



2nd Marianas History Conference

ONE Archipelago, Many Stories: Integrating Our Narratives

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American Era

of

History of the Mariana Islands

Three of Three



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The Early Political Status Talks on Saipan In The Early 1970'S Leading To The Plebiscite Vote On Us Commonwealth Status Of The Northern Mariana Islands

A Personal Perspective

By Guadalupe Camacho Borja-Robinson

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Abstract: From the ruins of World War II, Saipan has traveled a long journey to become a resort island for tourists from Asia and Russia. Today on Saipan, the Hyatt Regency, Pacific Islands Club and other major hotels cater to tourists who enjoy the island's tropical waters and sandy beaches. How have the indigenous people of Saipan adapted to the economic and social changes that have taken place in the island in the last 68 years? As a Chamorro woman who was born on Saipan after the war and who lived and experienced many of those changes, I will discuss some of those economic and social transitions. This paper is not intended to be an exhaustive review; it merely is based on my experiences and observations.

Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. My name is Guadalupe Borja-Robinson, a married Chamorro woman from Saipan in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI). It is an honor for me to speak before you today.

I became interested in speaking at this conference when I realized that, as an indigenous Chamorro woman from Saipan who has lived, experienced, and observed some of my island's most profound political, economic and cultural changes, I have insights that I can share with other people at a conference such as this. I hope that by the end of my presentation you will agree.

I have spent most of my professional life on Saipan as a writer for different government agencies and as an English teacher at the college and high school level. In my early years after graduation from college, I worked as a writer for the Public Information Office of the Trust Territory (TT) Government on Saipan and later at the Pacific Daily News on Guam. I have always been interested in learning more about

Marianas history, especially since my early education only taught me about America: its history, government, and the like. It was only until I started my undergraduate studies at the University of Hawai'i in 1966 that my curiosity about Marianas history developed as an outside interest.

I was born on Saipan after World War II, and I received my early education at Mount Carmel School on Saipan. After high school graduation from Mount Carmel in 1965, I applied and was accepted as a third grade teacher at Chalan Kanoa Elementary School. At that time, Saipan was administered by the US Trust Territory Government.

As an agency of the Marianas District of the Trust Territory Government, the Marianas Education Department at that time accepted high school graduates to teach elementary school under the supervision of a certified teacher. I enjoyed teaching my third grade students, but I learned my first lesson in life. I realized that no matter how hard I worked, I could only receive the salary designated for the position: approximately 32 cents an hour because I was not a college graduate. That is when I decided to apply to attend college.

A year later in 1966 I received an East West Center grant to begin my undergraduate studies in education at the University of Hawai'i in Hilo and Honolulu. At the University of Hawai'i an introductory course, Introduction to Physical Anthropology, sparked my interest in learning more about my history and my people. However, books about Northern Marianas history at that time were limited.

Some time after returning to Saipan in 1971, I became employed by the Public Information Office of the Trust Territory Government. Saipan was the headquarters of the Trust Territory. Working for the Public Information Office gave me a first-hand opportunity to observe the first meeting in December 1972 between the members of the Marianas Political Status Commission headed by Edward Pangelinan and the American negotiators led by Ambassador Franklin Haydn Williams at the Royal Taga Hotel on Saipan. (The World Resort Hotel today has replaced the Royal Taga Hotel at the same location in Susupe, Saipan.)

At the December 1972 meeting, I remember the American negotiators in their US Mainland suits and the Marianas status group, some of whom wore suits while others wore island shirts. The members of the Marianas status group were well-respected island leaders from Saipan, Tinian and Rota, but I saw the meeting as “city folks”

negotiating with island leaders who were smart, but many of whom did not have the formal education and sophistication that the American negotiators had.

During the year that I worked at the Public Information Office, I remember that the US and the Marianas status groups each gave little or no public education on the political choices the people of the Northern Marianas could consider. The only status that was discussed was a close political relationship with the American family, or commonwealth status. For us Chamorros, the word “family” means closeness; it implies that the United States would want only the best for the Northern Marianas.

The little or no political education that was offered in 1972 did not appear right to me. I believed there should have been extensive public education on the statuses of commonwealth, free association, and independence so that the people could make an intelligent choice. The other five Trust Territory island districts at that time were considering free association and independence (Farrell).

So while working for the Public Information Office, I approached my supervisor, James Manke, about writing an article for the *Micronesian Reporter*, the quarterly magazine the PIO published for the Trust Territory Government. My article would survey the four American territories of Guam, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, and American Samoa. Mr. Manke told me to go ahead.

