



United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20240

July 17, 1973

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7/30/73*

Mary Vance Trent
Status LNO
Capital Hill
Trust Territory Headquarters
Saipan, Mariana Islands 96950

*Probably aired by Mrs. F.
Discussed with J. Wilson -
before the action. 8/9
MVT*

Dear Mary:

At Jim Wilson's suggestion I am enclosing a recent exchange of correspondence between Mrs. Rosalia Fleming of Tinian and this office. We think it might be useful to have Jim's reply to Mrs. Fleming aired in your local press. We defer to your judgment, however. If you think well of the idea, perhaps you could prompt Mrs. Fleming to undertake the initiative with the press. Regardless of what you decide on the question of publicity, you will probably want to pass a copy of our reply to Senator Pangelinan. Hence an additional copy of that letter is enclosed.

Best.

Sincerely,

Harmon
Harmon E. Kirby,
Office for Micronesian
Status Negotiations

Enclosures:

- 2 copies of Wilson-Fleming letter
- Letter to Secretary Morton from Mrs. Rosalia Fleming

*Done
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Action Office
for info only

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Hon. Rogers C.B. Morton
Secretary of Interior
United States Department of Interior
Washington, D. C. 20240

June 12, 1973

Dear Mr. Morton:

My husband and I are citizens of Micronesia and resident landowners of Tinian in the Mariana Islands District Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands.

Since time immemorial our people have cherished land not as a thing apart but as an integral part of our lives.

To us, land is literally Mother Earth from which succeeding generations have drawn daily sustenance. It is not a commodity but a heritage, a veritable source of life for us and our descendants.

Very recently Ambassador Williams along with the members of the Mariana Islands Political Status Commission conducted a public forum on the Island of Tinian where the Ambassador made known the requirements of the U.S. Military to land on Tinian.

Contrary to the rumors circulating prior to the public meeting it was made clear that the military wishes to acquire not a part but the whole of Tinian.

Although initially my husband and I were among the Tinianese who welcomed the advent of the U.S. Military to our island, the lack of detail in the disclosures made at the meeting have alarmed us no end.

For one thing, our understanding is that the Relocation aspect of Ambassador Williams' proposal will result in our becoming landless tenants of the military.

For another, although there was talk that seemed to assure that a new home would be built say, for my husband and I as heads of a family, nothing was said about building new homes for our married children who presently occupy homes provided them by us on our land. And, in time, what solution to the problem of providing homes for our children's children?

We appreciate that a Resolution of the problem will require many more meetings and in that regard we hope that we the people most affected will be kept fully informed or better yet, that we be granted the status of participants in a matter so vital to our future and that of our children.

Speaking for my husband and myself we would extend a glad welcome to the U.S. Military but as our tenants and not the reverse.

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Given the uncertainty of the length of time the United States will have a need for our land we would be amenable to a long term leases which, although denying us the use, would at least have the merit of insuring continued ownership and eventual capitalization rights in ourselves and our descendants.

✓ As an alternative we would consider an exchange of our land in Tinian for suitably located land in Saipan. Here also difficulty may be anticipated because there exists a long list of Saipanese residents waiting for the release of both public and retention land to the homesteading program and doubtlessly the needs, and conceivably the prior rights, of the landless residents of Saipan would take precedence over an any exchange program.

As to an outright taking of our land for "Just compensation" I will only comment that since we do not regard land as a commodity for which a monetary value can easily be determined a meeting of the minds in this respect will very difficult to achieve.

In the event, we still welcome the military and we are persuaded that a good faith approach by all concerned will lead to a mutually satisfactory solutions.

Sincerely,

Rosalia A. Fleming (Mrs.)

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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

The Old Executive Building
Room 361
Washington, D.C. 20506

July 12, 1973

Mrs. Rosalia A. Fleming
P.O. Box 100
San Jose Village
Tinian, Mariana Islands 96950

Dear Mrs. Fleming:

Secretary Morton has forwarded to this office your letter to him of June 12, because it relates to matters concerning Ambassador Haydn Williams' responsibilities as the President's Personal Representative for the Marianas Status Negotiations. The Ambassador, who is presently away from Washington, has asked that I reply to your letter in his stead.

All of us engaged in the status negotiations are reassured by your indication that the U.S. military services will be welcome on Tinian. On the other hand, we fully appreciate the concerns you raise in your letter regarding the amount of land to be controlled by the military and arrangements for compensating those residents of Tinian who might be asked to move from their present homes. We especially welcome the thoughtful, constructive way in which you have put forward these concerns. We wholly agree with your comment that if these problems are approached in good faith, solutions can be found which should be equitable and satisfactory to everyone.

You will recall, of course, that when he visited Tinian in early June, Ambassador Williams promised to keep the people of Tinian fully informed on all matters relating to future arrangements for their island. He indicated, moreover, that final decisions on matters affecting their future welfare will not be taken without adequate consultation with them. I am also confident that your local officials and your representatives on the Marianas Political Status Commission will do their utmost to involve all interested persons in the formulation of the Commission's position on matters relating to Tinian.

Without trying to outline here all the possible methods by which those Tinianese who might be displaced could be resettled in a way which would not be disadvantageous to them, I would like to comment briefly on some of the specific relocation questions you raise as they might possibly relate to the circumstances of your own family. If the U.S. proposal is accepted, the alternatives available to current landowners will include an arrangement

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whereby those resettling elsewhere on the island could obtain use rights for virtually an indefinite time to comparable land located in the southern third of the island. This area would be under the jurisdiction of locally-elected civil authorities. Those landowners choosing not to resettle on Tinian would have the opportunity to buy land on a priority basis elsewhere in the Marianas, including on Saipan, with the proceeds from the sale of their land on Tinian. Moreover, it is anticipated that the additional revenues which the people of Tinian who choose to remain on the island will realize from the U.S. military presence might eventually make it possible for them to purchase land anywhere it is for sale in the Marianas, or even in the United States.

Every effort will be made to ensure that suitable substitute housing will be available for all the citizens of Tinian who relocate on the island. In these cases the U.S. Government will provide replacement housing as Ambassador Williams and the American Delegation explained during their meeting with the people of Tinian. As regards your own situation, which involves more than one dwelling on property in your name, under applicable U.S. law only the main residence qualifies for replacement. The law does, of course, provide for replacement housing in cases where married family members occupy houses on lots deeded in their own names. If the property continues in your name, however, you would be reimbursed at the fair market value for the additional homes and other improvements on it. These funds could then be used to build elsewhere whatever housing you wished.

I mention these alternatives only preliminarily. I am sure you and others on Tinian have special circumstances which each of you will wish to consider and consult on further before final decisions are made. I am hopeful, however, that the foregoing will indicate something of the range of possibilities open to you and will stimulate you to think further about some of the obvious advantages of U.S. proposals for land use on the island. Not the least among these advantages, of course, is the favorable local economic impact of the proposed military presence, an impact from which the present and future generations should greatly benefit.

Let me repeat our thanks for the straight-forward manner in which you have raised these questions concerning the implications for the people of Tinian of a future U.S. military base on your island. Ambassador Williams and the rest of us engaged in these negotiations look forward to further constructive dialogue over the months ahead with the Marianas Political Status Commission and with the people of Tinian as we seek solutions equitable to and meeting the legitimate needs of all the parties concerned.

With all best wishes.

Sincerely,



J.M. Wilson, Jr.

U.S. Deputy Representative for
Micronesian Status Negotiations

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