

(WILLIAMS REVEAL U.S. MILITARY PLANS ON TINIAN)

SAIPAN, DEC. 11 (MNS)---AMBASSADOR HAYDN WILLIAMS AND THE MARIANAS POLITICAL STATUS COMMISSION HAVE CONCLUDED ONE WEEK OF MEETINGS IN THE FIFTH SESSION OF THE MARIANAS POLITICAL STATUS NEGOTIATIONS WHICH BEGAN ON DECEMBER 5.

THE MEETINGS HELD THUS FAR HAVE BEEN DEVOTED TO A CAREFUL REVIEW OF A DRAFT COVENANT PRESENTED BY THE JOINT DRAFTING COMMITTEE TO ESTABLISH A COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS IN POLITICAL UNION WITH THE UNITED STATES. SUBSTANTIAL PROGRESS HAS BEEN MADE IN REACHING AGREEMENT ON THE TEXT OF THE DRAFT.

AMBASSADOR WILLIAMS INFORMED THE MARIANAS POLITICAL STATUES COMMISSION ON DECEMBER 10 THAT A REVIEW OF U.S. DEFENSE PLANS HAS MADE NECESSARY VARIOUS ADJUSTMENTS IN U.S. DEFENSE PROGRAMS INCLUDING ADJUSTMENTS IN THE PLANS AND TIMETABLE FOR A MILITARY BASE ON TINIAN. THIS REVIEW HAS BEEN REQUIRED IN PART BECAUSE OF THE IMPACT OF INFLATION ON THE U.S. DEFENSE BUDGET.

AMBASSADOR WILLIAMS SAID THAT THE REVIEW HAS CONCLUDED THAT THERE CONTINUES TO BE AN IMPORTANT DEFENSE REQUIREMENT FOR THE PROPOSED TINIAN MILITARY LAND NEEDS AS PREVIOUSLY SET FORTH AND TENTATIVELY AGREED TO LAST MAY AND IT WILL REMAIN NECESSARY FOR THE U.S. TO ACQUIRE APPROXIMATELY 3,785 HECTARES ON TINIAN IN ADDITION TO THE PRESENT MILITARY RETENTION LANDS ON TINIAN. THE LONG TERM USE OF TINIAN WILL INCLUDE JOINT SERVICE LAND, SEA AND AIR TRAINING AND MANEUVERS, AMMUNITION STORAGE AND FORWARD LOGISTICS, WITH AN OPERATIONAL JOINT SERVICE AIRFIELD AND A DEVELOPED HARBOR TO SUPPORT THESE ACTIVITIES. HOWEVER, IN THE NEAR TERM, THE MAJOR PLANNED USE FOR TINIAN WILL BE FOR GROUND, SEA AND AIR TRAINING EXERCISES.

TINIAN WILL BECOME AN IMPORTANT SITE, THE AMBASSADOR SAID, FOR KEEPING U.S. FORWARD AMPHIBIOUS FORCES IN A HIGH STATE OF READINESS THROUGH COMBINED EXERCISES. IT WILL BE USED BY UNITS OF VARIOUS SIZES, UP TO 2,000 MEN, FOR GROUND OPERATIONS AND AMPHIBIOUS LANDINGS SUPPORTED BY APPROPRIATE NAVAL AND AIR UNITS.

AMBASSADOR WILLIAMS POINTED OUT THAT TO SUPPORT THESE OPERATIONS AND TO FACILITATE THE RAPID BUILD-UP IN AN EMERGENCY AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE FULL PLANS FOR TINIAN, THE HARBOR AT SAN JOSE WILL BE REHABILITATED AND WEST FIELD WILL BE UPGRADED, ALTHOUGH THE DEFENSE DEPARTMENT DOES NOT PLAN TO REORIENT AND LENGTHEN WEST FIELD AT THIS TIME. AMMUNITION STORAGE MAY COME LATER, AND IF IT DOES, A WET SLIP FOR OFF LOADING SHIPS WILL BE BUILT.