

TWELFTH SAIPAN LEGISLATURE
SAIPAN, M. I.

February 23, 1960

Conference between the Legislature and his Excellency D. H. Nucker, High Commissioner of the Trust Territory and Rear Admiral W. F. A. Wendt, and representatives of the U. S. Naval Administering Authority of the Saipan District.

8:30 A. M.

SPEAKER: The house will now come to order. Before going over our discussion, I would like to take this opportunity in introducing the members of the Twelfth Saipan Legislature, our Mayor, and members of the District Commissioners.

From the left hand corner is the Honorables Elias P. Sablan, Francisco S. Pangelinan, Antonio S. Palacios, Felipe Ruak, the Mayor of Tinian--Mr. Antonio Borja, Leon T. Camacho, Antonio A. Diaz, Juan B. Blanco, Vicente D. Sablan, Gabriel F. Borja, and the Honorable William S. Reyes.

Behind me is the Honorable Ignacio V. Benavente, Mayor of Saipan. Next, the District Commissioners --- Mr. Jose Magofna of Tanapag District, Mr. Gregorio Camacho of San Roque District, Mr. Mariano Aquino of Susupe District, Mr. Antonio Regolofoi of District No. 4, Mr. Tomas P. Sablan of San Antonio District, Mr. Isidro S. Tudela of Chalan Kanoa District No. 2, and Mr. Crispin S. Cruz of Oleai District.

At this time may I extend on behalf of the Legislature and the people of Saipan our sincere welcome to His Excellency Mr. High Commissioner, Admiral Wendt, and official Parties, and I sincerely hope that our meeting this morning would serve satisfactory to whatever purpose their visit to Saipan may be. As I understand that some of our visitors this morning will return to Guam after this conference, therefore, I urged all of you my fellow congressmen to express your views and commends as much brief as possible. And now I will turn over the floor to Admiral Wendt.

ADMIRAL: Mr. Speaker, Mr. Nucker, members of the Legislature, Ladies and Gentlemen. As you know I have said before that I will be back soon, and I am glad that I can keep up with my word. I am particularly pleased of having the opportunity of bringing with me such friends of Saipan as his Excellency, High Commissioner Nucker, as you probably know shortly will leave to make reports on the Trust Territory before the United Nations. And old friends of Saipan Captain Findley and Commander Law. I think it is best to let the High Commissioner Mr. Nucker, and the various people here explain the purpose of this meeting. However, I would like to say this, that I am happy to be here again, and that I am happy to be in this excellent gathering this morning.

SPEAKER:

Our next speaker is his Excellency the High Commissioner.

MR. NUCKER:

I am pleased to be able to come to Saipan through the kind offer of Admiral Wendt. Last year when I was here, I was in the company of the United Nations Trusteeship Council Visiting Mission. They visited Saipan after having visited all the other districts in the Trust Territory. And most recently Saipan was also visited by a United States Congressional Committee under the Chairmanship of Congressman Aspinall. You were also visited by a group of Legislators from Guam, and had quite a session with these gentlemen. The reason I've mentioned these three groups of visitors is that I know, that as a result, there has been many thoughts has been given as to the future of Saipan would be. Those thoughts range from the possibility of Saipan coming into the Interior Administration, other possibility, Saipan becoming a part of Guam, and also to the fact that many of you hoped Saipan remain under the Navy. I have personally heard many rumors, rumors not found in facts, rumors which will originate from someone's imagination. I also know that there has been petitions send to the United Nations from Saipan. Knowing these things I wanted to talk to the Legislators to tell them what should have been the facts, rather than the rumors. Just a little over months ago, about January 15th to be exact, I was in Washington, and while in Washington, had some time with the Secretary of the Interior and members of his Staff. Also had discussion with the officials in the Pentagon concerning Saipan. Much thoughts and much discussions has been given to the problems of Saipan becoming Interior Trust Territory. As you people know, the Trusteeship Council has recommended that Saipan be transferred back to the Interior. Since the United States administered the Trust Territory under a Trusteeship Agreement, the United States then must give credit to, and study the recommendations made by the Trusteeship Council. We do not necessarily have to do what they recommends. But we must study and see what could be done in regards to their recommendation. It is because the move has been recommended by the Trusteeship Council a number of times, the Department of the Interior and the Department of Navy has been thoroughly discussing the problem. I want the people of Saipan to know two things. One, neither the Department of the Navy nor the Department of the Interior want to take an action which would be injurious to the Saipanese. And two, that the Department of the Navy and the Department of the Interior are discussing these problems in a very friendly atmosphere and has no quarrel each with the other. I am very pleased to be able to be with you today, to tell you in a very direct fashion that there has been no decision, absolutely no decision, as to any change or transfer, and to assure you, and I hope you will believe this, that if and when there is a decision, you people will be inform directly and immediately.

