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# New Statuser Reflects On Job

By Diane Maddex  
Daily News Staff Writer

SAIPAN - "I'd like to convince myself that the U.S. is negotiating with us not because they like us militarily, but because they like us as people." Pedro A. Tenorio, the newest member of the Marianas Political Status Commission, observed on Saipan.

Tenorio stressed that the people of the Marianas should be viewed as people and not as objects in their future status talks, which resume here on Dec. 6.

Tenorio's appointment to fill the vacancy created by the resignation of Saipan businessman Jose C. Tenorio a month ago was finally made official on Tuesday by District Administrator Francisco C. Ada. The Saipan Chamber of Commerce recommended that Pete Tenorio, 32, replace Joe Ten as the business community's representative on the 15-member status commission.

The new commission member is a hydrologist and vice president of the architectural

and engineering firm of Thomas J. Davis on Saipan. Formerly the staff hydrologist of the Trust Territory government, Tenorio holds two masters degrees from the University of Hawaii in hydrology and environmental health. Last year he ran unsuccessfully for a senate seat in the Congress of Micronesia.

Tenorio is also a frequent writer of letters to the editor that are not exactly complimentary about the state of political life in the Marianas, including past negotiations of the status commission. Following the last session in June, he wrote that he could find "not a single honest sign of humanitarian concern on the part of the U.S. for welcoming the Marianas District people into the U.S. political family."

Softening a little yesterday, he admitted, "I have a lot of trust in the U.S. government. I have confidence in their willingness to compromise. I think our whole future here depends on how the U.S. looks at us as people - not because they need our land.

"I'm looking forward to the

next talks because I like to be outspoken on issues I know something about," said Tenorio. "Yes, I will be outspoken. Of course, I'll be representing the business community on the commission, but basically I'll be representing the people's interests."

Tenorio picked out the U.S. military's requirements in the Marianas and the method of financing the new Marianas government as the two areas most likely to be the major topics during the next status talks. He also forecast an "inevitable" political alignment between the Marianas and Guam, and viewed with a twinge of regret the separation of the district from the rest of Micronesia.

"I'm very much interested in the military aspect of our future political status," Tenorio said. "That's not to say I'm against it. I'd just like to study it carefully."

"The military arrangement has to be flexible and viable. Whatever is agreed on should not be permanently binding. It should be open."

As to Tinian, he said, "I'm deadset against a complete

military takeover there. From what I've read, the U.S. hasn't justified their needs. I don't think they have given the commission members enough and enough rational information on it.

"Whether we like it or not, the military is going to come in if we are to become a part of the U.S. But the extent of their presence has to be agreed on by the commission. We shouldn't be forced to accept a complete takeover.

Tenorio talked about commonwealth as the status the Marianas are headed for, but admitted he could not say which status would be best.

"I agree with the commission chairman, Ed Pangelinan, that other alternatives should be left open if what we're looking at now isn't the most beneficial type of relationship for the Marianas.

"It's time that determines whether the decision you make today is favorable for the good of the people. We have to accept the fact that mistakes will be made, since we're not experts."

The U.S. team negotiating with the Marianas, said Tenorio,

are obviously experts. "I think the U.S. is very well prepared. They're experts. They're minds are made up.

"On the other hand, I think many of our commission members are not as well prepared to face the expert U.S. negotiators. Fortunately, we have consultants to advise the commission on the major issues, which is one way of educating the members."

"In one way I feel kind of



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pessimistic about some of the members' not being as prepared as they should be. But I think each is using his own common sense and it's an asset that they understand the feelings of the local people on the basic issues.

"In general I think the commission is working well together to come up with a status that will be for the people's good."

On a possible Guam-Marianas rapprochement, Tenorio said "it's inevitable that these islands will become one, perhaps a sort of territory. From the administrative standpoint of the U.S., combining with Guam sometime in the future would be more workable.

"But I don't feel that being culturally close to Guam is the point to consider in integrating the two. More people are looking at what we could get out of Guam economically. In other words, if we're going to associate with Guam, are we going to benefit economically?"

"Personally, I feel that going on a tangent from the rest of the districts in the TT is kind of unfortunate," said Tenorio. "We've been together a long time, we share many problems and concerns. But it's inevitable.

"People here in general consider themselves different. I personally hate to see people feeling this way because of the strong feeling among the Marianas that we are economically advanced and don't want to wait for the other districts to develop.

"The people feel an antagonism and this has brought about a change in the future of the district. I think those things are exaggerations and shouldn't be the basis for separation."

Compromise is what the status talks are all about, said Tenorio. The issues will be pursued "until both sides have compromised to the point where they can't compromise any more."

Tenorio joins former Tinian mayor Jose Cruz as the only new members on the Marianas Political Status Commission since it was created in May 1972. Cruz was appointed in September to replace Herman M. Manglona, who also resigned.

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