Published in the 1972 Third Quarter issue of the *Micronesian Reporter* and titled “A Survey of American Territories,” my article pointed out that there were many advantages of being an American territory, such as American citizenship and federal benefits, but there were also disadvantages. (Note: The people of American Samoa are considered American nationals, not citizens.)

The essence of my article in the *Micronesian Reporter* was that as an American territory, we would have a measure of self-government, but we would be governed by laws made in Washington, DC. We also would not be able to vote for the US president. In effect, we would become second-class American citizens.

Reviewing newspaper articles at the Archives of the Northern Marianas College helped me remember some of those early political status talks. I also interviewed Juan Sablan Del Rosario, an indigenous Chamorro journalist who witnessed first-hand those early political status talks as a staff member of the Marianas delegation to the Congress of Micronesia. Del Rosario agreed that the political status message expressed to our

people was one-sided, in favor of commonwealth. There were a few local leaders who urged more public education on the status of free association which the other five island districts of the Trust Territory were considering. The Carolinian member of the Marianas status group, Felix Rabauliman, urged more public education on the status of free association and independence, but his view and that of other Carolinians in Saipan were certainly a minority (Farrell 593, 599).

I left the Public Information Office in 1973 to work for the Pacific Daily News on Guam. The Marianas Political Status Commission in 1974 started holding village meetings on Saipan, Tinian, and Rota to explain commonwealth status to the people. The meetings were conducted in Chamorro, so the Pacific Daily News sent me to cover those village meetings.

At those meetings, I remember the village commissioners on Saipan and other village leaders on Tinian and Rota saying that commonwealth status would improve the lives of the people. The late Fernando Benavente, the village commissioner of San Antonio village on Saipan, is quoted in a Pacific Daily News article (8). Speaking in Chamorro, Benavente said he favors commonwealth status “because it provides a tax system in which taxes remain in the islands ‘for roads and so forth’ and thus would be most beneficial to the Northern Marianas” (8).

In a newspaper article by the Micronesian News Service (MNS) which was published in the Pacific Daily News, two Saipan Municipal Council members, Dino Jones and Juan Demapan, questioned certain provisions of the Covenant (53). (The Micronesian News Service was the official news service of the Trust Territory Government). In the news article, Dino Jones said, “the US Constitution, laws and treaties will...be made applicable to the Northern Marianas” (53).

In recent interviews on Saipan, Del Rosario noted that the economy of Saipan under the Naval Technical Training Unit (commonly known as the NTTU time) from 1952 to 1962 was good. He said, “There were many jobs for locals and the minimum wage was 75 cents an hour; under the Trust Territory Government the minimum wage was 16 cents an hour and there were very few jobs.”

Del Rosario also recalled those village meetings on Saipan, Tinian and Rota before the plebiscite vote on commonwealth status in June 1975. He described those village meetings as “very flowery presentations of the benefits that would come under commonwealth”. Del Rosario recalled the late Felipe Mendiola, the speaker of the

Tinian Municipal Council, telling him (Del Rosario) in Chamorro, “Let’s vote for it (commonwealth status) for our children’s future”.

So an improved minimum wage, US citizenship, and other federal benefits were highlighted during those village meetings on Saipan, Tinian and Rota. I remember little discussion on the disadvantages of commonwealth status. Jose Cruz, or “Jose’n Pinchang” represented the Marianas Status Commission at those village meetings. An intelligent and charismatic type of person who later became mayor of Tinian, Pinchang only discussed the advantages of commonwealth status: US citizenship, a higher minimum wage, and federal benefits. At those village meetings, some people questioned certain provisions of the Covenant, but “Pinchang” refuted each criticism (Pacific Daily News, May 9, 1975: 8).

In recent newspaper accounts on Saipan, Governor Eloy Inos and other lawmakers have criticized the recent unilateral activities of the US military on Pagan, the Air Force plans to build a divert airfield near Saipan airport, and other issues. In regard to the proposed divert airfield, Inos said that its request for 33 acres of land on Saipan for the next 50 years “is quite an undesirable conclusion as it would impede future commercial development in the area”(Saipan Tribune front page, August 12, 13).

In a recent online Pacific Daily News article dated August 17, 2013, the US military is quoted, “The plan to use Tinian as a live-fire training range and transient base camp for Marianas as well as for Pagan to host amphibious landing exercises in addition to live-fire training is part of a broader plan to develop a “Marianas hub” under the US Pacific Command” (2).

