the forces on Guam.

The irony of that, of course, is that Guam has not fought the military every step of the way. For years and years, by most lights, it has been a receptive, cordial, and even bent-over-backward host, even if it had no choice about being a host. During the years of the Vietnam war, hundreds of Guamanian boys made good soldiers and the Guam community was almost always in support of the war effort. Any Mainland locale with a base as heavily involved in the war as Guam's bases were would have had a host of mean war protests; Guam only had two in all those years, and neither

of them amounted to anything at all.

It is only recently that Guam has shown much life in its anti-military or quasi-anti-military factions. Even then, many of those who oppose a project like the proposed Sella Bay ammunition wharf stress they don't have a beef with the military as such.

And the reaction? Well, the reaction is intriguing. There were some around yesterday suggesting the military wanted to send up a "trial balloon" in all this — for one thing, as a warning to Guam that "this could happen."

And the view on Guam yesterday seemed to be that the message got through: Suddenly everybody seemed to be saying, Hey, wait, don't take your money elsewhere...

The irony of this reaction would be if in the end it had any effect on the outcome of the Sella Bay vote in the Legislature.

For there is the cloud of Sella Bay behind all this: Clearly an ammunition wharf could go in on Tinian if residents here put up too big a fuss. It is possible that Tinian, in fact, is the contingency plan that the Navy and GovGuam have been discussing all the while they've been denying having any contingency plan for a failure in the Sella Bay negotiations.

Suddenly, yesterday, people were thinking of all the dollars that might veer away from Guam if that ammunition pier goes 100 miles north....

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Rogers In Venezuela

CARACAS, Venezuela (AP) — Secretary of State William P. Rogers was here Tuesday for a 22-hour visit expected to center around discussions on oil and U.S. investments.

Rogers flew to Caracas from Managua, Nicaragua, where he inspected damage from last December's earthquake. Venezuela is the third stop on his 17-day Latin American tour. Mexico was the first.

