

(MPSC RESPONDS TO SEN. HART'S CHARGES)

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SAIPAN, MAR. 17 (MNS)---CHAIRMAN OF THE MARIANAS POLITICAL STATUS COMMISSION (MPSC) EDWARD DLG. PANGELINAN AND CONGRESS OF MICRONESIA SENATOR PEDRO A. TENORIO HAVE RESPONDED TO A LETTER RELEASED BY UNITED STATES SENATOR GARY W. HART (D-COLO) IN WHICH SEN. HART OBJECTED TO A REQUEST FOR \$1.5 MILLION TO COVER TRANSITION EXPENSES IN THE MARIANA ISLANDS TO A NEW COMMONWEALTH STATUS. THE MONEY IS INTENDED TO COVER EXPENSES IN THE TRANSITION OF THE MARIANAS TO A NEW POLITICAL STATUS, INCLUDING THE COST OF A MARIANAS CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION, REFERENDUM, INFRASTRUCTURE NECESSARY FOR A SELF-SUSTAINING ECONOMY AND OTHER RELATED MATTERS, PANGELINAN EXPLAINED IN HIS LETTER.

THE BILL, (S. 326) ACCORDING TO PANGELINAN, HAS BEEN APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY BY THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON INTERIOR AND INSULAR AFFAIRS. SEN. HART IS TRYING TO ELIMINATE SECTION 2 OF S. 326 WHICH IS A REQUEST OF \$1.5 MILLION. IF THE U.S. CONGRESS APPROVES THE FUNDING, THE MONEY WILL BE MADE AVAILABLE IF THE COVENANT IS APPROVED IN A PLEBISCITE.

THE MPSC CHAIRMAN REMINDED SENATOR HART THAT THE TRANSITION FUNDS CANNOT BE OBLIGATED "UNTIL THE CONGRESS (U.S.) APPROVES THE COVENANT." THE BILL, CONTENDED PANGELINAN "IN NO WAY PREJUDICES FULL CONGRESSIONAL CONSIDERATION OF THE PROPOSED COVENANT AT A LATER DATE" BUT ASSURED THAT THE FUNDS WILL BE AVAILABLE IF THE COVENANT IS APPROVED. IF THE TRANSITION FUNDING IS NOT APPROVED, "THAT WOULD DENY FOR...AN ADDITIONAL PERIOD THE BENEFITS OF THE NEW POLITICAL STATUS WE HAVE LONG DESIRED."

"WE HAVE EXPRESSED OUR DESIRE FOR A CLOSE RELATIONSHIP WITH THE UNITED STATES BECAUSE WE BELIEVE VERY FERVENTLY IN THE TIES OF INDIVIDUAL RIGHTS AND FREEDOM, AND THE DEMOCRATIC PHILOSOPHY WHICH HAS SUSTAINED YOUR GOVERNMENT AND PEOPLE FOR ALMOST 200 YEARS. WE SINCERELY BELIEVE AS WELL THAT NO OTHER STATUS WILL PROVIDE OUR PEOPLE WITH THE OPPORTUNITY FOR REALISTIC AND VIABLE SELF-GOVERNMENT," THE LETTER POINTED OUT.

PANGELINAN TOLD SEN. HART THAT HE "DISAGREED" WITH HART'S SUGGESTION THAT THE CONGRESS OF MICRONESIA "HAS ANY LEGAL AUTHORITY OR RIGHT TO DICTATE TO THE PEOPLE OF THE MARIANAS THE KIND OF POLITICAL STATUS WHICH IS MOST APPROPRIATE FOR THEM." HE REMINDED THE SENATOR THAT AS ADMINISTERING AUTHORITY UNDER THE TRUSTEESHIP AGREEMENT THE UNITED STATES HAS AN OBLIGATION TO "RESPECT THE RIGHT OF SELF-DETERMINATION" TO THE PEOPLE OF THE MARIANAS. "THE DECISION OF THE UNITED STATES...TO ENGAGE INSEPARATE STATUS NEGOTIATIONS WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF THE MARIANAS REFLECTED U.S. RECOGNITION OF THIS OBLIGATION," PANGELINAN ASSERTED. FURTHER, HE STATED, "THE ACTION OF THE UNITED STATES IN THIS REGARD HAS BEEN RECOGNIZED BY THE UN TRUSTEESHIP COUNCIL."

