

(STATUS DELEGATIONS VISIT TINIAN)

Mar. 18

SAIPAN, MAY 23 (JOINT STATUS RELEASE) --THE MARIANAS POLITICAL STATUS COMMISSION AND THE UNITED STATES DELEGATION TO THE MARIANAS POLITICAL STATUS TALKS VISITED TINIAN WEDNESDAY AT THE INVITATION OF THE TINIAN MUNICIPAL COUNCIL FOR THE EXPRESS PURPOSE OF PRESENTING TO THE PEOPLE OF TINIAN IN AN OPEN MEETING THE AMENDED UNITED STATES PROPOSAL FOR ITS FEDERAL LAND REQUIREMENTS ON TINIAN.

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AT THE PUBLIC MEETING THE CHAIRMAN OF THE MARIANAS STATUS COMMISSION, SENATOR EDWARD DLG PANGELINAN, GAVE A SHORT DESCRIPTION OF THE PROGRESS OF THE NEGOTIATIONS TO DATE. THEN AMBASSADOR HAYDN WILLIAMS, MADE A DETAILED PRESENTATION OF THE UNITED STATES LAND REQUIREMENTS IN THE NORTHERN MARIANAS WITH PARTICULAR EMPHASIS ON TINIAN INCLUDING A BRIEFING BY LIEUTENANT COLONEL DALE STRAIT OF THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE.

AMBASSADOR WILLIAMS OPENED BY SAYING THAT IT HAD ALWAYS BEEN THE DESIRE OF THE UNITED STATES THAT THE PEOPLE OF THE MARIANAS BE INFORMED AND CONSULTED ON POLITICAL STATUS MATTERS AND THAT OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS HAD BEEN HELD FOR THIS PURPOSE THROUGHOUT THE MARIANAS SINCE THE TALKS BEGAN. TURNING TO LAND THE AMBASSADOR NOTED THAT THE UNITED STATES HAD ALREADY TRANSFERRED CONSIDERABLE AMOUNTS OF LAND TO THE PUBLIC DOMAIN AND THAT THE UNITED STATES WAS WILLING TO SEE THE EARLY TRANSFER OF TITLE OF PUBLIC LANDS TO THE ISLANDS.

THE AMBASSADOR NOTED THAT THE UNITED STATES PRESENTLY CONTROLS 3,550 HECTARES OF MILITARY RETENTION LAND ON TINIAN AND HAS A REQUIREMENT FOR AN ADDITIONAL 3,450 HECTARES, OF WHICH 275 ARE PRIVATELY OWNED AND THE REST IS PUBLIC LAND. HE STATED THAT THE UNITED STATES IS PROPOSING TO BUILD A JOINT-SERVICES MILITARY FACILITY TO INCLUDE A NEW MILITARY AIR FIELD IN THE WEST FIELD AREA AND THE REHABILITATION OF SAN JOSE HARBOR. BOTH THE AIRFIELD AND THE HARBOR WILL BE OPEN FOR PRIVATE USE. THE PEOPLE OF TINIAN WILL ALSO HAVE ACCESS TO RECREATIONAL AND AGRICULTURAL AREAS WITHIN THE BASE. THE AMBASSADOR ANNOUNCED THAT A U.S.-MARIANAS JOINT-CIVIL MILITARY ADVISORY COMMITTEE WILL BE FORMED IN THE NEAR FUTURE TO CONSIDER A LARGE NUMBER OF QUESTIONS INVOLVING CIVIL-MILITARY RELATED TOPICS. AMBASSADOR WILLIAMS ALSO EXPLAINED

THAT THE VILLAGE OF SAN JOSE DID NOT NOW HAVE TO BE RELOCATED AS A SPECIAL "WET SLIP" WOULD BE BUILT ON THE NORTHERN END OF THE ISLAND FOR THE LOADING AND UNLOADING OF AMMUNITION MAKING IT UNNECESSARY TO HAVE A TWO MILE SAFETY ZONE RADIUS AROUND THE HARBOR OF SAN JOSE.

AFTER THE PRESENTATION. MR. JOAQUIN ARRIOLA, A LAWYER REPRESENTING CITIZENS WHO WISH TO LIMIT THE MILITARY PRESENCE ON THE ISLAND SPOKE AGAINST GIVING THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT MORE THAN ONE-THIRD OF THE LAND. MAYOR BORJA OF TINIAN SPEAKING ON THE OTHER SIDE SAID THAT MANY PEOPLE HAD SUPPORTED THE REQUEST OF THE UNITED STATES FOR LAND ON TINIAN AND WERE UPSET THAT THE VILLAGE OF SAN JOSE WOULD NOT NOW BE RELOCATED. AMBASSADOR WILLIAMS REGRETFULLY SAID THAT WITHOUT A MILITARY REQUIREMENT TO REMOVE THE VILLAGE THE UNITED STATES COULD NOT SPEND FUNDS FOR RELOCATION OF THE PRESENT VILLAGE. MR. KEN JONES, PRESIDENT OF THE MICRONESIAN DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION, DESCRIBED HOW THE MILITARY LAND REQUIREMENTS WOULD AFFECT HIS RANCHING OPERATIONS ON TINIAN. AMBASSADOR WILLIAMS RESPONDED THAT HE DID NOT BELIEVE THAT THE FURTHER ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF TINIAN INCLUDING AGRICULTURE WAS INCOMPATIBLE WITH THE UNITED STATES PLANS FOR A MILITARY BASE ON THE ISLAND. HE SAID FURTHERMORE THAT HE FELT THE OPPORTUNITIES FOR PRIVATE ENTERPRISE ON TINIAN WOULD BE IN FACT ENHANCED BY THE UNITED STATES PLAN.

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