

Week in Review

SUMMARY OF NEWS OF THE TRUST TERRITORY OF THE PACIFIC ISLANDS
Prepared by Micronesian News Service

Saipan, Mariana Islands

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MARIANAS STATUS TALKS END

The third round of Marianas Status negotiations ended last week on Saipan. According to Ambassador F. Haydn Williams, President Nixon's personal representative to the status talks and Senator Edward Dlg. Pangelinan, Chairman of the Marianas Political Status Commission, substantial progress was achieved during the talks.

In his closing statement Ambassador Williams said this round has "advanced us significantly nearer the attainment of our joint goal of a status agreement which will assure the people of the Marianas a secure place in the American political system under conditions affording them maximum responsibility for their own self-government and the fullest expression of their unique cultural heritage, a heritage which has enriched and will continue to enrich the larger American family."

The Ambassador summarized the major accomplishments of the session as: "One, a number of important understandings on complex constitutional, legal and fiscal matters--including citizenship and nationality, the applicability of federal law, the protection of the right of local self-government, and customs and internal revenue; two, agreement to establish forthwith an Ad Hoc Preparatory Committee to prepare a detailed work plan, timetable, organizational structure, and budget for transition planning; three, an examination of the pace and direction in which the economy of the Marianas is likely to develop and the opportunity this presented for the U.S. to present a specific proposal of U.S. financial assistance during the first five years following the installation of your new government ...; and four, an exploration of such questions relating to land in the Marianas as the recent U.S. policy decision to return public land to local control and the related intensified land cadaster program and U.S. land needs in these islands."

He indicated that the U.S. "appreciates" the understanding of the Marianas delegation regarding its minimal military land requirement and the delegation's "general agreement to accommodate them".

In his closing statement, Senator Pangelinan stated that the Marianas delegation is determined to "relate the significance of the negotiations to the everyday life of the people of the Marianas". He indicated appreciation for "the willingness of the United States to understand the political complexities involved in these negotiations" and that consultation with the people of the Marianas will take time and effort, "particularly when the issues involved are as sensitive and significant as those which we have been discussing in these negotiations."

JOINT COMMUNIQUE ISSUED

According to the official Joint Communique issued at the conclusion of the third round of Marianas status negotiations, tentative agreements were made in several areas.

In the area of local self-government, it was agreed that specified fundamental provisions, including provisions to assure maximum self-government, "may not be amended or repealed except by mutual consent of the parties" and that "approval of the Status Agreement by the people of the Marianas would constitute a sovereign act of self-determination."

The choice of becoming a citizen or a national of the United States would be decided by the individuals themselves.

A detailed study of relevant federal laws applicable to the future Commonwealth of the Marianas, with recommendations, will be presented to the U.S. Congress.

Regarding taxation, those persons who reside in the Marianas and "who become U.S. citizens or nationals would be subject to federal income tax only on United States source income." Also, the future Government of the Marianas would have exclusive power to enact, amend or repeal its internal revenue laws, and would have authority to establish a "duty free port" and local customs laws relating to imports from foreign countries and to impose duties on exports from its territory.

A joint Ad Hoc preparatory Committee will be established to prepare a detailed work plan, timetable, organization structure, and budget for the transition.

The Marianas Commission agreed to give careful consideration to the U.S. proposal for financial assistance including \$14.5 million of direct assistance annually, \$4.5 million annually in indirect assistance and an undetermined amount of economic benefit that would result from the establishment and maintenance of a U.S. military base complex in the Marianas.

Discussions involving land centered on the application of the new U.S. public land policy in the Marianas and the satisfaction of U.S. Government requirements for land in the Marianas. It was agreed that the matter of U.S. military needs would be discussed further at the next negotiating session.

LAND POLICY CLARIFIED

High Commissioner Edward E. Johnston issued a policy statement on Marianas land last week clarifying the present policy on the leasing of public land as it relates to the current status negotiations.

The three-part statement is concerned with the background of the land policy, the reasons for exercising care in the leasing of public land, and deals with the homesteading program on Tinian.

Johnston indicated that "during the active period of negotiations there will be no leases of public lands without consultation with the Marianas

Political Status Commission". He also advised the District Administrator of the Marianas that "no leases of public land to either citizens or non-citizens of the Marianas should be granted without conferring with Senator Edward Pangelinan as Chairman of the MPSC." Johnston stated that it was "determined that it would not be in the best interests of the future of the Mariana Islands to grant any new homestead permits on the Island of Tinian after May 8, 1973, which was the date on which Ambassador Williams and his delegation revealed publicly the United States desire for land acquisition on Tinian."