Oral Interview and Literature Review

Juan Sablan Del Rosario, an indigenous Chamorro journalist on Saipan with more than 40 years of writing experience, recalled in recent interviews those early political status talks in the early 1970’s on Saipan, including the village meetings on Saipan, Tinian and Rota. Del Rosario remembered that the village leaders at the meetings supported the Covenant to provide a better future for their children and grandchildren. A staff writer for the Marianas delegation to the Congress of Micronesia in the early 1970’s, Del Rosario also wrote for the Micronesian News Service during that period. Today Del Rosario writes a daily column in English and Chamorro for the Saipan Tribune newspaper on issues affecting the Commonwealth.

Don Farrell's *History of the Northern Mariana Islands*, published in 1991 by the Public School System of the NMI, is the first comprehensive textbook about the Northern Mariana Islands (NMI). The book covers the islands' different periods: prehistoric, Spanish, German, Japanese, then World War II. The US military overtook Japanese forces in critical battles on Saipan and Tinian, which led to Japan's surrender of the war in 1945.

Farrell's book also covers Saipan under the Naval Technical Training Unit, then all of the Northern Marianas coming under the US Department of Interior in 1962. As a district of the TTPI, the NMI became dissatisfied with the status quo and sought separate talks with the US. The US began political status talks with the Congress of Micronesia status group as early as 1971.

In Chapter 17 of his book, *Negotiating the Covenant*, Farrell discusses the steps the leaders of the NMI took to become a permanent part of the "American political family." The Marianas District Legislature created the Marianas Political Status Commission in 1972 to negotiate a close political relationship with the United States. Members of the Commission met with US negotiators until the people of the NMI voted in a plebiscite in 1975 for US Commonwealth status.

"American Territories – A Survey" is an article I wrote in 1972 for the *Micronesian Reporter*, the quarterly magazine produced by the Trust Territory Government. I wrote the article to show that the four American territories of Guam, Puerto Rico, American Samoa and the Virgin Islands each had a measure of self-government, but it was Washington, DC that really had control of the islands. American Samoans are American nationals, but the people of Guam, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands are American citizens.

In the *Micronesian Reporter* article, I discussed what being a US territory may mean for the Northern Marianas. The article surveyed the government and the economy of those four American territories. I wrote that although the people of those territories are American citizens (except American Samoans who are American nationals), they cannot vote for the US president. They also do not have a voting delegate to the US Congress where laws are made. In essence, my article asked the question whether the people of the NMI should submit to political controls in which they would have no say in exchange for projected economic development benefits.

For this paper, I also reviewed several newspaper articles written on Saipan and Guam in the early 1970's. In the May 9, 1975 issue of the Pacific Daily News which I wrote, Jose Cruz of the Marianas Political Status Commission spoke in Chamorro and refuted any criticism of the Covenant raised by a villager. Cruz said that if the people of the Northern Marianas did not approve the Covenant, the Congress of Micronesia's Political Status Commission would negotiate the lease of Tinian and other issues on behalf of the Northern Marianas and the other six island districts of the Trust Territory.

In an article of the May 9, 1975, issue of the Pacific Daily News written by the Micronesian News Service, two members of the Saipan Municipal Council: Dino Jones and Juan Demapan questioned the provisions of the proposed Covenant. However, Jones and Demapan were a minority who questioned the provisions of the covenant.

Another newspaper article in the June 6, 1975, issue of the Pacific Daily News and written by Joan King, the Bureau Chief of the PDN, discussed the ad hoc committee formed by the Trust Territory Government to prepare for the eventual separation of the Marianas from the Trust Territory. Remember, Saipan then was the headquarters of the Trust Territory Government.

Farrell's book noted that prior to the plebiscite vote on June 17, 1975, people speculated that the plebiscite vote would be "Yes" with 65-80 percent (599). 78.8 percent of the people voted in favor of the covenant (599).

For this paper, I also reviewed recent newspaper articles on Saipan and an online Pacific Daily News article about military activities on Pagan, the military's plan to build a divert airfield near Saipan's international airport, and related issues.

Findings

From a subsistence economy before World War II, the ruins of the War, then recovery after the war, the people of the Northern Marianas have experienced phenomenal changes in their political, economical, and social lives. Saipan today boasts several first-class hotels that cater to tourists.

