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DISCUSSION PAPER  
REGARDING THE  
NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN THE MARIANA ISLANDS AND THE UNITED STATES  
RELATING TO  
CERTAIN U. S. MILITARY REQUIREMENTS IN THE MARIANAS

It is generally recognized that one of the most important aspects of the current negotiations between the Mariana Islands and the United States relates to the land in the Marianas which the United States is requesting for military purposes. During the third session of negotiations, which ended on December 19, 1973, the differences between the negotiating parties on this subject were clearly identified. Unfortunately, during the recess, there has not been any indication from the Office of Micronesian Status Negotiations that United States representatives are seriously interested in modifying the United States position so that tentative agreements in this area can be reached at the next session of negotiations. The following observations may be pertinent in this connection:

- (1) The joint communique of December 19, 1973 indicated that certain technical matters associated with military land requirements of the United States would be discussed at a technical level before the next session. Although the joint communique was not specific, this undertaking by the parties came as an

aftermath of discussion during the last session regarding such matters as the appropriate terms of any lease and/or restrictive covenants that might be considered by the parties in connection with the use of Marianas land by the United States for military purposes. No discussions of the kind clearly contemplated by the Joint Communique as of late March, 1974 have been held or scheduled.

(2) More basically, the United States representatives have not exhibited any awareness of the political sensitivity prompted by the extensive land requirements identified by the United States in the Marianas. The most important of these, of course, is the request for some 18,000 acres, or approximately two-thirds, of the island of Tinian. The Marianas Political Status Commission has repeatedly asked the United States delegation to explain in some detail exactly how the land on Tinian is intended to be used and why the full 18,000 acres is required. Without such information, it is impossible for the Marianas representatives to go before their constituents and explain on what basis they have agreed to make land on Tinian available for military use. If they are unable to do so, of course, then any Status Agreement negotiated will run a substantial risk of being defeated when it is eventually put to the people for a vote.

The Marianas request for more detailed justification can be made without disclosure of any classified information. So far, however, the United States has provided no information other than that the land is generally required for a joint-service military base complex, including harbor facilities, an airfield with related facilities, an ammunition and logistics support facility, and a training area. In respect to each of these four major components, the United States has not provided detailed information as to how the land will be used, in terms of facilities or buildings, and how the amount of land requested on Tinian for each of these general purposes compares with other military facilities of a comparable nature located elsewhere in the United States or abroad.

(3) The United States is apparently not considering modifying, even in a relatively minor degree, the extent of its request for land on Tinian. The ability of the Marianas representatives to sell the resulting agreement to their constituents will depend largely upon the extent to which they are able to persuade the people that their representatives have negotiated vigorously and "persuaded" the United States to modify its original request for land. One important compromise, which may be forthcoming from the United States, is a change from its previously expressed insistence on purchasing the land and a new readiness to accept leasing the land on a long-term basis. If this change in the United

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States position materializes, it will also be important for the United States to evidence some readiness to reduce the amount of land needed on Tinian, if only by 1,500 - 2,000 acres. It seems likely that a modification of this limited extent could be effected without impairing the ability of the United States to use the remaining 16,000 acres for a military base complex of the kind deemed necessary. It seems clear that the United States representatives would be well advised to take the long view and recognize that civilian/military relations on Tinian are going to be vitally affected by the way in which land on Tinian is made available.

(4) Another way for the United States to respond positively and creatively to these negotiations would be to exhibit more frankness regarding their proposed use of the land. It seems very likely that some of the United States hesitation in disclosing the exact uses of the land centers about the proposed recreational uses of the land for members of the military forces and their dependents stationed on Tinian. One can only assume, for example, that the proposed recreational uses on Tinian will include such items as a golf course, swimming pool, gymnasium facilities and tennis courts. One can reasonably anticipate the reaction of the residents of Tinian when it is disclosed that their most scarce resource is being used for ostensibly frivolous purposes. One way for the United

States to anticipate this problem - and respond to it creatively - would be to promise to locate all such recreational facilities in the southern one-third of the island, i.e., that portion not required by the military, and to make these recreational facilities available to all the people of Tinian on an equal basis with the military and their dependents. If a proposal along these lines were advanced by the United States during the negotiations, it might well represent an important breakthrough and provide the Marianas representatives with the ingredients of an attractive settlement on this important agenda item.

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