



THE DEPUTY SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20301

6 DEC 1974

Honorable Franklin Haydn Williams
U. S. Ambassador
Micronesia Status Negotiations
Old Executive Office Building
Washington, D. C. 20506

Dear Ambassador Williams:

(U) Secretary Schlesinger has asked me to respond to your letter of November 25, 1974,* since you and I had discussed the same subject during our meeting on the 26th.

(C) As I indicated during our discussion, our plans for Tinian are changing. Several important considerations have evolved over the past year to cause this and many other adjustments in Defense programs. The major impacts of inflation and Department of Defense budget constraints are causing a review of all our priorities. In light of the relatively stable situation in the Asia-Pacific area, full funding of the Tinian base program does not now have high priority. Moreover, the leveling off of pressures to reduce our posture in Asia was evident to me in my recent trip there. In short, current world conditions dictate an adjustment of the requirements for the Tinian base, and economic factors do not permit the allocation of significant Defense resources in the near-term for Tinian.

(U) While our review of this situation will not be complete for a month or two, we fully recognize and concur with the need to explain the situation to your Marianas counterparts.

(U) As I promised, the following unclassified guidelines are provided regarding our current planning for the Tinian base:

- The international situation no longer requires the early development of a multi-purpose base on Tinian.
- Economic factors, especially the impact of serious inflation on a fixed budget, are causing a restructuring of many DOD programs and priorities including the Tinian base plans.
- The basic requirement to acquire approximately 17,800 acres on Tinian remains a necessity. This acreage provides an adequate training area, airfield and a storage and administration complex, all of which will be major considerations

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TOP SECRET CONTROL		
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Case No.	<u>83-F01-1746</u>	
T.S. No.	<u>88-75-179</u>	
Document No.	<u>13</u>	

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as longer range requirements evolve. However, portions of the land will be brought into use over the long-range period rather than in the near-term.

- Lands temporarily in excess would be made available for out grants and, when developed, the facilities would be subject to the joint use agreements worked out in the negotiations or at the time facilities become available.
- Defense has no plans in the near-term to construct any permanent buildings.
- Initially, after obtaining Congressional approval, Defense would upgrade the existing harbor and airfield, and possibly make minor related improvements. This would provide support for training exercises and the capability to expand rapidly in an emergency.
- Plans for further development of the base are being reviewed and any required construction would be completed over a long-range period unless world conditions dictate otherwise.

I would caution the Marianas leaders to avoid allowing their expectations for the military installation on Tinian to exceed the upgrading of the existing harbor and airfield, at least in the near future.

(C) I am still hoping that you will be able to acquire the land on Tinian in fee simple, which will ease our task on Capitol Hill immensely. On the other hand, if we must lease the land we will know you pushed them to the brink.

(U) We regret adding to your difficult task by revising our plans for Tinian at this late date. However, we will support you in any way we can to insure your continued success in the negotiations.

Sincerely,

H. P. Demaree

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