MR. NUCKER cont'd: You will not have to based as information on rumors. One, there has been no dicison. Two, if there is a dicision you will be told immediately, and three, there is in my opinion, there is no disicion in sight or in immediate future. The primary reason that I want to come to Saipan is that in April, I must appear before the Trusteeship Council, again, given our reports on various things of the Trust Territory. I like to see each of our District before going to New York to report. Today, it gives me an opportunity to drive around the Island to see things in general and ask questions in particule, of your people here so that I may thorough represent Saipan when I report to the Trusteeship Council. I thank you. (applause)

SPEAKER: Our next speaker is Captain Findley.

CAPTAIN FINDLEY: Mr. Speaker, members of the Legislature, Mayor Benavente, Ladies and Gentlemen. I'm glad to be back. As Admiral ~~Estad~~ told you he will return here during his previous visit to Saipan, I ~~said the same thing~~. Only it was four years ago, much too long of time. I hope I'll do better next time. Admiral Wendt, and the High Commissioner will return back to Guam this afternoon. Cdr. Carey, Commander Law and myself, will remain in your Island until the later part of the week. I'm looking forward with great deal of pleasure of meeting familiar face and many familiar spot. (applause)

SPEAKER: At this time I will give the floor to members of the Legislature, and again, may I say this that I do hope that you express your views and commends as much brief as possible instead of prolonging.

Honorable Elias Sablan?

E. SABLAN: No commends.

MR. PANGELINAN: No statement Mr. Speaker.

A. PALACIOS: I have no commends at this time Mr. Speaker, but I would like to express my sincere appreciation for the presence of these gentlemen here today.

RUAK: No commend Mr. Speaker.

CAMACHO: No commend.

A. DIAZ: Welcome to Saipan your Excellency High Commissioner, Admiral Wendt, Captain Findley, and Commander Law. I would like to make a commend in regards to the High Commissioners remark. I sincerely hope and hereby memorialize you gentlemen to assist as accomplish public wish and sentiment. And that is by Marianas Unification. The situation at the present on Saipan is getting worse, and I don't attempt or to imply that the Navy is at fault. The administration of the Navy to Saipan is excellent and warrants recognition. However, I am incline to say that our economy is much too poor.

DIAZ cont'd: Marianas Unification is what the people here wants, and it is supported by plural majority. The people of Saipan and Guam are the same people, same everything.

SPEAKER: Mr. Diaz, you are not confining your subject of discussion with the purpose of this meeting. Please comply accordingly.

DIAZ: Mr. Speaker, I am trying to express my point of view. And further, if I may, I want to emphasize that a military unit is not equipt to run civil population and civil function. I thank you.

CAPTAIN FINDLEY: Mr. Speaker, may I said this in regards to Re-integration matter. Perhaps most of you gentlemen knows that I am at the present stationed at the Pentagon in the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations. All letters, correspondence, petitions, generated here on Saipan will go to ComNavMarianas Admiral Wendt, then it goes to the Commander-in-Chief Pacific Fleet, and finally to my office in Washington. I can assure you gentlemen that all matters, and certainly most important matters, such as the matter of re-integration with Guam are on the study of a possible transfer to the Department of the Interior as has been outlined carefully by High Commissioner Nucker that it will receive an utmost careful study before any action is to be taken. And you people here on Saipan will be apprise and learn of the outcome that has been made in Washington immediately.

SPEAKER: Mr. High Commissioner?