The question that comes to my mind, however, is "Did we give up too much for American citizenship and many economic benefits?" In light of recent military activities on Pagan, its plan to build a divert airfield on Saipan, and other military plans, I believe we need to re-examine the Covenant and question the true motives of

the US Government in the Northern Marianas. The negotiations leading to the Covenant vote in 1975 did not include military activities on Pagan and other northern islands, and the US Air Force plans to build a divert airfield near Saipan's airport. Under the Covenant, the Navy and Air Force has use of 2/3 of Tinian.

When the political status talks formally began in 1972 on Saipan, it was apparent that most of the members of the Marianas Political Status Commission (MPSC) wanted commonwealth status for the islands. For many of those MPSC members and other island leaders, commonwealth status was an improvement to being a part of the Trust Territory Government. It was only the Carolinian community which did not support commonwealth status; they favored free association or independence.

Under the Naval Technical Training Unit from 1952 - 1962, Saipan saw a fairly good economy with many jobs and 75 cents an hour as the minimum wage (Del Rosario interview). Then minimum wage fell to 16 cents an hour under the Trust Territory Government. So for many island leaders, commonwealth status would improve lives with more jobs and a higher minimum wage.

There was no public education on free association or independence for the people to consider. The Marianas Political Status Commission favored commonwealth from the start, and it promoted only commonwealth status in the village meetings on Saipan, Tinian, and Rota before the plebiscite vote in 1975. The Marianas status group and other village municipal leaders believed commonwealth status offered by the American negotiators would improve the economy.

The Marianas status group was chaired by Edward Pangelinan, the first Chamorro attorney in the Northern Marianas. Beside Pangelinan, only one or two members had a college education. The other members of the status group and the village/municipal leaders were intelligent and well-respected individuals, but lacked a formal education, because there were no education opportunities for local people under the Japanese administration.

Del Rosario noted that Article 12 of the Covenant, the land alienation clause, is a credit to the Marianas status group who insisted on it and to Ambassador Williams and his group for making the provision. Article 12 restricts land ownership to persons of Northern Marianas descent. Del Rosario noted that Article 12 was carefully drafted to protect the indigenous Chamorros and Carolinians of the Northern Marianas.

According to recent newspaper accounts on Saipan, the United States military is on Pagan doing studies without permits from Northern Marianas environment and land use agencies. In spite of repeated requests from Governor Inos and Tinian leaders to place the Divert Airfield on Tinian, the US Air Force wants 33 more acres to build a divert airfield near the Saipan airport. Under the Covenant, the Air Force and Navy have leased 2/3 of Tinian for defense purposes.

In light of recent military activities on Pagan, the US Air Force plan to build a divert airfield on Saipan, and other related issues, I believe it is important to re-examine the Covenant which established commonwealth status. Pagan and a divert airfield on Saipan were not discussed and approved in those early political status negotiations in the early 1970's.

Conclusion

The present unilateral actions of the United States military on Pagan, Saipan, and other islands in the Northern Marianas clearly show that the United States has sovereignty in the Northern Marianas. I believe it is time to re-examine the Covenant that established the Northern Marianas commonwealth status, and determine to what extent the US can exercise its sovereignty in the Northern Marianas.

I am concerned that in the event of a nuclear attack from North Korea or another country in Asia, those of us in the Northern Marianas and Guam will be the first targets, due to our islands being part of the "Marianas hub" of the US Pacific Command. I believe the Northern Marianas may have given up too much to the US in those early political status talks.

I hope that this paper will encourage others to study further and write their findings of the present unilateral actions of the US military in Pagan, the Air Force plans to build a divert airfield on Saipan, and related issues. Thank you.

Presentation slides begin on the following page.

**The Early Political Status Talks On Saipan
In The Early 1970's
Leading To The Plebiscite Vote On US
Commonwealth Status Of
The Northern Mariana Islands**

A Personal Perspective

By Guadalupe Camacho Borja-Robinson



Photo Credit: University of Iowa - Hamilton Library; printed in *History of the Northern Mariana Islands* by Don Farrell

Photo of Edward Pangelinan, chairman, and Vicente Santos, vice-chairman, (second and fourth right) of Marianas Political Status Commission with Ambassador Franklin H. Williams, chairman of U. S. delegation (third right) and James Wilson, deputy chairman, U. S. delegation (first left) (Farrell 591)



Photo Credits: Journey to Home: Marianas Library, printed in History of the Northern Mariana Islands by Don Farrell

Photo of **Guadalupe C. Borja-Robinson**, writer of this paper, seated behind Marianas Status Commission member **Francisco Palacios** (fourth from right) (Farrell 592)

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Guadalupe Borja-Robinson was an indigenous Chamorro journalist on Saipan when the political status talks began in the early 1970's. Those talks developed, because Northern Marianas leaders had insisted on separate talks with the United States even though the Northern Marianas were still a part of the US Trust Territory Government.

