

Tinian

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

MORATORIUM?

Dear Editor:

The U.S. Government's role on the decision to declare a land moratorium on Tinian, which affects the homesteading program as well as potential economic development in the way of outside private developers and investors, has been amplified and has appeared to be a unilateral decision by the administering authority. But was the decision in fact made without consultation and approval of the local political status commission? Did the commission have prior knowledge about the impending moratorium on Tinian? What important actions for personal gains were taken by individual commission members to take advantage of the alleged U.S. instigated moratorium?

Let's review the events that could lead to answer these questions. During the first session in December, 1972 between the Marianas Political Status Commission and the U.S. Delegation, the following statement was made by Chairman Ed Pangelinan with regards to Public Land Lease in the Marianas. He stated, "In the interim we ask that the United States join us in requesting the High Commissioner to refrain from approving any leases on public lands to non-citizens of the Marianas without prior consultation with the Marianas Political Status Commission". (Page 20, "Report on the Marianas Political

suddenly withdraw their previous support on land moratorium? One possible answer was that, the U.S., again a scapegoat to another controversy, and moratorium being politically unpopular among the people as the members eventually found out, the members chose to change their support and instead put all the blame on the U.S.

I believe that members of the Status Commission had previous knowledge of the moratorium. I do not believe that during their two long sessions with the U.S. Delegation that the subject was never brought up. Certainly, if military land requirements were discussed, it should stand to reason that public land leases and the homesteading program were also subjects of the discussion as these issues will have a direct influence on future military land needs.

What will the moratorium on land on Tinian do to present land owners and particularly the land values when the time comes to negotiate with the U.S. on its military land requirement? For the residents of San Jose Village, it has already been established that the U.S. will be willing to generously compensate the people for their homes and land. For those landowners such as several members of the Commission, the prospect for a better deal is eminent.

As early as January of this year, less than a month after the first session of the status talks was completed, Vicente N. Santos, a member of the Commission took steps to take advantage of the moratorium and the future prospect for land exchange or purchase by the military. For \$11,000 he purchased land on Tinian totalling 480,000 square feet. This is less than 3 cents per square foot. Imagine selling this size of land to the military for \$5.00 a square foot, or even \$1.00

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cal Status Commission, First Session Dec. 1972")

Is it possible that the U.S. could have used the above declaration in its decision to impose land moratorium on Tinian? It appears obvious to this writer that the so-called "moratorium" on land on Tinian was indirectly but originally instigated by the Commission itself. This would apply only to public land leases which will have an important effect on economic development.

Just recently, some members of the commission expressed shock and disappointment on the "action" of the U.S. on the Tinian land moratorium, claiming that the "decision (by the U.S.) was made unilaterally and without any consultation with the people of Tinian". It's probably true that the indigeneous people were not consulted, but isn't it the Marianas Political Status Commission's original idea to declare the moratorium on lands in the Marianas affecting economic development?

On August 7, 1973, a resolution was introduced into the Marianas District Legislature calling the alleged U.S. imposed economic development moratorium on Tinian a "blatant and flagrant denial of due process for the island's residents". The President of the District Legislature, Vicente N. Santos and Tinian's representative, Herman T. Manglona, both sponsored a resolution calling the land moratorium "a breach of good faith and the spirit of cooperation that existed between the status negotiations for the United States and the Marianas Islands District".

Both of the sponsors are members of the Marianas Political Status Commission. Both of them must have been aware of the fact that the Chairman of the Political Status Commission, in which he spoke on behalf of the Commission, endorsed the idea to temporarily stop leasing of public land in the Marianas District.

Why then did several members of the Status Commission

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In May of this year, two members of the Commission undertook a land transaction that involved a double sale of the property. A piece of land was sold by a Tinian resident for \$15,000. The buyer, Herman M. Manglona, a member of the Commission in turn sold the same land to another Commission member, Olympio T. Borja in less than a week for an inflated price of \$85,000, an increase of over 350% of the original value! The first transaction was notarized by Mr. Borja, the second by Mayor Vicente D. Sablan. Where did the \$85,000 come from? It was probably a falsified transaction not requiring any cash exchange. All that was needed to be done was to inflate the value of the land and show that it was "legally" done. Now the next thing to do is to sit tight and wait for the military

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

A Personal View

By: JON A. ANDERSON

Continued from page 5

SHORT TAKES--It's nice to return from a brief vacation and discover somebody actually reads this weekly opinion piece and has taken the time to react to it. Brian Farley's lengthy, thoughtful letter in last week's edition was most welcome. He pointed out a mistake, which I concede (my elephant-like memory failed me there) as well as offering another point of view regarding the United Nations and political education. I find very little to disagree with in Brian's letter. Good for you, Brian.