IN REGARDS TO SEN. HART'S CHARGE THAT THE U.S. INTENDS TO HOLD A PLEBISCITE AND TAKE OVER THE MARIANAS BEFORE ASKING CONGRESSIONAL APPROVAL OF THE COVENANT, PANGELINAN ADDED THAT THERE IS NO "TAKEOVER PLAN NOR COULD WE AS REPRESENTATIVES OF THE MARIANAS PEOPLE EVER AGREE TO SUCH A PLAN."

CONCERNING SEN. HART'S STATEMENT THAT THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE PLANS TO BUILD A VAST MILITARY COMPLEX ON TINIAN, THE FORMER CONGRESS OF MICRONESIA SENATOR REITERATED THAT HART MUST HAVE BEEN "MISINFORMED" AND THAT THE COVENANT, IF APPROVED BY BOTH SIDES, "WILL PERMIT--BUT DOES NOT REQUIRE--THE UNITED STATES TO LEASE ON LONG TERM BASIS APPROXIMATELY 18,000 ACRES IN THE NORTHERN MARIANAS, MOST OF IT ON TINIAN, FOR DEFENSE PURPOSES." HOWEVER, THE DEFENSE DEPARTMENT LATE LAST YEAR

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ANNOUNCED ITS DECISION TO DEFER CONSTRUCTION OF ANY SUBSTANTIAL FACILITIES ON TINIAN. THE DEFENSE DEPARTMENT PLAN TO USE PORTIONS OF TINIAN FOR MILITARY TRAINING PURPOSES, ACCORDING TO PANGELINAN.

"WE ARE," CONTINUED THE LETTER, "OF COURSE, DISTURBED ABOUT THE UNSEEMLY AND PLAINLY IRRELEVANT STATEMENTS YOU HAVE MADE REGARDING CERTAIN MEMBERS OF THE MPSC. WITH REGARD TO THE VIEWS OF THE PEOPLE OF TINIAN--WHO CONSTITUTE ONLY ABOUT SIX PER CENT OF THE TOTAL POPULATION OF THE MARIANAS--THE FACTS ARE THAT THE LOCAL MUNICIPAL COUNCIL HAS VOTED UNANIMOUSLY TO SUPPORT THE PROPOSED LEASE OF LAND ON THAT ISLAND TO THE UNITED STATES, AND THAT PETITIONS SUPPORTING COMMONWEALTH STATUS...HAVE BEEN SIGNED BY A MAJORITY OF THE TINIAN VOTERS. AND... THE COVENANT WAS UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED JUST THREE WEEKS AGO BY THE MARIANAS DISTRICT LEGISLATURE, WHICH INCLUDES REPRESENTATIVES OF TINIAN."

"SENATOR HART...WE CANNOT BELIEVE THAT YOU WANT TO DENY OUR PEOPLE THEIR RIGHT OF SELF-DETERMINATION, AND THEIR RIGHT TO ESTABLISH A POLITICAL STATUS WHICH IS CONSISTENT WITH OUR DESIRES AND INSTITUTIONS, AND WHICH, MOST IMPORTANTLY, IS CONSISTENT WITH THE PRINCIPLES OF DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT TO WHICH WE HAVE BEEN EXPOSED FOR OVER A QUARTER OF A CENTURY," THE LETTER STATED.

"FURTHERMORE, WE CANNOT BELIEVE THAT YOU WOULD OPPOSE A POLITICAL STATUS WHICH, IF APPROVED BY THE PEOPLE OF THE MARIANAS IN A DEMOCRATICALLY CONDUCTED PLEBISCITE, WOULD PERMIT THE UNITED STATES TO TERMINATE THE WORLD'S ONLY REMAINING TRUSTEESHIP IN A MANNER WHICH IS BOTH CONSISTENT WITH ITS OWN NATIONAL INTEREST, AND WHICH FULLY DISCHARGES THE RESPONSIBILITIES THE UNITED STATES UNDERTOOK IN 1947," THE LETTER CONCLUDED.

COPIES OF THE LETTER HAVE BEEN SENT TO ALL MEMBERS OF THE SENATE. SENATE BILL 326 MAY COME BEFORE THE FULL SENATE FOR ACTION SHORTLY.

