

Marianas Win Pledge Of Extra \$2 Million

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SAIPAN - Marianas status negotiators have received a tentative pledge from the United States for \$2 million more a year in financial support than the Americans offered last December.

According to a joint communique issued after the current round of talks ended here Friday, the United States has upped its annual assistance from \$14.5 million to \$16.5 million a year.

Last year the Marianas were asking for an average of \$23.25 million in budget support from the United States.

The U.S. tentatively has agreed also to base its support on an initial seven-year period, as the Marianas requested, the communique said. The United States originally proposed a five-year period.

An additional \$1.2 million will be given by the United States to plan the Marianas district's transition from trusteeship to U.S. commonwealth status.

A new government of the Northern Marianas could be installed as early as July 1976, said the communique.

The eight-page document was signed by Franklin Hayden Williams, the President's

personal representative for Micronesian status negotiations, and the chairman and vice chairman of the Marianas Political Status Commission, Sen. Edward DLG. Pangelinan and Vicente N. Santos.

The communique also disclosed that the Marianas have asked to be administered separately from the other districts of Micronesia prior to termination of the United Nations trusteeship agreement.

The United States has taken the matter under advisement, said the communique, and both sides will study the question further before the next negotiating session.

Sources close to the status talks say the next round may take place about September.

Major points left unsettled after this fourth round of negotiations are whether the United States will lease or purchase land it has requested in the Marianas for military purposes and what the cost will be.

A joint land committee has been created by both sides to consider specific requirements and terms for U.S. land acquisition, said the communique.

The committee is one of three announced Friday. A joint drafting committee

will prepare a proposed future status pact and present it to both delegations at the next session.

The third study group, a joint commission on transition, will steer the planning for the changeover to commonwealth status. It will be aided by a joint secretariat composed of six professionals.

Following is the text of the communique's major points:

LAND

A summary of the tentative agreements reached on land requirements follows:

1. Farallon de Medinilla. This island consisting of 229 acres
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U.S. Pledges Extra \$2 Million

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 (93 hectares) will continue to be made available to the United States as a target area. Maximum safety precautions will be enforced by the United States.

2. Tanapag Harbor area, Saipan. About 197 acres (78 hectares) in the southern portion of the Tanapag Harbor area, now under military retention, will be made available for future contingency use by the United States. Most of this land will be used by the United States for the development of an American memorial park which will be used as a recreation area by the people of the Marianas. Preliminary plans for the park call for cleared beaches, an amphitheater, a family picnic area, an arboretum, a swimming pool and other athletic facilities in addition to a monument.

Land in the Tanapag Harbor area not used for the memorial park or for military purposes will be made available to the future government of the Northern Marianas for possible sub-lease for civilian harbor-related activities. There are no current plans for military use of this area. Subject to the limitations imposed by any future military use, the United States has agreed to permit maximum feasible joint use of any land and facilities which are developed for military purposes.

3. Isley Field area, Saipan. About 482 acres (193 hectares) south of and adjacent to the southern runway of Isley Field and within the south boundary road also will be made available for future contingency use by the U.S. forces. As at Tanapag Harbor, this land will be made available to the future government of the Northern Marianas for use or lease for industrial or agricultural purposes compatible with possible future military use.

4. Tinian. About 17,475 acres (6,993 hectares) will be made available for the development of a joint service military base in accordance with the plans newly presented by the U.S. These plans reduced the acreage required by approximately 1,200 acres (485 hectares) and eliminated the necessity for relocating San Jose Village. The U.S. will reevaluate its military land needs in the area south and east of the northeastern portion of the proposed runway to make as much of this land as possible immediately available to the government of the Northern Marianas under a land-use arrangement for agricultural and other purposes compatible with planned military activities.

Joint use arrangements for both the new West Field and the rehabilitated San Jose Harbor, with free access to both, will be developed. The rehabilitated harbor will be under the civilian control of the Marianas government except during times of national emergency. Consistent with military requirements, land will be made available under a land-use arrangement in the San Jose Harbor area for civilian harbor-oriented activities. In addition, there will be maximum civilian use of land within the base itself for agricultural, fishing, recreational and other purposes including access through the base area to northern beaches compatible with the military operation of the base.

Further discussions will be held with respect to local community needs for public

utility services. The U.S. offered to improve the road from San Jose Village to the Marpo Valley and north into the base area by the construction of a bypass road to the civilian air terminal and around the air base. Opportunity will be provided for the development of a commercially operated ferry system between Saipan and Tinian and possibly Rota.

