

PDN
1-25

Editorial

Marianas
copy sent
FBI/ANP
OASIN
hvi

No Way To Integrate.....

It may be all over as far as Marianas re-integration goes. To be very honest, we don't see any point in pursuing the matter further. Back in 1966, even through 1970 there may have been some real common interest in the re-joining of the island chain. Certainly, it was dealt a near death blow a few years ago when Guam's residents, in a sparse vote that had little publicity, or little organization support, or opposition, voted down any such re-unification.

More, and more these days we see signs that the Northern Marianas are determined to go it alone, and we see little sign that Guam would like to warmly embrace its neighbors to the north. Even the legislature has stopped making their annual "pilgrimage" to Saipan. The Conference of Legislators, originally designed for the Marianas, has been expanded to include Samoa, and Hawaii, and then almost scuttled.

The people of the Northern Marianas have set about making their own deal with the United States, and we don't see anything in their plans that includes Guam.

Recently a Saipan newspaper, the I Gaseta, published a lengthy feature article on Oscar Cruz Rasa, a doctoral student at the American University in Washington, D.C. and a former Senatorial candidate in the last election. Rasa, again a potential candidate for the Congress of Micronesia, is young, articulate, and has always been left leaning in his views. He lost in the last election by only 164 votes, to Sen. Olympia Borja, so undoubtedly his views are shared by more than a few Saipanese.

Rasa has this to say about reintegration: "As a people, we have always been dominated. Reintegration with our so-called Chamorro cousins on Guam would not end this domination and give us real self-government. Reintegration would simply make us a colony of the business, political, and military leaders of Guam."

According to Rasa, as the Northern Marianas progresses in its negotiations with the United States to become an American Commonwealth, many leaders on Guam see Saipan and the other Northern Marianas as ripe for investment purposes, but only speak of reunification based on cultural reasons.

"The leaders of Guam are arguing for reintegration on the basis of cultural heritage and have told visiting American Congressmen recently that a unified Marianas would be advantageous for administrative reasons," Rasa said. "From the stateside point of view, they are correct, but from our point of reference, it would mean very little self-government. We are only 15,000 people and could not compete with 100,000 people on Guam. Simple arithmetic tells us Guam would have the economic power, political influence, and both add up to complete authority over our islands."

Rasa downplays the cultural ties, saying, "...the sad truth is, Guam wants not only to control our islands, but wants to gain from the sacrifices we will make in order to become an American Commonwealth." He said: "At this time in our history, the word 'Chamorro' requires a sociological definition because today we have two very distinct Chamorro 'cultures'. It will take more than a constitutional document to unite the Mariana Islands now."

In the I Gaseta article Rasa described the concept of reintegration that is now frequently heard from Guam leaders and written about in the Guam press as an "exploitative mechanism."

He said: "The benefits derived from a close association with the U.S. must come directly from the United States and not via Guam. Otherwise why should Guam benefit when we make part of Tinian available to the American military."

Rasa said despite the cultural and the political divisions between the Northern Marianas Islands and Guam, economic coexistence should continue: "But after over 300 years of outside domination, first by the Spanish, Germans, Japanese, and Americans, joining Guam would not give us the kind of self-government we need. They naturally would place their interests before our own."

Admittedly, not everybody in the Northern Marianas shares Rasa's views, or the views of the I Gaseta, which describes Guam as being "little more than an American colony." But many people do feel that way, and with that kind of attitude, coupled with Guam's reluctance to work towards any solution, all tied in with the American Political Status team, which has repeatedly rejected any Guam involvement in the status talks, we don't really see any future in a rejoining together of the Marianas.

Besides, as we mentioned before, the leaders of the Northern Marianas are growing accustomed to power, and the feel of power isn't easy to dispose of. Right now they are in charge of the future of their islands. We doubt whether they would like to revert to any system that would leave them just another member of a much larger group.

True, the culture ties might have worked at one time. The peoples of all of the Marianas are originally Chamorro. But that was a long time ago. Since 1898 Guam has been American, and the rest of the islands have been run by the Germans, and the Japanese, and then the Trust Territory. The break in culture has been long, and perhaps beyond repair.

The only problem, as we see it, is that the U.S. Congress is not going to be too happy about the fact that two separate governments are developing in the Marianas. They would prefer that the islanders get together in one solid government.

Yet, the die has been cast. We don't see how a merger could be effected at this stage. The lack of initiative several years ago clearly spelled the downfall of any real alignment of the Marianas.

This is not to say that all of the islands can't work together, economically, in the future for the benefit of all. We would hope that a close relationship could be a part of any plan for the Marianas. Guam needs the other islands, and we like to think that they need us too. We could be wrong, but we are trying to be realistic, and right now we can't see that a Commonwealth of the Marianas, or a State of the Marianas is in the cards. JCM.

Pacific Daily News

ROBERT E. UDICK Publisher

JOSEPH C. MURPHY Editor

PUBLISHED ON GUAM, WHERE AMERICA'S DAY BEGINS

Daily except Sunday at Agana, Territory of Guam, U.S.A.

P.O. Box DN-Agana, Guam 96910

PHONE: 777-9711

031740