

~~SAIPAN, SEPTEMBER 12, 1973 --- (MARIANAS DELEGATION RELEASE) --- Senator~~

BEGIN TEXT Senator

Olympio T. Borja of the Marianas issued a statement Wednesday (Sept. 12) on Saipan concerning the recent closed-door meeting between Ambassador Franklin Haydn Williams, the Marianas District Legislature, the Saipan Municipal Legislature, the Marianas Congressional Delegation, the Marianas Political Status Commission and Municipal Officials.

Senator Borja's statement relates to the current Tinian moratorium on homesteading, economic development, and the leasing of public lands on the island of Tinian.

The Marianas Senator, also a member of the Marianas Political Status Commission (MPSC) said he is thankful of the Ambassador's effort, to come to Saipan to "clear the air" by candidly admitting that his office had ordered the Tinian Moratorium, and that he (Ambassador Williams) now considered it a mistake to have done so without first consulting with the Marianas Political Status Commission.

The statement declared that the Senator is strongly opposed to the United States' unilateral imposition of the Tinian moratorium. He asserted that such action by the U.S. deprives the people of Tinian their rights to due-process of law and equal protection of the laws as guaranteed by the Bill of Rights in the Trust Territory Code.

Senator Borja emphasized that the Marianas Status Commission had requested the U.S. Delegation "to join in asking the High Commissioner not to approve anymore public land leases without consultation with the Commission." He indicated, however, that such request "hardly warranted the sudden, complete and unilateral moratorium on the development of Tinian"

The statement went on to say that during the recent Marianas/United States Negotiations, the U.S. agreed in principle "to establish an effective means for preventing land in the Marianas from being alienated to persons not of Marianas ancestry." The Senator continued, "The United States also agreed in principle to establish a consultative group to discuss the detailed plans for military and related land use in the Marianas as they are developed and to consult with the people directly affected by those plans." He also stated that the elected leaders of the Marianas cannot properly represent their constituents if they are "kept in the dark" as to what the United States plans to do.

(more)

According to Senator Borja, Ambassador Williams stated during the meeting that the Tinian moratorium is only temporary and it could run for about a week, a month and/or over. Senator Borja, however, urged the Ambassador to lift the moratorium immediately to prevent further injustice to the people of Tinian.

The Marianas Senator further stated that the obvious admiration and fondness that the people of the Marianas have for America stems from their understanding of American freedoms and justice and even-handed judicial processes. He indicated, however, that such actions by the United States on the unilateral moratorium have cast shadows of doubt over these ideas of America and could even undermine the status negotiations.

Senator Borja went on to say that the recent action of the United States on the Tinian moratorium could possibly cause the Marianas to opt for different types of association or independence, instead of what is currently under negotiation. Senator Borja concluded his remarks by expressing his support of the then-pending District Legislature resolution opposing the moratorium.

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