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Atalig, Wilson Potshot Again Over Status

SAIPAN (COM)-Marianas Rep. Felipe Q. Atalig responded this week to statements made several days ago by U.S. deputy representative to the Office of the Micronesian Status Negotiations, James Wilson concerning their recent exchange of heated words.

Last week, Wilson wrote the congressman a letter asserting that Atalig made it clear to him that "he did not want to become a member of the American political family" and further suggested that "it would be difficult, if not impossible to carry on discussions on future status unless both sides agreed that membership in the family was the common goal and if anyone felt otherwise he had no business there and should get out—not of the islands, of course, but of the talks."

Atalig, in a letter to the chairman of the Marianas Political Status Commission replied: "I protest his intimation that I did not want to become a member of the American political family. Such is not the case and should have been made clear in the closing sentences of my letter to him—if it was not the night of his untoward behavior."

Atalig continued: "I reiterate that he imposed his presence and views upon me—and not the reverse. I further charge, again as it should have been clear in my letter—that my remarks to him concerning the subject area dealt with him as being representative of the approach of the U.S. delegation. Furthermore, since I am not a member of the commission, Wilson's comment implying that I should get out of the talks is revealed as nonsensical."

The letter further stated: "I also find myself somewhat more than slightly exasperated, by the fact that Wilson did not have the courtesy to indicate to whom he was sending copies of his letter as I did on my letter. This, if nothing else, should indicate that his reply was formulated with the intention of discrediting me and twisting the tale of events to his benefit."

Atalig indicated in his letter that what he believed had started the exchange was that Wilson might have been partying too much. He reiterated his hope that Wilson would be replaced and again stated:

"It would be unfortunate if any misunderstanding from this incident were allowed to mar in any way what I believe to be the pleasant and useful relations between the United States and Micronesia—especially the Marianas District.

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