

# A New Community Of \$13.5M Described

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would be in full operation by 1982.

During a color-slide presentation each phase of the plan was translated into Chamorro by Marianas Status Commission Chairman Sen. Edward Pangelinan. Islanders were told Tinian would become an air, logistics and supply base, and that occasional ground maneuvers would be carried out. Williams said total military and civilian personnel would be 2,600, excluding dependents.

Tinian residents learned that the village of San Jose would be relocated so the munitions could be safely handled periodically in the harbor area, but were reassured the port area would be open at "all other times" for commercial purposes.

A drawing of a six-room concrete home was also shown and impressed many residents. Ambassador Williams said such a home, estimated to cost about \$20,000, would be built for each present homeowner on Tinian.

But news that U.S. "minimum" land requirements included acquisition of the southern one-third of the island, causing San Jose to be moved, created a visible stir during the meeting.

One young family man wept asking: "Will we be squeezed

into a small piece of land?....what about our children's future 20 years from now? One-third of the island will not be enough."

Former Mayor Jose Cruz, describing himself as 100 percent pro-military, asked if compromises by both sides could be worked out and suggested the people should retain the southern half of the island. But he added after the meeting: "We would lease the land to them...we will not give it up."

"What are the consequences if we don't accept the proposal?" He asked the ambassador. "Will we be forced to move?...We would appreciate these concerns considered." The remarks drew applause from the audience.

Williams replied: "The U.S. will try to understand your needs and we hope you will try to understand ours." He reassured the people: "We are not thinking in terms of the action you mentioned and we hope you will join us in planning for a new and better community."

Williams said a new community costing \$13.5 million would be built for residents and told them: "There are benefits as well as obligations that accompany membership in the U.S. political family."



MARIANAS STATUS COMMISSION chairman explains purpose of visit to Tinian. From left: Deputy Rep. James M. Wilson, Tinian Mayor Antonio Borja, Ambassador Franklin Haydn Williams, Municipal Legislature Speaker Felipe Mendiola and Navy Admiral William Crowe.

The ambassador said landowners would be compensated at "fair market value" and that homestead lands could be made available on Saipan for other Mariana Islands.

Asked if the military's two-thirds share of Tinian could be expanded later if necessary, Williams answer was affirmative but he added: "We have no plans to do so... We would also acquire California if it were absolutely necessary."

He said the U.S. does not intend to use "muscle" to acquire land, although it is "every legal right to do so."

During the meeting, which lasted well past 1 a.m., economic benefits were also outlined. Tinian residents learned that the local economy would receive an estimated \$10 million to \$12 million annually while the base is being built and as much as \$15 million annually after the completion date in 1982. Williams said job opportunities would exist and local residents would be given priority for concessions on the base.

But many Tinian residents, notably landowners and younger people, maintained the U.S. was "asking for too much" in terms of land area and conditions of the plan. On the other hand, the plan was applauded by most poorer, older residents, who seemed to welcome prospects of new

homes and jobs.

It can be said with certainty that the U.S. proposal has opponents on Tinian.

One young man said it was "a crime to dislocate the people," and Municipal Speaker Felipe Mendiola expressed reservations about becoming a "potential target area" in case of war with such a large base on Tinian. "The northern part of Tinian would be sufficient for the military," he said.

"Do we have to give our land to part of the American family?" he asked.

Williams responded: "Any future relationship will be your own choice."

Referring to future tourism on Tinian, Guam businessman Robert Jones of Micronesia Development Corp. was told by Williams that hotels were not a real source of income for the people (local) and that it sometimes bring "undesirable elements" to the area. But he added the decision would be up to a joint economic planning committee for Tinian.

After the meeting American representatives professed "great satisfaction" by the opportunity to meet with the people face-to-face and present their proposal.

But several Tinian leaders saw the visit as "unfair" and believed it subverted the bargaining power of the Marianas Status Commission.

"Our people are poor and

economically starved," Legislator member Mendiola said. "Many people would no doubt take the first deal offered to them, including new homes to replace their tin shacks. It is not a fair way to negotiate."

Another former mayor, Vicente M. Mangiona, agreed. He said not only was the commission's position weakened, but that they were allowing the U.S. to bargain with an "upper hand" in other areas.

"The U.S. talks of 'legal rights to takeover and fortify our islands' but these are old post-war agreements. Micronesians never signed those documents. They are antiques today. At this stage we make our own decisions."

Tinian Legislature Speaker Mendiola said the U.S. is "apparently unaware how attached islanders are to their lands. If the U.S. attempts to force us, I would predict another 'Wounded Knee.' It is our land and our future."

Another Tinian landowner likewise made a comparison. "The offer of concrete homes is an insult. Manhattan Island in New York was purchased for \$24 worth of beads and trinkets. I will leave the Marianas if the military is permitted to take my land."

He said the Trust Territory government has already cancelled all foreign business applications for Tinian without any advance notice to local leaders.

Another source said the possibility exists that a delegate from Tinian might be sent to the United Nations trusteeship council meeting expected to convene this week in New York.