

Tinian Rep Warns On Land Grab

Tinian

PDW

8/14

SAIPAN. — One of Tinian's two representatives on the Marianas Political Status Commission Monday threatened to withdraw his support for a close U.S.-Marianas status if the U.S. military continues to toe its hard line on Tinian.

"Right now I support a commonwealth arrangement," said Herman M. Manglona on Saipan.

"But if the military won't consider the desires and the interests of the people of Tinian, I'll consider supporting free association status." This is the proposed future status currently being discussed by the Joint Committee on Future Status of the Congress of Micronesia, which is negotiating on behalf of all six TT districts.

Manglona said he would favor free association or some other looser political arrangement because it would give the people of Tinian a better opportunity

to determine their own future.

"I don't believe that to become a member of the American family we should give up Tinian," he said.

Manglona added that Tinian Municipal Council members said this weekend that they would welcome the military only on the present retention lands, approximately 9,000 acres or one-third of the island. "If the military wants more, they will have to justify the reasons," he said.

Discussions on Tinian this Saturday between the Tinian Municipal Council and the Marianas District Legislature also pointed up the residents' views that the agricultural homestead program should not be made dependent on the military's land needs on Tinian, said Manglona. The program has been halted under a U.S.-ordered economic development moratorium.

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Manglona, also a member of the legislature, has co-sponsored a resolution calling for an end to the moratorium. A public hearing on the measure will be held at 7 p.m. Tuesday evening at the District Legislature Building on Saipan.

The reason the U.S. wants all of Tinian, Manglona said, is that good roads, a harbor and airfields already exist there. "They're concerned with saving money, but they're not concerned about injuring the people of Tinian.

"If the U.S. can afford billions of dollars for Viet Nam, they can afford to put in a harbor or roads somewhere else."

Whether the residents of other islands in the Marianas, such as Saipan or Rota, would be more agreeable than Tinian's people, to accepting a military build-up, Manglona declined to say.

He did, however, express

his "full confidence that the Marianas status commission won't take any action that is detrimental to the people of Tinian."

Manglona added that action in the Tinian Municipal Council on a bill calling for a referendum on the military issue may be postponed. Sept. 14 was proposed as the date of the referendum, so that the results could be transmitted to the Marianas Political Status Commission as the official position of the people of Tinian.

He stressed that a public education program should precede the referendum.

Manglona also indicated that a controversial municipal council resolution that would unseat him from the status commission may be withdrawn by its sponsor. Under its provisions, Manglona and Francisco A. Hocog would be replaced by Tinian Mayor Antonio S. Borja and Rep. Felipe Q. Atalig of the Congress of Micronesia.