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MS PACIFICA WENT AGROUND

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TO WILLIAMS

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SAIPAN, MAY 7 (MNS)---THE MS PACIFICA, A TRUST TERRITORY GOVERNMENT VESSEL, WENT AGROUND IN THE HARBOR AT NASA, JAPAN DURING A STORM ON THE NIGHT OF APRIL 20. THE SHIP, AN EX-U.S. NAVY LSM WITH 27 MICRONESIAN CREWMEN ONBOARD, WENT AGROUND WHILE SHE WAS ANCHORED IN NASA HARBOR AT THE ISLAND OF AMAMI OSHIMA LOCATED SOUTH OF KYUSHU UNDERGOING ENGINE REPAIR AT THE TIME.

THE FOLLOWING MORNING, DURING SALVAGE OPERATION, THE TOWING CABLE PARTED AND THE PACIFICA GROUNDED AGAIN ON A ROCKY LEDGE AT THE BOTTOM OF A STEEP CLIFF WITHIN THE HARBOR. THE CREW WAS RESCUED BY THE JAPAN SAFETY OFFICE'S VESSEL "AMAMI" AND TAKEN SAFELY ASHORE. THEY HAVE BEEN RETURNED TO THE U.S.

THE GOVERNMENT'S VESSEL IS OPERATED BY THE TRANSPORTATION DIVISION AND USED TO SUPPORT OUTER ISLAND CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS THROUGHOUT MICRONESIA. THE SHIP WAS ENROUTE TO PUSAN, KOREA FOR A SCHEDULED DRYDOCKING AND OVERHAUL. AFTER WHICH SHE WAS TO BE CHARTERED BY HANIL DEVELOPMENT COMPANY FOR USE IN THE MARSHALLS TO TRANSPORT EQUIPMENT AND MATERIAL FOR CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS AT JALUIT.

A SPOKESMAN FOR THE TRANSPORTATION DIVISION INDICATED THAT AN INITIAL SURVEY OF THE DAMAGE HAS BEEN COMPLETED AND IT APPEARS THE VESSEL IS SALVAGEABLE. THE SHIP SUSTAINED A NUMBER OF HOLES IN THE BOTTOM AND A 25 FOOT SLASH FOUR (4) FEET WIDE ON THE STARBOARD BOU. WATER FILLS THE ENGINE ROOM AND CREW QUARTERS. NEGOTIATIONS ARE CURRENTLY UNDER WAY WITH TWO SALVAGE COMPANIES TO REFLOAT THE VESSEL. AFTER THE VESSEL IS REFLOATED A COMPLETE SURVEY WILL BE MADE TO DETERMINE THE FEASIBILITY OF REPAIR.

(TWO COUNCILMEN OPPOSES COVENANT)

SAIPAN, MAY 7 (MNS)---TWO SAIPAN MUNICIPAL COUNCILMEN STATED WEDNESDAY THAT THEY WILL CAMPAIGN AGAINST THE PROPOSED COVENANT TO ESTABLISH A COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANAS IN POLITICAL UNION WITH THE UNITED STATES.

JUAN DEMAPAN AND DINO JONES SAID THEY SHIFTED POSITION FOR SEVERAL REASONS. BOTH SAID THERE IS A PROVISION IN THE COVENANT WHICH IS NOT IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE PEOPLE OF THE MARIANAS.

"IN THE COVENANT," DEMAPAN SAID, "THERE IS A PROVISION THAT U.S. CITIZENS CANNOT OWN LAND HERE, I DOUBT VERY MUCH IF THE U.S. CONGRESS WILL ACCEPT THAT."

THE AUTHOR OF THE RESOLUTION ADOPTED BY THE COUNCIL ENDORSING THE PROPOSED COVENANT, DEMAPAN ASKED: "WHAT WILL HAPPEN THEN FOR THOSE PEOPLE WHO VOTED FOR THE COVENANT IF THE U.S. CONGRESS VOTES IT DOWN?"

JONES, WHO VOTED FOR THE RESOLUTION ENDORSING THE COVENANT, SAID THAT HE REGRETTED HIS ACTION. HE SAID HE VOTED FOR THE RESOLUTION BECAUSE "AT THAT TIME, WE WERE BRIEFED ONLY ABOUT THE ADVANTAGES" IF THE MARIANAS SHOULD SEPARATE ITSELF FROM THE OTHER DISTRICTS. NOW I'M BEGINNING TO REALIZE THE DISADVANTAGES IN THE COVENANT," THE SAIPAN COUNCILMAN SAID.

BOTH DEMAPAN AND JONES STATED THAT THEY WILL APPEAR ON TELEVISION AND RADIO TO EXPLAIN WHAT THEY CALLED "VERY IMPORTANT POINTS" IN THE COVENANT.

CONCERNING AMBASSADOR WILLIAMS' RESPONSE TO SENATOR PEDRO TENORIO THAT THE U.S. CANNOT RENEGOTIATE THE COVENANT, JONES SAID HE DOES NOT "BELIEVE" WHAT THE AMBASSADOR SAID.

BOTH COUNCILMEN STRESSED THAT THEY ARE STRONGLY SUPPORTING THE COMMONWEALTH FORM OF GOVERNMENT BUT OPPOSE CERTAIN PROVISIONS IN THE COVENANT. "MAJOR ISSUES FOR OUR PROTECTION AND BENEFITS

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ARE EXCLUDED," JONES SAID REFERRING TO MINIMUM WAGE AND FIRST PREFERENCE FOR JOBS.

REGARDING SEPARATE ADMINISTRATION, DEMAPAN WHO SUBMITTED HIS RESIGNATION RECENTLY, ASKED: "WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF THE MARIANAS BECOME SEPARATED ADMINISTRATIVELY FROM THE OTHER DISTRICTS AND THEN THE U.S. CONGRESS REJECTS THE COMMONWEALTH COVENANT?"

THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS WILL NOT HAVE SELF-GOVERNMENT UNDER THE COMMONWEALTH CONCEPT, JONES MAINTAINED. AS AN EXAMPLE," HE EXPLAINED, "THE U.S. CONSTITUTION, LAWS AND TREATIES WILL ALSO BE MADE APPLICABLE TO THE NORTHERN MARIANAS. I STRONGLY BELIEVE THAT WE WILL HAVE THE SAME TYPE OF GOVERNMENT UNDER THE TRUST TERRITORY OR EVEN WORSE. THE ONLY CHANGE IS THE NAME OF THE GOVERNMENT, WHICH IS COMMONWEALTH."

BOTH JONES AND DEMAPAN WILL LEAVE LATER THIS MONTH TO TESTIFY AT THE UNITED NATIONS HEARING CONCERNING THE PROPOSED COVENANT.

CONTACTED BY MNS WEDNESDAY, SAIPAN MUNICIPAL COUNCIL SPEAKER VICENTE CAMACHO ACKNOWLEDGE THAT THE COUNCIL HAD ACCEPTED THE RESIGNATION OF JUAN DEMAPAN LAST WEEK.

(ULUL PEOPLE OWN LAND; BURNETT RULES)

SAIPAN, MAY 7 (MNS)---THE PEOPLE OF ULUL ISLAND IN THE NAMONUITO ATOLL, TRUK DISTRICT, HAVE BEEN DECLARED OWNERS OF THEIR 400-ACRE ISLAND, ACCORDING TO AN "AMENDED JUDGEMENT" ISSUED BY HIGH COURT CHIEF JUSTICE HAROLD W. BURNETT.

THE AMENDED JUDGEMENT REVERSED A 1967 RULING THAT THE TRUST TERRITORY GOVERNMENT OWNED THE LAND, ACCORDING TO A STORY CARRIED ON WEDNESDAY'S PACIFIC DAILY NEWS.

THE ULUL ISLANDERS' VICTORY OCCURRED WHEN THE TT GOVERNMENT AGREED THAT THE LAND RIGHTFULLY BELONGS TO THEM, THUS ENDING THE LAWSUIT THE PEOPLE BROUGHT LAST YEAR.

THE AGREEMENT WAS REACHED BEFORE THE CASE WENT TO COURT, ACCORDING TO PDM STORY. IN HIS RULING LAST WEEK, BURNETT STATED THAT THE MAY 9, 1967 DECISION, DECLARING THAT THE TT GOVERNMENT OWNED ULUL ISLAND, SHOULD BE SET ASIDE AND THAT THE ISLANDERS ARE THE TRUE OWNERS OF THE LAND.

A MICRONESIAN LEGAL SERVICES COOP. (MLSC) SPOKESPERSON, REPRESENTING THE ULUL ISLANDERS, SAID: "WE'RE OF COURSE PLEASED BY THE RESULT IN THIS CASE. OUR ONLY REGRET IS THAT IT TOOK YEARS OF PROTEST BY THE PEOPLE OF ULUL, EXPENDITURES OF LARGE AMOUNTS OF TIME AND MONEY BY THE MLSC AND, FINALLY, THE FILING OF A MAJOR LAWSUIT TO LET THE GOVERNMENT TO AGREE TO LAND RIGHTS WHICH THE PEOPLE PLAINLY HELD ALL ALONG."

BURNETT'S ORDER ALSO CONFIRMED AGREEMENT THAT THE ULUL SCHOOL SITE "IS DECREED TO BE LAND BELONGING TO THE MUNICIPALITY OF ULUL". IT STATED THAT A LEASE SHOULD BE ENTERED INTO BETWEEN THE MUNICIPALITY AND THE TT GOVERNMENT FOR 50 YEARS FROM WHEN THE GOVERNMENT FIRST BEGAN USING THE LAND.

THE GOVERNMENT PREVIOUSLY HAD ARGUED THAT IT PURCHASED THE ISLAND FROM FLORENTINE CAYMONT ETSCHKEIT FEB. 14, 1957 FOR \$75,000, PDM STORY POINTED OUT.

BUT THE ISLANDERS, REPRESENTED BY MLSC ATTORNEYS SHINA MACMEEKIN AND LAR HELPERN, INSISTED THAT THE ETSCHKEIT FAMILY NEVER HELD TITLE TO ANY ULUL ISLAND.

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(BENGE RETIRES FROM GOVERNMENT)

SAIPAN, MAY 7 (MNS)---CLYDE A. BENCE, COMMUNICATIONS OPERATIONS TRAINING OFFICER, RETIRED FROM THE TRUST TERRITORY GOVERNMENT THIS WEEK AFTER SERVING MORE THAN 16 YEARS.

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BENGE FIRST CAME TO THE TRUST TERRITORY IN 1958 WHEN HE SERVED AS DISTRICT COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER IN PALAU DISTRICT. HE THEN WAS TRANSFERRED TO TRUK WHERE HE BECAME COMMUNICATIONS OPERATIONS OFFICER BEFORE MOVING TO SAIPAN IN 1966 WHERE HE WAS APPOINTED STATION CHIEF OF THE KAGMAN RELAY/CONTROL STATION.

IN HIS MOST RECENT ASSIGNMENT, BENGE WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR ADMINISTERING THE OPERATIONS TRAINING PROGRAM FOR THE COMMUNICATIONS DIVISION.

BENGE IS MARRIED TO THE FORMER TOSIE UEDA FROM PALAU. THEY HAVE TWO CHILDREN, JOHN 12, AND NORENE, 10.

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