

Editorial Rooting For Rota.....

The mini-hassle in near-by Rota over their political future only points up the difficulties of a status change anywhere, but more particularly on a tiny island, semi-isolated, 40 or 50 miles away from its nearest neighbor.

Our nation was built on contiguous areas, at least until Hawaii and Alaska came along. We're not used to the idea of a series of isolated islands, each with its own needs, its own culture, each with a varying degree of sophistication, and self-sufficiency. What we're saying is there is a definite paucity of understanding and information on all three sides—that is the Rotanese, the rest of the Marianas, and the United States.

Last July the Congress of Micronesia's Joint Committee on Future Status held hearings in Rota, and recently issued a report which seemed to suggest that the people of Rota are not necessarily happy with the present course of the Marianas in pursuing separate negotiations with the United States. As many as 50 percent of the people of Rota felt this way, the report indicated. The report seemed to feel that Rota would choose to remain a part of Micronesia if Micronesia opts for a close relationship with the United States which would assure "their economic development goals." The group recommended that Rota be treated separately from the Marianas when the Micronesian constitutional referendum and national plebiscites are held, and that the Congress consider making Rota permanently a separate administrative district.

While we don't pretend to know the minds of the people of Rota, who will make the final decision, we do see this as a ploy by the Congress of Micronesia's Joint Committee to throw a bombshell into the Marianas talks with the United States. They seem to be thinking that if they can get one of the Marianas islands to disain the talks, perhaps all the negotiations will fall flat on their face—a situation they obviously would welcome. Even suggesting that the Congress considers making Rota permanently a separate administrative district is little more than offering some attractive bait to the people of Rota, in exchange for wrecking the Marianas talks.

After all, the Congress hasn't considered making Kusaie a separate district, and yet it is considerably larger, and considerably more isolated than Rota is.

All this may really be a tempest-in-a-teapot. The initial hearings were held six months ago. Since that time more and more information has been made available to the people of Rota, and to the Marianas negotiators. Diane Magdcox, Daily News staff writer, reports that any strong anti-Marianas leanings among Rota's people appeared to have been muted, at least publicly. She says that generally the Rotanese interviewed by her seemed beguiled at the prospect of becoming U.S. citizens or nationals, a choice they will get to vote on under the Marianas agreement, if consummated. One girl disagreed emphatically, saying: "I don't want to give up my Micronesian citizenship. I'd go to live in the Marshalls." This only

Voice Of The People

Dear Editor:
This letter is in response to your column on Friday, January 11, concerning possible contributing factors to why youngsters from Chamorro background fight with youngsters from other cultural backgrounds.

At one point you pointed to the possibility that Guamanian children might possibly be trying to overcompensate because of an inferiority complex, caused, in the past, by Stateiders and their patronizing attitudes. Some of your points are well taken and I agree that to some people, fighting seems to be an equalizer in the attempt for equality, although I can not condone such action.

As you are aware, the Department of Education has two programs now under development and implementation in bilingual and bicultural education. The DOE's Chamorro language and cultural studies program is being introduced on the elementary level, and is referred to as *kolehon mandikike*. It was first introduced at Price and Torres Elementary Schools in 1970 and now includes Agat Elementary, Yona Elementary and Mount Carmel Elementary Schools, with 410 youngsters participating in grades kindergarten through three.

We also have a Chamorro language program, including cultural studies, for intermediate grades, and are planning on introducing the

implementation of such a curriculum change parallels changes in Mainland schools attended by students of Mexican-American, Indian or Puerto Rican descent. Research studies show that such programs have, in fact, been beneficial to students.

One of the benefits of such a program is that students can learn about themselves, their heritage and find pride in their cultural background. Participating students then have the chance to discover and discuss common grounds of understanding.

Our intent is to make the Chamorro language and cultural studies a formal part of the curriculum so that students from various backgrounds can learn about other cultures. I often wondered, as a young girl, why I had to study U.S. History, particularly before Guamanians became United States citizens. I wondered why I couldn't study Chamorro history. I also wondered why I couldn't speak my own language as a student. I clearly remember instances when I had to pay a penny for each Chamorro word I spoke at school. Such practices certainly contribute to a person

students, in decreasing racial or cultural tension and improving self-identity of students.

Sincerely,
/s/ Katherine B. Agoun
Director of Education

Dear Editor,

Please print my letter to Mr. Burton, the chairman of the Subcommittee on Territorial and Insular Affairs, in regard to the article appeared on PDN, the "Junketers 'Learned a Lot' on Saipan," Wednesday, Jan. 9, 1974 page 4.

Dear Mr. Burton,

You were quoted as having said that, "your meeting with the Marianas Status Commission had left you impressed with the political savvy of the members."

You were also quoted, having said that, "you believe the people of Tinian are not going to be disadvantaged by having a major U.S. military base there."

Mr. Burton, if it is true, then what are the *advantages* of the people of Tinian "having a major U.S. military base," on their small island??

The cold war, the death, the starvation, and destruction of their small island-- are these going to be their advantages?

Aren't they going to suffer like we Micronesians suffered during World War II, due to the Japanese military bases which were installed in many parts of the islands of Micronesia?

I am not speaking as an

I am not speaking as an objective observer, but as one who has lived through the destructive consequences of having military base on my island.

/s/ Augusta N. Ramarui
Concerned Micronesians
University of Guam

certainly contribute to a person developing an inferiority complex. I certainly am aware that implementation of a Chamorro Language and cultural studies program is not the total answer to the current problem. But it is one solution which I sincerely believe will be beneficial to our

planning on introducing the Chamorro Language and related cultural studies on the junior and senior high school levels. Eventually, we hope to have a Chamorro Language and Cultural studies program extending throughout the grade levels for students to enroll on a voluntary basis.