(HIGH COMMISSIONER MAKES SAN FRANCISCO SPEECH)

SAN FRANCISCO, MAR. 17 (MNS)---HIGH COMMISSIONER EDWARD E. JOHNSTON WAS THE GUEST SPEAKER BEFORE 400 MEMBERS OF THE COMMONWEALTH CLUB OF CALIFORNIA IN SAN FRANCISCO LAST FRIDAY AND SPOKE ON THE TOPIC - "MICRONESIA - AMERICA'S CHALLENGE"

IN JOHNSTON'S SPEECH, WHICH WAS CARRIED BY 85 RADIO STATIONS ON THE WEST COAST, HE SAID THAT AMERICAN FACE "A GREAT CHALLENGE" IN DISSOLVING THE LAST MAJOR TRUSTEESHIP AND IN BRINGING MICRONESIA'S PEOPLE "INTO THE FULL REALM OF SELF-GOVERNMENT THEY SO RICHLY DESERVE." THE HIGH COMMISSIONER ALSO STATED THAT HE BELIEVED THAT AMERICA WAS "AT LONG LAST MEETING THAT CHALLENGE".

A NUMBER OF FORMER IT EMPLOYEES WERE AMONG THOSE IN ATTENDANCE INCLUDING CHARLES WRIGHT, MR. AND MRS. ARTHUR MONTAGNE AND MRS. DONNA COOK, WIDOW OF FORMER DIRECTOR OF TRANSPORTATION, JAMES V. COOK.

AFTER THE SPEECH, JOHNSTON FLEW BACK TO WASHINGTON TO PARTICIPATE IN ADDITIONAL U.S. CONGRESSIONAL HEARINGS ON THE IT BUDGET. THE SENATE APPROPRIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE WILL HEAR TESTIMONY ON THE PROPOSED 1976 BUDGET ON MARCH 18 AND THE U.S. HOUSE ON MARCH 20.

THE HOUSE INTERIOR COMMITTEE WILL ALSO BE HOLDING HEARINGS ON MARCH 24 ON THE IT REQUEST TO RAISE THE AUTHORIZED CEILING ON APPROPRIATIONS FOR FY 75 FROM \$60 TO \$75 MILLION AND RECOMMENDATIONS TO PLACE THE FY 76 CEILING AT \$80 MILLION.

HIGH COMMISSIONER JOHNSTON IS EXPECTED TO RETURN TO SAIPAN AT THE END OF THE MONTH.

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(WEILBACHER ADDRESSES PONAPE LEGISLATURE)

PONAPE, MAR. 17 (MNS)---IN HIS "STATE OF THE DISTRICT MESSAGE" LAST WEEK TO THE FIRST REGULAR SESSION OF THE THIRD PONAPE DISTRICT LEGISLATURE, ACTING DISTRICT ADMINISTRATOR BERMIN F. WEILBACHER TOLD THE LAWMAKERS THAT INDEPENDENCE STATUS SHOULD BE FURTHER CONSIDERED AND "SPECIFY THE TYPE OF INDEPENDENCE OUR PEOPLE HAVE CHOSEN" SINCE THE CONSENSUS OF PUBLIC OPINION IS FOR INDEPENDENCE.

"THE CHOICE IS FOR THIS BODY TO CHANGE OR STRENGTHEN THIS STAND, AND CERTAINLY YOU MUST MAKE YOUR STAND KNOWN," WEILBACHER SAID. THE ACTING DISTAD WAS REFERRING TO THE PONAPE CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION DELEGATES THAT HAD VISITED THE MUNICIPALITIES TO LEARN THE ASPIRATIONS OF THE PEOPLE ON THE FUTURE GOVERNMENTAL SYSTEM. "...ONE CAN BE POLITICALLY INDEPENDENT AND YET--ECONOMICALLY DEPENDENT," HE ADDED.

WEILBACHER ENLIGHTENED THE LAWMAKERS ABOUT THE PROGRESS PONAPE DISTRICT HAVE MADE DURING THE YEAR. HE ALSO OUTLINED MEASURES WHICH THE ADMINISTRATION WILL SUBMIT SOON FOR ENACTMENT. THESE INCLUDES: THE RETURN OF PUBLIC LAND; RESOURCES AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS; CRIME AND GAMBLING; CHARTER AMENDMENTS RELATING TO SPECIAL SESSIONS; A BUILDING CODE INCORPORATING SAFETY AND PLANNING STANDARDS; LEGISLATIVE APPROVAL OF THE LOCATION OF THE KUSAIE AIRPORT; REPEALING OUTRIGHT GRANTS TO MUNICIPALITIES AND RELYING UPON THE MUNICIPAL AID FUND PROGRAM AND BUDGET ITEMS TO CARRY ON PROGRAMS.

