

Interview With Mr. Jose R. Cruz

Mr. Jose R. Cruz of Tinian is the newly appointed Mayor of Tinian from 1968 till 1971. member of the Marianas Political Status Commission. Mr. Cruz attended the Japanese elementary school on Saipan. He graduated from the Metropolitan High School in Los Angeles, California in 1952; he also attended San Bernardino Valley College. As Tinian resident and businessman, he promises to elected as Marianas Senator to the Congress of Micronesia until 1967; then he moved to Tinian and served as represent Tinian people as best as he can.

MARIANAS VARIETY:

Mr. Cruz, congratulation for your new appointment as a member in the Marianas Political Status Talks. Do you have any new ideas to add or suggest in the next round of talks?

MR. JOE CRUZ: Well, first of all we have been informed that the United States Government is interested in acquiring immediately 2/3 of Tinian and eventually will remain 1/3. My position now is rather different from the past. In the past, I was talking as one individual of this community. This time I am speaking as a representative of the people of Tinian in the Political Status Talks. My solemn obligation is to see that interests of Tinian are being protected and represented at the same time.

MY: What is the interest of Tinian now?

CRUZ: Well, let me go back further on that. You see, a lot of people misinterpret the position of the people of Tinian. Actually, there is no person who opposes the so-called proposal for military build up. A group of people are opposed to the military base, simply because the military is asking too much. If they are asking a reasonable area of land, I'm sure that every-



body here will support that. Right now I feel that the majority of the people of Tinian will support the military coming to Tinian provided they only use the northern part of Tinian, let's say 1/3 of the island. The United States Government informed the people of Tinian here that they will like to relocate the village because of security precautions but the community refuses to comply.

MV: Do you agree to that?

CRUZ: That's right! I'm talking about the majority now. We want to remain in San Jose village. We welcome the joint use of the present Tinian dock and the

west field as well. The north field we welcome to let the military use all of it. And of course, we are concerned about the Micronesia Development Corporation ranch here. The (MDC) has been providing substantial amount of income on this island, as a matter of fact it was this company who lifted the economy of Tinian 8 years ago.

MV: And that's what you are going to present in the coming round of talks as the majority of the people feels?

CRUZ: That's right. On our next meeting I will present the feelings of the people.

MV: Somehow an agreement between the Marianas Delegation and U.S. Delegation will be reached and military will be taking two thirds of Tinian. What will be your (and the people's) reaction?

CRUZ: Let me clarify your question. Your question is, if I understand it correctly, suppose the majority of the Marianas Political Status Commission members voted in favor of 2/3 to be used in Tinian by the military rather than 1/3 what will be my position? Well the public certainly will be indignant and I could see great trouble probably, because we feel that 1/3 should be enough.

MV: Mr. Cruz, in the past you welcomed the military on Tinian, are you still pro-military?

CRUZ: Yes, I am. I am pro-military and pro-American. MV: What do you think military could do or bring for the Tinianese?

CRUZ: Well, if you're asking me as individual citizen, this would be my answers, if I was not a member of the political status commission and I am speaking only as a member of this community this would be my position, I would support the Military build up in Tinian 2/3's rather than 1/3. And I will welcome the relocation of the village. No one on Tinian who is presently resi-

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Mr. Cruz

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ding in this village, San Jose, actually has what you might call sentimental reasons to retain this village. Our parents did not own this land. It was not an inheritance piece of land, it was given by the Trust Territory government to all the landowners here through the homestead program, for a matter of fact it cost us \$10.00 a lot and now the position of the United States Government urging the people of Tinian to change the village to a new location, is simply because of safety reasons. San Jose Village is located right on the dock and you know that if the military comes in, they will bring in ammunition and for that safety reason they want to relocate the village. You see! Right now in the village we have slums, no zoning law, no sewer system, but if it will be relocated, the United States government promise to show us the blue print of the type of new city we will have, and what type of house they are going to build for us and, from what I have gathered, the new village will be like one of your modern city in the states. You know! urban renewal in the mainland. So tis very advantageous to everybody, there will be no poor and rich homes, and there'll be more jobs opportunity, there will be more in-service training for skilled workers and technical workers through the military outlets, the farmers don't have to worry about marketing their produce. And there will be a high school, when the military comes, there will be an even better education than what our government, the Trust Territory offers, because the military dependents have to be educated. Our children will be welcomed to

attend the school. Also our roads will be maintained, and the dock which we have right now, sooner or later, we will lose anyway from lack of maintenance, so there's a lot of advantages really.

MV: A lot of advantages and a lot of improvements, but what do you think about the new Tinian generation or the population increase and future land which will be needed for more homesteads and agriculture.

CRUZ: Well, in my position, by saying the 2/3's of Tinian for the military, I don't mean to sell the 2/3's of Tinian but to lease it. I am against selling this land. I want it to be leased, so that the people can control the land, you ask me about the future generations, where they're going to live when there'll be no more land. Well, let me answer it this way. Right now we don't have anything in Tinian, and if we remain as it is now, we are going to be like this for the next 20, 30 years. So I rather see the military come in here and develop this island. Like I said, when the time comes, 30 years from today, and we feel that we need more lands, then we'll have to negotiate again, but in the mean time what are we going to do? We're helpless people, our way of life is just as what you see today, its miserable, and I would like to see some changes. I don't think the United States Government will let us down like some of the foreign parties did to us in the past. But let me emphasize my statement, I just told you that I am speaking as one individual. And again you must realize my position in the status talks is to represent the interest of the people of Tinian, so it's two ways. For now, I need the good wishes more than the congratulations.

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