Walking For Camel

By Art Buchwald

WASHINGTON—The French have just made a new deal with Saudi Arabia—oil in exchange for Mirage airplanes and sophisticated arms. The British are in the process of making a similar deal with other Arab oil-producing countries including the tiny sheikdoms along the Persian Gulf. The cruel fact is that in order to guarantee an adequate fuel supply for itself, any industrialized nation is now willing to give the Arabs all the weapons they want.

The big question is how much sophisticated armaments can the oil-producing Arab states absorb? Most of their land is covered with sand inhabited by Bedouins who still are not quite used to the sudden wealth that is being showered on them.

The following scene will probably take place in a year or two:

A Bedouin camp 300 miles from the Saudi Arabian capital of Riyadh. The chief of the area pulls up in a brand-new British armored personnel carrier.

"Ahmed," shouts the chief, "you lazy lout, wake up and come out of your tent. I have a gift from the king for you!"

Ahmed rushes out of the tent. "Did you bring me a camel?"

"I did better than that, my desert friend. See what I have on the back of the new British armored personnel carrier?"

Ahmed follows him to the rear of the truck.

The chief strips off the canvas from the object he has in tow.

"What is it?" Ahmed asks, staring at the strange machine.

"It is the latest French fighter plane, the Phantom-Mirage. It will fly at speeds over 1,100 miles an hour and can carry six air-to-air supersonic missiles. Now what do you say?"

"I still would rather have a camel," Ahmed replies.

girl disagreed emphatically, saying: "I don't want to give up any Micronesian citizenship. I'd go to live in the Marshalls." This only goes to prove what a bug-a-boo nationalism can be. A few years ago there wasn't any Micronesia, except for some lines drawn on a map by a scientist. But now, nine years after the first Congress of Micronesia, some of the younger people feel like Micronesians, instead of Rotanese, or Saipanese, or Trukese.

The idea of Rota becoming a separate administrative district of Micronesia is completely incomprehensible to us. There would be no way that the U.S. Congress would ever allow three separate governments, Guam, Rota, and the Northern Marianas, to operate in the same tiny island chain. There would be no way that Rota, cut off from the rest of Micronesia by many hundreds of miles could ever survive as a separate district. The seat of government in future Micronesia would be Ponape. Such island gerry-mandering just wouldn't make any sense to any thinking person. We find even the suggestion of a separate district for Rota, with its limited population, and resources meaningless, because we don't see how it could happen, or how it could function.

This is not to say that each island, including Rota, shouldn't have as much local autonomy as possible to contrive under any new government. Each island should elect its own leaders, plan its own economic growth, restrict buildings, even levy its own taxes if possible. We are definitely for local government for Rota, Tinian, and every other island, but we also feel that they have to fit into a larger picture from the standpoint of citizenship, air rights, foreign trade and negotiations, even defense.

One of the problems in charting any course for the future will be the decision on how the eventual voting will go. Will the votes of all of the people of the Marianas be counted in a plebiscite as a single vote, or will each island decide for themselves? This critical question hasn't been resolved yet, at least to our knowledge. If the vote is for all of the Northern Marianas collectively, it would seem that Saipan, with its 12,000 people, would be in a real position to decide the future of the rest of the islands.

As usual the problem with Rota seems to be one largely of communication, and education. One man, Rudy Calvo, said: "I hesitate to say what I want because I don't have the details. Our lessons so far have been very limited, not the type we can understand. We don't want hearsay or things that are too complicated. But the majority here don't understand what's going on."

Certainly the people of Rota, or in any of the other islands are going to have to go through a period of learning, of studying, and soul searching. Right now this might be difficult because not all the facts of their political future are available, because the negotiations are still going on. They can't make information available yet because all the facts and ramifications of the negotiations aren't yet known.

As a start in getting facts to the people of Rota, the Marianas Status Commission announced last week that its full membership will begin a district-wide set of public meetings in Rota on Jan. 19. We don't suggest that the Commission "sell" their program to the people of Rota, but it is pretty obvious that Rota has been treated as a sort of step-child thus far.

We're all looking for a solution that is in the best interest of the people of Rota, and the people of all the Marianas—both North and South, if such a split does exist. There are problems ahead, and it is obvious that no solution is going to please everyone, or be agreed upon unanimously. We still think it is an exciting time for the people of the islands, to have the opportunity to make such decisions, one always made for them before.

"How dare you talk that way about a gift from your most gracious sovereign?"

"Forgive me," Ahmed says fearfully, "but I already have four British fighters, six American Sky Hawks and seven heavy armored helicopters out behind my tent. What I really need is something that can cross the desert and doesn't use up water."

"I will forget I heard your treasonous words. His majesty has vowed that every citizen in his country will have a complete air squadron of his own by 1977. Now where do you want us to put the Mirage?"

"Put it next to the British Centaur tanks you brought me last week. Are you sure I was supposed to get 30 tanks? You know we don't have any children."

The chief checked in his book. "That's correct. You are to have 30 tanks, plus 2,000 rounds of armor-piercing cannon shells."

"Are you certain his majesty didn't mention anything about giving me a camel? You see my old one is on his last legs, and if I could get a new camel I could sell the dates from the Wadi Oasis and go to the market at Medina and..."

"Silence, you ungrateful wretch. The next thing you will tell me is that you don't want a nuclear submarine."

"A nuclear submarine?"

"That is right. The French have agreed to sell us 1,000 nuclear submarines in exchange for 1,000 barrels of oil. As soon as we get the transportation we will be delivering one to you."

Ahmed sighs. "All right. But if you can't get me a camel, what about a donkey? I could make do with a donkey until I have enough money to buy a camel."

The chief got back on his armored personnel carrier and just laughed. "What industrialized country in the world would give us a donkey?"