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(Atalig and Wilson Argue)

1 SAIPAN, December 19, 1973--(CONGRESS RELEASE)--A heated
2 exchange of words between Representative Felipe Q. Atalig, who
3 represents Tinian, and Deputy Representative Captain James Wilson
4 of the Office of Micronesian Status Negotiations, took place at
5 the close of a party Tuesday night (Dec. 18) at the Royal Taga
6 Hotel..

7 The exchange took place at a reception hosted by the Marianas
8 Political Status Commission for the U.S. negotiating team which
9 was witnessed by several guests and bystanders.

10 The following day Atalig wrote a strongly worded letter
11 describing the incident which he sent to Wilson with copies to
12 several high officials.

13 The discussion related to the homesteading program on Tinian
14 which was terminated by the Trust Territory Administration,
15 according to Atalig's letter. What concerned Atalig most was the
16 "attitude and behavior" displayed by Mr. Wilson in terms of the
17 Marianas/U.S. Negotiations.

18 During the fiery discussion, the Ambassador's deputy asked
19 if Atalig was in agreement with the work of the Commission. The
20 Congressman responded that he was not if Wilson's attitude was

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1 any kind of example of the approach by the United States.

2 According to Atalig's letter, Mr. Wilson made the statement
3 that if Congressman Atalig does not like it, then he should move
4 out--that he had no business on the island. The Congressman
5 wrote that while he is not Anti-American, he is however, against
6 any person who is disrespectful of the feelings and opinions of
7 another person or other people.

8 Congressman Atalig's letter further noted that he is not
9 against the goals and objectives of the current Marianas talks,
10 but rather against the frequently "high-handed approaches and
11 arrogance" displayed in the attitudes of certain people on the
12 U.S. Negotiating Team. "We all realize that America is a
13 powerful nation, but that recognition should never lead one to a
14 'belligerent and overbearing' attitude when dealing with the
15 citizens of another smaller country," he added.

16 The verbal exchange started when the Ambassador's deputy
17 asserted that some 83 applicants for homesteads on Tinian were
18 being denied because they failed to improve their property.

19 Atalig refuted Wilson's assertions and stated that if that were
20 the case, then letters or notice of noncompliance would have

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1 been sent to those applicants. Atalig continued that the 83
2 applicants which Wilson referred to as having been denied
3 homesteads due to noncompliance were new and thus there was yet
4 no need to prove compliance. This, according to Atalig, was
5 confirmed by Tinian Mayor Antonio S. Borja.

6 The Marianas Congressman was an invited guest at the
7 reception that evening when the verbal exchange occurred. He
8 noted that he was not making the incident known to the people
9 for the sake of publicity but rather he feels that the "attitude
10 and arrogance" manifested by high American officials toward his
11 people must be brought to the attention of the public.

12 The Congressman's letter went on to say, "It is fortunate
13 that Mr. Wilson in his capacity as a subaltern in Mr. William's
14 coterie did not epitomize the approach of the U.S. delegation.
15 If this were true, then I can foresee a troubled future for the
16 status negotiations."

17 Congressman Atalig concluded by saying indirectly he hoped
18 that Wilson would be replaced and that "...it would be unfortunate
19 if any misunderstanding from this incident were allowed to mar
20 in any way (what) I believe to be the pleasant and useful

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1 relations between the United States and Micronesia--especially
2 the Marianas District. I look forward to their continuation for
3 the mutual benefit of our respective countries," the letter
4 ended.

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