The United States indicated its intent to relinquish its use rights on all remaining military retention land in the Northern Marianas not covered by the new agreement — some 4,691 acres (1,898 hectares) — and to return them to the public domain at a time to be agreed but no later than the date when the formal status agreement becomes effective.

The two delegations discussed whether the land could be made available to the United States by lease or purchase and methods of determining fair market value. A joint land committee has been appointed by the Marianas Political Status Commission and the President's personal representative to consider the exact details of specific requirements and means, procedures and terms for acquisition of land by the U.S. government. It was agreed that the consideration and development of appropriate safeguards in the area of eminent domain would be referred to the Joint Drafting Committee referred to below. The question of how to implement the prior agreement that the Marianas government will have the authority to prohibit the alienation of land to persons not of Marianas descent also was referred to the Joint Drafting Committee. This committee will consider as well limitations on the amount of public lands which might be made available to or held by any one individual.

ECONOMICS AND FINANCE

A report by the joint ad hoc preparatory committee on transition established at the third negotiating session last December was approved. The report outlined a proposed program of studies and events to take place between the time of the signing of a political status agreement and the establishment of a new government of the Northern Marianas under its own constitution.

These studies will include those related to government organization and planning for the Marianas constitutional convention, research and planning for government reorganization and the initial legislative program, and research on U.S. programs and services. There also would be studies related to economic and social development planning, fiscal and revenue planning, physical planning and study of the impact of relocation of the capital of the Trust Territory.

The events anticipated to take place include a political status education program and status plebiscite, a constitutional convention, a constitutional education program and constitutional referendum, and finally the election of a new government.

A joint commission on transition, consisting of representatives of the Marianas and the United States, will be established to provide continuing consultation and policy guidance on all matters related to the change in political status. To assist the commission, a joint secretariat consisting of

six highly qualified professionals is to be established to develop transition plans and schedules, conduct basic economic studies, arrange for the employment of experts and administer funds to be made available by the U.S. for these activities in the amount of \$1.2 million.

The two delegations tentatively agreed on an initial seven-year program of U.S. financial assistance to begin after the installation of a new government of the Northern Marianas in accordance with a popularly approved constitution. This could be as early as July 1976.

Under this tentative agreement the U.S. will provide \$13.5 million for each of these years in direct financial grants as follows: a grant of \$8 million a year to help meet the cost of government operations, a grant of \$1.5 million a year to the future government of the Northern Marianas to be used for economic development loans, with \$500,000 a year of this amount to be reserved for small loans to farmers and fishermen and to agricultural and marine cooperatives, and a grant of \$4 million a year for capital improvement projects of which at the Marianas Political Status Commission request \$500,000 a year will be reserved for Rota and \$500,000 a year for Tinian because of the urgent

development needs on those islands. U.S. assistance will be provided in constant 1975 dollars.

In addition, a wide range of services and assistance under regular U.S. federal programs will be available. The United States estimates the value of federal services and assistance at \$3 million a year. The total direct annual assistance is thus estimated at \$16.5 million. This does not include potential additional income from military construction and a growing military presence and spending.

Federal funds will augment the commonwealth's other growing financial resources from internal taxes, anticipated rebates of U.S. federal income taxes after the new status becomes effective and income from public lands. All of these resources would be directed toward assuring the economic development of the Northern Marianas, higher personal income and living standards for the people, capital improvements for social and economic growth, as well as improved public services.

STATUS AGREEMENT

In the light of the progress achieved, both parties agreed to the establishment of a joint drafting committee whose members (1) will be charged with the preparation of a status agreement in keeping with the

tentative agreements reached to date, and (2) will have the authority to draft, subject to the approval of their principals, specific language for the provisions to be included in the agreement.

Their draft will be presented to the Marianas Political Status Commission and the United States at the next negotiating session.

It was reaffirmed that any final agreement will have to be approved by the Marianas district legislature, the people of the Mariana Islands district in a plebiscite, and by the U.S. Congress.

SEPARATE ADMINISTRATION

The final substantive item of discussion centered on the Marianas Political Status Commission's request for consideration of early transition to self-government and the possible separate administration of the Marianas district prior to the termination of the trusteeship agreement. The commission shared its preliminary views with the U.S. delegation for the purpose of opening a dialogue on this important subject. The U.S. in turn promised to take the matter under advisement and both parties agreed that further study and consultation on this question should be carried forward prior to the next negotiating session.

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