Borja-Robinson was a writer for the Public Information Office of the former Trust Territory Government when the US status negotiators formally met in December, 1972, with members of the Marianas Political Status Commission (MPSC) on Saipan. Later, she became a staff writer of the Pacific Daily News (PDN) on Guam. As a PDN staff writer, Borja-Robinson also covered the village meetings sponsored by the MPSC on Saipan, Tinian and Rota before the plebiscite vote on commonwealth status in June, 1975. Almost 78 percent of the voters in the Northern Marianas chose commonwealth status.

The Transformation of Guam's Penal System

Retribution to Rehabilitation

By Linda Song and Dominique Hope Ong

Student Seniors

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Abstract: *Guam's penal system has transformed immensely from its humble beginnings. Under Spanish colonization, societal order and the punitive penal system were heavily influenced by the Catholic Church. When Guam was seized by the United States, the new order was a fusion of Spanish and American influences. In the mid-late 1900s, an increase in the population of Guam also led to a gradual rise in crimes. At the same time, in the US, various social movements and reforms led to reforms in the penal system that affected the island. From the Guam Penitentiary to the Department of Corrections, there was sweeping reform in the philosophy, treatment, and rehabilitation of offenders. This is ultimately a reflection of the change in the penal philosophy that transformed a penitentiary to a correctional rehabilitative process. These changes reflected and followed reform within the society, structure, and order within Guam.*

Editor's Note: This paper, presented at the Marianas History Conference, was not made available for publication.



Linda Song is currently a senior attending St. John's School in Guam. Song is a National Honor Society member and an International Baccalaureate Diploma candidate. Her main interests involve research, specifically in the fields of Science, History, and English. Currently, Song is the Research Director at the Public Policy Institute.



Dominique Hope Ong is currently a senior attending St. John's School in Guam. She is of Filipino-Chinese descent. Some of her many extracurriculars involve Mock Trial, rugby and paddling. Ong is the president of her school's United Nations club. Currently, Ong is the Managing Director at the Public Policy Institute.

Jumping the Fence

An Evaluation of Nasion Chamoru and its Impact on Contemporary Guam

By Michael Lujan Bevacqua, PhD

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Abstract: *In 1991, a group of twenty people gathered in Latte Stone Park in Hagåtña to proclaim the birth of a Chamorro nation. This group would eventually evolve into “Nasion Chamoru,” the most notorious organization in recent Guam history. They would organize countless protests, sit ins, and other acts of civil disobedience and change the ideological landscape of Guam. This paper will evaluate the impact of Nasion Chamoru in terms of how people conceptualize decolonization, Chamorro culture, and land today.*

Editor’s Note: This paper, presented at the Marianas History Conference, was not made available for publication.



Michael Lujan Bevacqua is an instructor at the University of Guam. His research deals with the impact of colonization on Chamorros in Guam and theorizes the possibilities for the decolonization of their lands and lives. In 2001 he led a faculty task force in successfully creating a Chamorro Studies BA program at the University of Guam. He is a passionate advocate for the revitalization of the Chamorro language and has translated manga comic books, rock songs and even Beethoven’s “Ode to Joy” into Chamorro.

Historical Context of Suicide in Guam

By Iain K.B. Twaddle, Camarin G. Meno and Eunice Joy G. Perez

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Abstract: *Over the past forty years, Guam has had increasingly high rates of suicide among youth and young adults. Competing explanations have attributed suicide in Guam to biomedical factors, psychosocial variables, and broader sociocultural influences. While these perspectives each make an important contribution to our understanding of Guam's high suicide rates over the past four decades, historical records suggest that suicide in Guam may have a historical legacy that can be traced back to the 16th century. Spanish colonial documents from as early as 1521 suggest that suicide may have represented both an indigenous cultural style for responding to various forms of distress and also an act of resistance to Spanish colonial rule. Discussion focuses on the implications of this historical data for suicide prevention efforts in Guam and other indigenous communities, highlighting the need for prevention programs that promote self-determination and the preservation and revitalization of indigenous languages and cultures.*

Editor's Note: This paper, presented at the Marianas History Conference, was not made available for publication.



Iain Twaddle is Professor of Clinical Psychology and Micronesian Studies at the University of Guam. He is the director of several campus-based mental health service programs, including Isa Psychological Services Center, I Pinangon Campus Suicide Prevention Program, and the Violence Against Women Prevention Program. His research focuses on the development and evaluation of culturally responsive mental health programs for Guam and the Micronesian region.



