

J. M. W. Olson

DRAFT:JMW:EEA:ml 9/16/74

Hon J. Bennett Johnston, Jr.
Chairman, Subcommittee on Territories
and Insular Affairs
Room 432
Russell Senate Office Building
WashDC 20510

Dear Senator Johnston,

Your letter of September 5 reached me just before our hearings of last Wednesday and I am pleased to have this opportunity to comment further on the subject of our Tinian requirements. I very much appreciated the opportunity to appear before you and other members of the Senate Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs. The written statement submitted at that time eever provides background for many of your questions, but I am happy to provide further amplification.

Since December 1972 the United States has held four formal rounds of negotiations with the Marianas Political Status Commission (MPSC) which includes two representatives of Tinian in its membership of 15, and reached agreement on most substantive points which would bring the Marianas District under U.S. sovereignty and establish it as a commonwealth once the Trusteeship is terminated. As part of the negotiations the MPSC including the two representatives from Tinian agreed to make available to the federal government 17,475 acres of land in the island of Tinian to be developed over the next seven years as a major joint services military base. This comprises about two-thirds of the twenty-five thousand acres on the island. Almost half of the total area in both the northern and central part of the island has been under U.S.



lease of indefinite duration for possible military use and set aside as so-called "military retention land". The remainder will have to be acquired.

Tinian Mayor Felipe Mendiola's letter speaks to this issue. Mr. Mendiola, who recently won a close election for mayor on Tinian, has been thoroughly informed of our military needs on Tinian and of the decisions of the MPSC. It is not surprising that he and many of his constituents are not enthusiastic about having the federal government acquire this additional land. Others welcome the U.S. presence. The decision of the MPSC however, appear to represent a position agreed to by a large majority of all the Mariana Islands citizens. It should be noted that the total population of Tinian is less than 700 persons out of a total of 15,000 in the Marianas as a whole.

I believe that this matter is properly a subject for negotiations and has been resolved to our satisfaction and to the satisfaction of most of the people of the Marianas. Mayor Mendiola and his constituents will be the most affected but I believe their recourse is still through their political processes which must balance the individual good of limiting the displacement of some families on Tinian to that of meeting the wishes of the larger majority of the people of the Marianas.

I would like to take this opportunity to again thank you for the reception given to me by you and the Senate Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs during my most recent testimony.

Regards,

FHW