MR. NUCKER. I simply would like to say that I expect to be ask questions by the Trusteeship Council in regards to actions taken by this Legislative Body and the Guam Legislature concerning re-integration. I want to say this that I am not against or for reintegration other than to talk about any idea that may come forward, that any such change must come about as a result of study over a number of ~~years~~ ^{years}. It can not be entertained simply because some people wanted or some people becomes emotional about it. There must be a study to it. Such practice matters must be thought through, such as the financing, who is responsible to what. The relationship between the peoples concerned such as the Guamanian and Saipanese, the degree of representation of Saipan and Guam, considerable considerations must be given to the attitude of other countries of the world. The United States does not want to be known as the colonial power, a country going out grabing land. There are many many theory of important factors which must thoroughly discussed. No country takes action simply because few people wants or desire something, or becomes emotional about it. I will repeat, I am not expressing an opinion for or against reintegration. I am only pointing out problems, I mean only to say that our new States took the Congress of the United States many many years before deciding or making a dicision in regards to accepting them as members of the Union. So just to let you know that the Congress of the United States and the government of the United States will not act over night just for Saipan when it took so long to decide for Statehood Alaska and Hawaii. It is an involved matters, it takes a lot of time.

ADMIRAL WENDT: I just want to say this, if I may, that in regards to your economic situation is a matter that concerns me. I want to make sure that you realized that I will do my best to help you. But one word of caution that you must also start and begin and continue to help yourself. By doing both together, we can increase your economy.

SPEAKER: Mr. F. T. Palacios?

F. PALACIOS: Mr. Speaker, I came late due to medical reason, so I would like to pass on this opportunity to my other colleagues.

SPEAKER: Hon. Blanco?

BLANCO: First of all, I would like to express my sincere welcome to his Excellency Mr. Nucker, Admiral Wendt, Captain Findley, Commander Law, Mr. Spivey and Commander Carey. I am most anxious to learn the mission or the purpose of your visit to our Island. However, through Mr. Nucker's explanation, I am indeed very pleased to know that no decision has been made. Now, in regards to the reintegration of Saipan and Guam, I am pro-reintegrationist for the reasons that we are kinsmen and two, because we (saipanese) have been shifting allegiance from one flag to the other, hence, we do not have a future. I want to see that Saipan will remain under American jurisdiction, because our children are accustomed to it and we pride ourself all Americans. However, I realized that all these takes time and may I say this that I prefer to see the Naval Administration remain here until such time when the Marianas Reintegration took place. Thank you.

SPEAKER: Mr. V. D. Sablan?

V.D. SABLAN: It has been in my thoughts and for some time I have made studies in connection with reintegration and the matter of changing the administration of Saipan from the military unit to a civilian agency. Upon the recent visit by Admiral Wendt to Saipan, I was rather surprised about the subject being discuss in regards to the transfer of Administration here on Saipan. Very much reciprocated by the remarks of Mr. Nucker that rumors originated from one person and transmitted to the other person. This I do not know which person generated such rumors. Personally, I am conform to the point that administration of civilian population will not always be done by a military unit, and sooner or later, it will be turn over to a civilian agency of the Government. But the point is I am rather frustrated to the fact that you dignitary gentlemen come to Saipan just to advice us in regards to the transfer of administratio as alleged through rumors. The Naval Administration of Saipan is excellent and encouraging to our needs and our problems. (5)

V.D. SABLAN cont'd: During one occasion, Saipan was administered by the Department of the Interior and much of our problems were not solutioned because their time here were short. I am in confirmitive with Mr. Nucker's statement that all these matters required much thought and study, hence, public wish and sentiment are the prerequisite factors of public representation. I am representating the people of Saipan. The people here informed that they want the Navy to remain as our administrator. I thank you. (applause)

SPEAKER: Yes, Mr. Aldan:

ALDAN: I am rather surprised to hear the subject reintegration being discussed today and I am certain that this matter will not come possible for many many more decades. I am agreeable with Mr. Nucker's remark that the origination of all these were due to emotional and without proper study on the subject matter. The plebiscite conducted in the past (Eleventh Legislature) in regards to reintegration, the people here indicate their desires by majority to unify with Guam, however, I am confident that should another plebiscite be conducted on Saipan, 90 per cent of the people of Saipan will oppose the reintegration. I thank you.

SPEAKER: Mr. G. Borja?

G. BORJA: No commend.

SPEAKER: Mr. Reyes?

REYES: Mr. Speaker, your Excellency Mr. High Commissioner, Admiral Wend and Captain Findley. I just want to say that I have much faith in the United States Government and that thank you for your very encouraging remarks. I know that the U. S. Government as Mr. Nucker pointed out will not do anything that is detrimental to the people of Saipan.

SPEAKER: M. Sablan?

