

Guam, Saipan Residents Asking Marianas Islands Be 'Reunited'

(Editor's note: The author, who recently joined the staff of the MORNING STAR, is one of the few newsmen to enter the Saipan district since WW II. He lived in the Marianas for nearly five years. This is the first of two articles.)

By RICHARD R. WILLIAMS

Residents of Guam and Saipan are anxiously awaiting further action from the United Nations concerning the so-called re-integration of the Marianas islands.

Acting Governor of Guam, Marcellus Graeme Boss, received official information last month that the United Nations plans to send a UN team to the western Pacific islands to determine if the people of the Marianas want to be incorporated into one government under the framework of the Organic Act for Guam.

The principle Marianas islands include Guam, Saipan, Tinian and Rota.

Both Saipan and Tinian are closed to newsmen by order of the Chief of Naval Operations. The author was permitted to enter Saipan last October to cover events of UN Day celebrations, only after a request to CNO and favorable endorsement from RAdm. William L. Erdman, former commander naval forces Marianas.

Persons other than newsmen may enter Saipan and Tinian after the issuance of a security clearance from the naval commander. It has been a policy to deny entry clearance to persons other than American citizens, and then only to persons who have specific business there. Salesmen are discouraged as well as "tourists."

by Guam's 21 seat house, Sablan noted that the language and customs of the people of Saipan and Guam are identical and that many people of the two islands are blood relatives.

The Saipan legislature followed up Sablan's measure by introducing a similar resolution which was passed by a majority vote in the 12 seat house. The only difference in the two measures was, the Guam legislature referred to "re-integration." They based this on the contention that the two peoples were one during the Spanish regime up to 1899.

Each year the two legislative bodies bring the question back to life by reintroducing resolutions and forwarding copies to the UN, the president, the Department of Interior, Trust Territory headquarters, the governor of Guam and the commander naval forces Marianas.

Two years ago a five man survey team from the UN toured the Pacific Trust Territory. During their stops at Guam and Saipan they were queried as to their feelings on the subject of integrating all of the Marianas into one government. The UN members parried the questions by answering, "we intend to look into the matter."

The subject often comes up in "coffee break" conversations in Guam, and the consensus seems to be highly in favor of integrating. The same held true on Saipan last Octo-

ber when this writer visited there.

Many feel Saipan could become not only an agriculture source for Guam civilian markets, but a recreational island as well. Saipan today has many vine covered momentos of a great war. Look three miles across the channel to Tinian and one may see where the end of that great war started.

There are still many evidences of the great precautionary measures that were taken in the assembly of the A-bombs that were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Tinian is criss-crossed with runways, taxi ways and reinforced concrete buildings, now being taken over by the ever creeping jungle.

Saipan has some of the most attractive beaches in the Pacific, many photogenic scenes and boasts one of the best kept and nicely layed out nine hole golf courses in the Pacific.

The Saipanese are friendly and energetic. Under the Japanese, from 1898 to 1941, they learned to make the land work for them. They produced such crops as sugar, tapioca, coffee, citrus fruits and many varieties of vegetables. Remnants of a narrow guage railway to the sugar plantation still stand.

Predominately Catholic, the Saipanese take their religion seriously. Many of them operate small village stores; many are successful farmers, selling their produce to the military on the island and in Guam.

Rota is under the administration of the Pacific Trust Territory and permission to enter this island may be granted by the High Commissioner of the Pacific Trust Territory. But here again, there is a "closed door" policy. The High Commissioner, Delmus H. Nucker, apparently does not want to open any part of the Pacific Trust Territory to tourists. There has even been some indications that the door is closed to American businessmen in Guam who would like to sell their wares to the many stores within the vast trust territory area.

However, even if the Navy and Trust Territory did become more liberal in their policies there are two problems. Transportation within the islands is limited. The trust territory operates an inter island airline but use of it is primarily for administrative purposes and for transportation of trust territory personnel on official business.

The other problem is housing facilities for transient persons. On Saipan and Tinian the Navy must limit the travel of its own personnel because of limited transient housing facilities. Rota has no transient facilities and neither do the other islands in the Carolines, Marshalls and other areas which comprise the Pacific Trust Territory.

Six years ago Guam Congressman James T. Sablan introduced a resolution asking that the Marianas islands be integrated into the framework of the Guam government.

In the body of his resolution, which was unanimously adopted