NOTING THAT SOME DISTRICTS HAVE RESORTED TO GAMBLING AND SLOT MACHINES AS A MEANS OF INCREASING REVENUE, WEILBACHER POINTED OUT THAT "... THIS ADMINISTRATION IS OPPOSED TO SUCH DISGUISED FORM OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND WILL DO EVERYTHING IN ITS POWER TO DISCOURAGE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF SUCH ACTIVITIES..."

CONCERNING THE REDUCTION IN COPRA PRICE, HE URGED THE LEGISLATORS TO BEGIN SERIOUS CONSIDERATION OF THE "FATE OF COPRA PRODUCERS" WHO DEPENDS ON COPRA AS A SOLE SOURCE OF INCOME. "WE MUST BEGIN NOW TO PROCESS LOCALLY THE PRODUCTS OF OUR COCONUTS SO THAT THE PRICE OF OUR 'SUNSHIRE COPRA' DOES NOT FLUCTUATE AT THE MERCY OF FOREIGN BUYERS," THE PONAPE ACTING DISTAD SAID.

WEILBACHER ALSO ASKED THE LEGISLATURE TO JOINTLY PROPOSE A MEASURE TO ENCOURAGE FOREIGN INVESTMENT TO DEVELOP MARINE RESOURCES AND RELATED FACILITIES. "THE GOAL OF THE PONAPE DISTRICT MARINE RESOURCES DIVISION IS TO DEVELOP A VIABLE ECONOMIC FISHERY PROGRAM THAT WILL MAKE PONAPE SELF-SUFFICIENT IN FISH PRODUCTS," CONTINUED WEILBACHER. "IT HAS NOT BEEN POSSIBLE TO ATTAIN THIS GOAL DUE TO CONTINUED DIVERSION AND SIMPLE LACK OF NECESSARY FUNDS TO BUILD RUDIMENTARY FACILITIES," HE TOLD THE LEGISLATURE.

CONCERNING AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHY PROGRAM, WEILBACHER SAID THAT THE PROGRAM HAS BEEN SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETED WITH 100 PER CENT AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHIC COVERAGE OF PONAPE ISLAND PROPER, PAKIN, MOKIL AND PINGELAP. WEATHER DID NOT PERMIT COVERAGE TO INCLUDE KUSAIE ISLAND.

CONCERNING ROAD CONSTRUCTION, THE ACTING DISTAD REMINDED THE LAWMAKERS THAT ROADS "ONLY CAN BE BUILT AS FAR AS CERTAIN FUNDS PERMIT" AND THAT "WE SHOULD DEVOTE OUR ENERGIES AND RESOURCES TO SEE THAT PONAPE HAS A COMPLETE ROAD NETWORK--AND SOON. IN THIS REGARD, HE OFFERED ONE CONSIDERATION: "A TOLL SYSTEM WHICH WOULD POSSIBLY ADD TO THE AMOUNT OF MONEY AVAILABLE EACH YEAR MAINLY FOR MAINTENANCE."

CONCLUDING, WEILBACHER POINTED OUT THAT THE "CONSENSUS OF PUBLIC OPINION ON THE ISSUE OF FUTURE STATUS OF INDEPENDENCE, THE DESIRE IS UNITY AND THE REALITY IS THAT WE MAY NEVER ACHIEVE EITHER IF WE DO NOT COME FORWARD NOW AND MAKE A UNIFIED STAND ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT. I HAVE PROPOSED A JOINT-VENTURE DEVELOPMENT AND I SHALL LOOK FORWARD TO A FAVORABLE POSITION FROM THIS BODY."

(MLSC HAS NEW GRANT)

SAIPAN, MAR. 17 (MNS)---THE MICRONESIAN LEGAL SERVICES CORPORATION (MLSC) WILL RECEIVE \$300,000 FOR OPERATING COSTS FOR THE NEXT SIX MONTHS FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION AND WELFARE'S COMMUNITY SERVICES ADMINISTRATION, IT WAS ANNOUNCED IN WASHINGTON LAST WEEK.

ACCORDING TO MONDAY'S (MAR. 17) EDITION OF PACIFIC DAILY NEWS, THE FUNDS WILL BE USED TO ASSIST MLSC IN PROVIDING LEGAL SERVICES COUNSELING AND REPRESENTATION AT THE TRIAL OF APPELLATE LEVELS AS WELL AS BEFORE ADMINISTRATIVE AGENCIES.

FIFTEEN ATTORNEYS WILL BE MAINTAINED IN OFFICES IN SAIPAN, KOROR, PALAU; MOEN, TRUK; MAJURO, YAP AND PONAPE.