M. SABLAN: My humble appreciation for your presence here today. Now, relative to the reintegration or the unification of Saipan and Guam whereby a plebiscite was conducted by the past Legislature is poor and rather inequity. This matter was discussed among the legislators here and as a result it was pointed out that another plebiscite should be conducted. Changing of administration from one agency to the other is not an easy things to do. This is very complicate matter and should not be based on emotional point of view. Our legislature is governed by a parliamentary procedure and the move to initiate another plebiscite was defeated. As I am representing the people of Saipan may I say this that those who favors before the changing of administration of Saipan are now reversed and favors to see that the Navy remains here. I am pleased to learn that some of you gentlemen will remain here until the later part of the week.

M. SABLAN cont'd: The Navy on Saipan is doing an excellent job for our people and our Island. I sincerely want and do hope that they remain here as long as they wish. I thank you.

SPEAKER: Dr. Palacios?

DR. PALACIOS: Before I'll proceed with my comments and opinions, I would like to clarify further the purpose of this mission or conference. Is this meeting today is a subject of the future Marianas Reintegration, or is it the changing of Naval Administration to the other agency of the government?

MR. NUCKER: I might answer that. Before you came in I said that there has been no decision made imminent or immediate in regards to the change of administration. I said this just so that to eliminate the rumors going around here in regards to changing of administration. Now, in regards to the reintegration, I stated that this matter takes lots of time and study. It is an involved matter.

DR. PALACIOS: I think the matter on reintegration is too great of subject to discuss now in a very short of time allotted, so I will confine myself to the discussion on the subject of changing of administration. As I stated before that among my colleagues we do have different of opinions. Now it makes me wonder whether always the opinion of the layman leads to the benefit of the people. This is one matter to be consider. Whether the opinion of the Saipanese prefer Naval government or civil government, it is a very little concern for myself. My concern is this. Which government will benefit my people? Can anyone answer that? I don't believe so. There are certain advantages and disadvantages from the two government. However, which one will outweigh the other. Whether 100 percent the people of Saipan wants the Navy or the civil government, I will repeat again, in my opinion this matter is scanty, because I believe that the opinion of the layman will not always lead to the benefit of the laymen. Another, is it justifying to remarked on the Interior Department when they administered Saipan before, that their help to the Saipanese were so limited when their time here was much too short of time? I don't believe so. I still say that I do not know which one is better. I think this matter should be taken up to the higher authority and people who are more familiar with political science. Again, may I extend my gratitude for coming to Saipan.

MAYOR: May I say that I am gratified to know through Mr. Nucker's statement that there is no decision has been made as to the changing of administration of Saipan. We are not anxious to see the Navy leave Saipan. We are happy with them. I thank you.

MR. NUCKER:

I would like to say --- that by simply saying, I am extremely interested and very please with you people around the table have said. Particularly when you have expressed your pleasure with the Navy Administration. I have known for sometime that the Navy has done very many good things for Saipan and by hearing from you people now in front of the Navy that you are happy for what has been done. Dr. Palacios mentioned that the opinion of the laymen are not always right because the laymen will not know all of the fact involved. This is a very good observation and at times can be very true, but I want to add my part--- The United States government, which is above the Navy or the Trust Territory Government has one primary job, above all others in this Trust Territory, which includes Saipan. And that is to so administer the area either through the Navy or the Trust Territory Government in such a way as to cause or permit the people of the Trust Territory to feel free to express their desires and their opinions through an elected body of men. Then the administering authority having heard what the people's thinks and feels through an elected representative, has the responsibility of given very deep and thorough consideration to what they have heard. This is democracy, and this is what we are trying to teach throughout all the Trust Territory. And to sit here today, and know that the Navy has created such a good spirit and feeling of democracy and you people shown by what you have said today makes me quite happy regardless of whether or not I might agree or disagree with you. I feel very happy for what you have said. Only one other statement. You have evidenced that you have learned the rights under democracy to express yourself. I sincerely hope that you have also learned that under democracy you have the responsibility to thought yourself one follows the others, and when one follows the others, you will have good time of Saipan as good as can be expected under any branch of United States government.

The Navy has done a good job. Thanks a lot. (applause)

ADMIRAL WENDT: I just want to say thank you for meeting with you this morning, hearing commends of the High Commissioner and Captain Findley. I want you to know that I appreciate your willingness to take some of your time in coming here for this meeting. This is truly a democracy. (applause)

CAPTIAN FINDLEY: I just want to say that it is nice to be home again. (applause)

SPEAKER: The conference is now declare adjourned. 10:30 a. m.