

The Japan Times

'All the News Without Fear or Favor'

36

日刊 © The Japan Times 1973

Japan Times 1973

FRIDAY, JUNE 1, 1973

昭和48年5月22日第3版第147号
昭和41年4月28日改定郵便番号147

36

日刊 © The Japan Times 1973

U.S. Plans Base On Tinian Island

SAIPAN (Kyodo-Reuters) — The U.S. Government announced Thursday it proposes to acquire two-thirds of the Pacific island of Tinian — launch site for World War II atomic bombing raids on Japan — for construction of a major new military base.

U.S. Ambassador Hayden Williams, in a 20-minute radio address to the people of the U.S.-administered Mariana islands, said the base would include an airfield, harbor, supply and maintenance facilities and training grounds.

He gave no further details of the base, but the Pacific Daily News on the island of Guam said it would house 2,600 military and civilian personnel and would cover about 18,500 acres.

Tinian, with a population of nearly 800, is part of the Marianas group in the western Pacific. The Marianas form part of the Pacific trust territory which the U.S. administers under a United Nations mandate.

Negotiations have been in progress for several years on ending this mandate, but the Marianas alone want to continue as an American possession. Agreement has already been reached in principle on a form of Commonwealth status similar to Puerto Rico.

Tinian had a brief moment of fame when it was used to

launch the U.S. atom. bomb raids on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945. The runway is now overgrown. Ambassador Williams, who heads the U.S. negotiating team to the status talks, said the rights of local residents would be protected when the military moved in. But the island's only village would be moved from its present location near the harbor to a nearby area.

The U.S. proposal actually involves the takeover of the entire island, but about one-third will remain under civilian control.

Negotiations on the Marianas' future are expected to be completed this week.

Guam, the largest island in the Marianas chain, is outside the present negotiations. It already houses several important American military bases.

With the addition of Tinian, 176 km. to the north, the Marianas are expected to become the major line of defense for the U.S. in the western Pacific.

The acquisition of Tinian is seen as motivated by an American desire to have more secure bases to continue its security commitments to Asia.

As American territory, and lightly populated, Tinian has none of the political disadvantages of, say Japan and Okinawa, where the U.S. still maintains major facilities.

All Plenary Sessions Of ICCS Suspended