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U.S. Responds To U.N. Micro Call ✓ (1)

NEW YORK (MNS)—The United States Government has formally responded to a request made by a member of the Congress of Micronesia that a special session of the U.N. Trusteeship Council be called to consider recent U.S. actions and military proposals regarding the island of Tinian.

The request was made July 31 in a letter from Rep. Felipe Atalig of the Marianas to the president of the Trusteeship Council, which was circulated in New York last week in the form of a special petition.

The Daily News has also learned that Atalig is planning a trip to Washington to speak to high U.S. officials about the economic development moratorium imposed on Tinian. Both the halt on homesteading permits and the current ban on long-term land leases to non-Micronesian citizens would be discussed.

Ambassador Franklin Haydn Williams, head of the U.S. delegation to the Micronesian status talks, said here last week that the homesteading ban may be lifted in a few weeks. Both delegations, however, have spoken out against the "alienation" of land throughout Micronesia by transfer to expatriates.

In accordance with the rules and procedures of the Trusteeship Council, the U.S., as administering authority of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, was asked to comment on the Atalig petition, and did so as follows:

"As the United States reported during the Trusteeship Council's meeting last May, it is actively engaged in political status negotiations with the Mariana Islands. The people of the district are represented through their duly appointed Marianas Political Status Commission which includes two representatives of the island of Tinian. The entire commission, in the words of its chairman, is "...Determined to represent and protect the interest of all the people of the Marianas, including the people of Tinian, in their

status negotiations." The United States and the Commission committed themselves during negotiations last May to undertake fully consultation with the people of Tinian before any final decisions or agreements are made regarding the use of land on Tinian for military purposes.

"It was further agreed during the May session that the United States would work with the Marianas Political Status Commission to establish an effective means for preventing the alienation of land in the Marianas, including land on Tinian. The United States and the commission were also to establish a consultative group, including representative from Tinian, to discuss detailed plans for military and related land use in the Marianas as they are developed and to consult directly with the people affected by those plans, including residents of Tinian.

"The United States is also actively examining the possibility of an early transfer of control over Micronesian public lands including those public lands in the Mariana Islands and those on Tinian. The Marianas Political Status Commission has suggested that a public corporation be established to receive full title to such lands in the Marianas. This corporation would be under the direction and control of the people of the Mariana Islands and would set up whatever use or function is to be made in reference to this land. The commission has asked that the United States not alienate this land beyond a month-to-month tenancy so as to allow no further dissemination of public land without the approval of the new entity. This is, of course, predicted upon the early turnover of public lands in the Marianas to the entity. The United States is thus committed to a return of public lands to local control in the Mariana Islands as well as the Trust Territory as a whole. The questions to be resolved before this can be accomplished are ones of a technical, administrative and legal nature. These are being studied by United States fact-finding teams now in the Trust Territory.