

MPSC

FOR AMBASSADOR'S PRESENTATION TO MPSC/MARIANAS DISTRICT LEGISLATURE

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31 August 1973

Over the past few weeks there has been considerable discussion in your legislature, statements by officials of the local and TTPI government and by representatives of my office on the issues of economic development and homesteading moratorium on Tinian. I have been greatly concerned with this problem and the apparent misunderstandings that have developed, so much so, in fact, that I have delayed departure for Southeast Asia and scheduled meetings there on reconstruction programs in order to meet with you today in Saipan.

The moratorium on homestead permits and premises for new business enterprises on Tinian appears to have caused a great deal of concern and dismay, especially among the political leaders of the Marianas District. I am aware of the several moves that have been made to express this concern and the resultant dissatisfaction which some of you feel with respect to the U. S. role in this matter.

Let me say at once that I appreciate your concern and can understand, at least in some degree, your dissatisfaction. While reasons for the moratorium itself are, I believe, fairly obvious, the important aspect of announcing it to the people of Tinian and the rest of the Marianas District was not handled with the thoughtfulness and thoroughness which the subject deserved. Reasons for this failure, for which I believe the U. S. must take major blame, are scattered and I do not think it would be profitable to probe them further here. We have been made well aware of the unfortunate results of our failure to inform you

(or act jointly with you) in setting forth the requirements of this moratorium and I for my part shall be alert to the need for seeing that there is no such gap in the future.

As for reasons for the moratorium, although they are doubtless well understood here, it may be useful to review them for the record.

While our status negotiations are underway, and pending resolution of the question of land for U. S. military requirements, all homesteading on Tinian is suspended as of May 8, 1973. This suspension is necessary in order to prevent the land speculation which might otherwise occur resulting in unrealistic and exorbitant prices for the land for which we are negotiating. Suspended likewise are business permits for Tinian, subject to exceptions that may be granted, as for example the permits granted a few days ago to the Bank of America and the Bank of Hawaii, respectively. Permits could irreparably affect not only the price of needed land but also future economic opportunities for the people of Tinian. It has been made clear by the U. S. delegation in the negotiations with the MPSC that insofar as possible in the development of Tinian, business opportunities would be generated for the benefit of the people of Tinian. We therefore find it advisable, during this negotiating period, to take measures to prevent the preemption of such opportunities by non-Marianas interests.

I don't want to leave this important subject without stressing that, for my part, I intend to see to it that close coordination is maintained by the U. S. delegation with the MPSC who would of course comprise our proper channel to the Marianas District Legislature, the representative body of the people of the Marianas.

Draft: R Scott; M V Trench