Interesting position paper in the Sept. 3 issue of the Micronitor. The basic suggestion is that the status issue is being pushed too fast. Let's call a moratorium, and wait five years before mentioning the subject again, the paper suggests. Worth thinking about. I've been pondering the problem of Guam Publication's application for a business permit, and must admit I have mixed feelings about it. Surely it is obvious that granting such a permit would work a hardship on the two local weeklies. There is only so much advertising revenue on Saipan, and those available dollars are already stretched pretty thin. On the other hand, the Guam papers have lately been providing the best, most accurate coverage they've ever devoted to the Trust Territory, and an expanded operation on Saipan could be a real boost to the quality of TF journalism. On balance, though, I think I'll have to go along with

to make a deal. Why all this sudden rush to buy land on Tinian? Obviously, these representatives of the people know the inside story of land values and the monetary potentials of the military on future land transaction, and despite their awareness of a conflict of interest, as they are intimately involved with all aspects of the status negotiation, and the public trust bestowed upon them to negotiate in good faith, they obviously let their greed overpower what remains of their dignities.

The people of the Marianas had expressed strong support for a genuine political relationship between the people of the Marianas and the people of the United States. The ridiculous proposal of the military on land use and requirements in the Marianas, however, has actually negated the solution to important land issues. The Tinian land scandal which involved several members of the Commission should generate enough concern among the U.S. negotiators to stop the talks until our own representatives learn to negotiate in good faith instead of using the negotiations for their own personal material gains.

Furthermore, the integrity of the entire Status Commission members will be needlessly subjected to public mistrust on account of these members who deliberately abuse the "good faith" concept upon which the negotiation is supposed to be founded.

/s/ Pete A. Fombrio
Saipan

the recommendation of the Marianas Economic Development Board. My friends at PDN will jump all over me for that, but I really think the board's basic position in the case is sound, at least for now.

Hard to come away from any visit to Honolulu these days without the feeling that the city is destroying itself. Gone is most of the charm of the place, replaced by high-rise blah, concrete yuk, a familiar brown stink in the air that reminds one of Los Angeles, traffic that is worse than Los Angeles, and round-the-clock noise. The only thing that still can save the town is that a lot of nice people live there, and some of them still care. Others are escaping, though, in increasing numbers, mostly to the neighbor islands. A recent state job on Molokai, at a very low salary, drew 130 applications, most of them from people already holding better-paying jobs on Oahu.

Does anybody else besides me get sick of listening to the Baptist huckster on the radio? So don't listen, you say. Well all right, I won't, but by whose strange definition does such stuff fall into the category of public service, anyhow, especially on an island where the vast majority of the public is Roman Catholic? Opinions, please.

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JOINT STATEMENT ON TALKS

SALPAN—Following meetings held last week the chairman of the U.S. and Congress of Micronesia delegations to the Micronesia Future Status negotiations issued a joint statement Tuesday (Sept. 4) detailing the matters discussed. Here is the complete text of that joint statement:


"Ambassador Franklin Hayden Williams, the President's Personal Representative for Micronesia Status Negotiations and Senator Lazarus Salii, Chairman of the Congress of Micronesia's Joint Committee on Future Status, met on Guam August 30 to discuss a wide range of matters relating to the future status negotiations. Also present were Congressman Ekpak Slik, Chairman of the Joint Committee, and Captain Richard Scott, USN, Director of the Office for Micronesia Status Negotiations. "Like other informal sessions which the Chairman of the two delegations have been holding approximately monthly, the constructive fruitful discussion of August 30 made an important contribution to the preparatory work going forward prior to the resumption of talks by the full delegations later

this autumn. It was agreed that the primary common objective remains the early completion of the necessary preparatory work and subsequent completion of the Draft Compact of Free Association. "Ambassador Williams noted that two U.S. fact finding teams have just completed tours of all the districts and he gave Senator Salii summaries of their preliminary reports on views expressed to them in the districts on the public lands question. Additional studies on land will be made prior to a meeting of the two delegations.

"Also discussed were the economic moratorium on Tinian and pending charges involving three members of the Trust Territory Administration. "Another important substantive issue discussed

at length was political education. There was agreement on the need for an extensive political education program for the Micronesians people. Senator Salii and Ambassador Williams felt that it would be useful to hold further discussions on how such a program might best be designed and implemented. They planned to consult with the FPI Administration on the matter at an early date.

"Finally, the two sides discussed the timetable for the resumption of talks by their full delegations. It was felt that in view of the work still to be accomplished, particularly on questions relating to land, it was probable that the delegations would not meet until late October or early November.



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