Regarding the homestead permits on Tinian, Johnston said that "transactions which were in process prior to the cutoff date of May 8, 1973, will continue to be processed; and second, that this is purely a temporary situation to remain in effect while negotiations are actively under way between the United States and the Marianas delegation to resolve the future of the Marianas."

Johnston emphasized that all policies regarding the disposition of public land in the Marianas "are designed to be of maximum benefit to the future of the Marianas."

"MS MICRONESIA PRINCESS" LAUNCHED

Launching ceremonies were held last week in Pusan, Korea, for the new Trust Territory ship the "MS Micronesia Princess". High Commissioner and Mrs. Edward E. Johnston, Speaker of the House of Representatives of the Congress of Micronesia Bethwel Henry and his wife Marihne, and Assistant to the Director of Transportation and Communications Elias Okamura travelled to Korea to attend the christening ceremony.

In his remarks at the ceremonies, the High Commissioner indicated his appreciation for the cooperative attitude that exists between the people of Korea and of the Trust Territory. "We look forward to the cooperative effort continuing for many years to come," he said.

The HiCom explained some of the characteristics of the new ship which is designed, equipped and constructed specifically to meet the requirements of transoceanic support and intra-district service for Micronesia.

He concluded by stating, "may the future operations of the good ship 'Micronesia Princess', as well as Micronesia's excellent working relationship with the Republic of Korea be long and successful."

BRIEFLY, HERE ARE SOME OTHER ITEMS THAT MADE NEWS IN THE TRUST TERRITORY LAST WEEK:

The Trust Territory District Personnel Officers met on Saipan last week to review the new TT Personnel Regulations before they are presented to the TT Personnel Board and to the High Commissioner for approval.

President of the Gannett chain of newspapers, Paul Miller, visited the Trust Territory last week. Gannett owns the Pacific Daily News and its sister publication, Pacific Dateline, on Guam.

The "Micronitor", a weekly newspaper published in Majuro, Marshall Islands, officially changed its name to the "Micronesian Independent". According to the

editors, the name conveys two messages. "One, that we are Micronesian in outlook and concern and two, that we are independent."

"MS Micronesia Princess" is the winning name submitted by four Marianas students in the ship naming contest sponsored by the Department of Transportation and Communications. Each student will receive a \$100 prize plus recognition at the christening ceremony at which the new ship will be officially named.

The Senate and House Committee on Education and Social Affairs held public hearings in Palau and Yap last week and reviewed progress made on certain areas in education.

The Economic Development Division of the Department of Resources and Development announced the receipt of an application for Pan American World Airways, Incorporated, to renew its permit to operate a ticketing office on Saipan in the Mariana Islands and the withdrawal of the application of Alfred A. Yee and Associates, a Honolulu Architectural firm to do business in the Marianas.

A pre-hearing of the Water Transportation Review Board was held on Saipan last week to solicit public views on the services, rates and ship schedules of TransPacific Lines, Inc.

Finally, Christmas greetings were conveyed to the people of Micronesia last week from High Commissioner Edward E. Johnston of the Trust Territory, and in a letter to the High Commissioner from Richard M. Nixon, President of the United States.

The President said: "Mrs. Nixon and I extend our warmest Christmas greetings to you and the people of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands.

"We do so in a spirit of thanks for the great strides that have been made toward building a lasting peace in the world and for the support we have received in these endeavors from the men and women of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands. We hope that this will be an especially happy and satisfying season for all."

The High Commissioner, in his message, said: "At this joyful time of the year, when Christians throughout the world celebrate one of their most significant holidays, we are happy to be spending another Christmas in Micronesia. Mrs. Johnston and I hope that this holiday will be especially meaningful for each of you. And as we look toward 1974, may the New Year bring a generous measure of health, happiness and accomplishment to you and your families.

"1973 was a year of great progress for Micronesia. We are sure that the New Year will also be a significant year for the Trust Territory as we move toward increased economic and political self-sufficiency and a better life for all citizens of the Trust Territory.

To those messages, we add our best wishes for a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year from the staff of the Micronesian News Service and the Micronesian Broadcasting Service.