

# Atalig Hits At Tinian Plan

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SAIPAN -- Tinian's representative to the Congress of Micronesia, Felipe Atalig, predicted yesterday that island residents will strongly oppose the U.S. military's proposed plan to acquire all of Tinian -- even if the southern one-third of the island is set aside for the people.

Atalig called the proposal, announced in a radio broadcast Wednesday night by U.S. Ambassador Franklin Hayden Williams, "some kind of fancy dream by the military," and said he personally felt it was a bad proposal to take to the people.

U.S. and Marianas status representatives plan to travel to Tinian today to air the proposal in public. The group is expected to return to Saipan tomorrow.

Atalig, who just returned from a trip to the Far East with Tinian officials, including Clark Air Force Base and Subic Bay in the Philippines, said municipal officials are prepared to meet the military -- but on their own terms.

But he said that the proposal now before the people of Tinian, was "scary."

"But with all due respect to the Marianas Status Commission," he said, "the future of the Tinian people should not be sacrificed simply because U.S. negotiators have implied that the future financing of the new Marianas commonwealth depends on the military's access to Tinian."

"The Tinian people have always welcomed the military and are now prepared to lease their lands to them. But now the military wants to acquire the entire island and lease land to the people. Let me state for the record: The people are the landlords of Tinian, not the military," he said, "Tinian belonged to their ancestors long before the United States government and their military interests here and elsewhere ever existed. I personally intend to see the rights of the Tinian people protected."

"The present plan to take the entire island will deny the people their birthright," he said. Both delegations met yesterday afternoon presumably to consider the Tinian proposal.