

CONFIDENTIALS I F I E D

f. On 28 July 1973, PDN carried a slanted story on the moratorium. This was the first public disclosure of the "Tinian Moratorium".

g. During Mr. Wilson's trip through the Western Districts early August, he met with the Marianas District Legislature, and during the session he explained the necessity for the moratorium, i.e., to prevent speculation, and stressed the short term, temporary nature of the moratorium.

2. Discussion

A. Reasons for the "Moratorium"

The "moratorium" issue is still very active as evidenced by the passage of HJR 88 in the Congress of Micronesia on the subject. Mary Vance Trent called 20 February 1974 asking for guidance on the subject as a result of a question asked during hearings on land legislation in the COM. The question was, "Did Ambassador Williams tell the MPSC that the moratorium was only a matter of weeks or months?"

The answer was based on the record of the Ambassador's meeting with the Marianas District Legislature and MPSC on 31 August 1973. The main subjects at this meeting were permits for homesteading and foreign business establishments in the interim period pending completion of status negotiations. During the meeting he stressed that the reasons for the suspension of permits was in order to prevent land speculation and preemption of business opportunities, neither of which would be in the interests of the people of Tinian nor of the United States, pointing out that the suspension of land acquisition in areas under consideration for public use is our normal procedure. The Ambassador stressed that such suspension is customarily temporary until final decisions are made and stated that in the case of land on Tinian such suspension should be thought of in terms of weeks and months rather than years as has been mistakenly assumed in other cases.

Most of the discussion following Ambassador Williams' opening statement to the assemblage focused on the so-called Tinian moratorium, including presentation of statements by Atalig, Borja and others. These statements and follow-on comments carried the central theme that the suspension or so-called moratorium may last over a period of years and is certainly not temporary in nature. Ambassador Williams countered this argument by an explanation of his position. He referred to his 29 August meeting on Guam with Senator Pangelinan and President Santos where tentative agreement had been reached on holding the next session of Marianas Status Talks in early November. At that time the subject of military land requirements would again be discussed and hopefully some agreement reached. In the meantime, over the next few weeks, it would be to the long-term benefit of the Marianas and Tinianese to prevent undue land speculation on Tinian by maintaining a moratorium while active negotiations are being conducted.

During the December session, Marianas III, Ambassador Williams was able to obtain a policy statement on Marianas land from the HICOM. **711658**

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