Camarin G. Meno is a graduate student in the Master of Science in Clinical Psychology Program at the University of Guam and currently serves as the Victim Services Coordinator at the University's Violence Against Women Prevention Program. Her research interests focus primarily on sociocultural and historical perspectives on mental health and social issues in Guam, such as domestic violence and suicide.



Eunice Perez is currently pursuing her doctoral degree in Clinical Psychology at Saint Louis University in St. Louis, Missouri. She obtained her Master's degree in Clinical Psychology at the University of Guam. Her research has focused on sociocultural and mental health issues of marginalized populations in the Micronesian region.

I Kelat

The Fence, Historical Perspectives on Guam's Changing Landscape

By the Guam Humanities Council

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Abstract: *From village lawns, to láncho boundaries, to the wire fences enclosing U.S. military property; fences (and walls) have been a part of Guam's landscape and mindscape for centuries. The exhibition "I Kelat" explores the relations between Chamorros and fences from historical, political, and cultural perspectives. It moves from the iconic, the familiar and tangible, to the less familiar and intangible, to the unforeseen and unexpected effects of fences. These relations are organized into four exhibit components: Fences and Walls as Chamorros Know Them; Early Chamorro Fences and Walls; Other "Sides" of the Fence; and Intangible and Unexpected Fences. Fences indicate property boundaries and are meant to demarcate and regulate social space and relations. By regulating what can be included, they also exclude. By fortifying and protecting, they also insulate and incarcerate. Fences and walls mark political, social, and cultural differences, including racial, gendered, and classed lines.*

KONSEHILON
TINA O T A O
G U A M



G U A M
HUMANITIES
COUNCIL

The Guam Humanities Council partnered with historian Christine Taitano DeLisle, PhD to develop the "I Kelat" exhibition and associated programs, as a companion to "Between Fences", a traveling exhibition of the Smithsonian Institution. The Council worked with several organizations and individuals to develop exhibit content for "I Kelat", including the Guam Museum, Guam International Airport Authority, Naval Base Guam Public Affairs Office, Northern Mariana Islands Museum of History and Culture, Richard Flores Taitano Micronesian Area Research Center, University of Guam, USAF Photo 36th Wing History Office, and War in the Pacific National Historical Park, U.S. National Park Service.

KONBEHILDON
TINAOTAO
G U A M



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- P R E S E N T S -



*A Smithsonian Institution
Museum on Main Street Exhibition*



Smithsonian Institution

- A N D -



Galvanizing Past and Present Threats to Chamorro Homelands

By Vicente (ben) Pangelinan

Senator

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Abstract: *Enacted in 1975, the Chamorro Land Trust Act was a law envisioning homelands for Chamorros. Yet this concept lay dormant nearly twenty years before the government of Guam was forced to implement it, over objections by the Governor and Attorney General at the time. Why was opposition to the law drawn out, and how was this eventually overcome? This presentation outlines the work and sacrifice of those few who educated the entire community on the notion of native land rights, fought the government's obstinate refusal to implement the law, and who ultimately achieved homelands for Chamorros in perpetuity. Today, we witness the first generation of Chamorros, previously disenfranchised from land ownership in Guam, to have homes and sustain their families through use of the land granted by leases under the Chamorro Land Trust. We witness, as well, the threats and strategies to protect this hard fought program for future generations.*

Good afternoon, Ladies and Gentlemen. It is my pleasure and honor to join you this afternoon. I have to say that this has been a well-attended conference with a good, diverse and inspiring mix of presenters and attendees. I believe it could not have come at a better time. Thinking and discussion that otherwise often gets pushed to the margins are incited here – that is what a history conference should do, inspire us to remember those events that have gone before us and create new ways of interpreting so that we are better able to hold true to the foundational values that really matter.

Today, I want to talk to you about my experiences over the years, most particularly dealing with land issues on Guam, and in this case, the Chamorro Land Trust.

There is a familiar Native American quote that we've come to know, "We do not inherit the Earth from our Ancestors, we borrow it from our Children." The phrase we I present here is similar, but a little more basic since we Chamorros are pretty simple people. We're not too sure about borrowing, but we know what belongs and where we belong. On land, I would characterize our beliefs as, "The Land does not belong to Us. We belong to the Land."

It is that soul and that spirit, that *ânti*, that gave birth to the Chamorro Land Trust here on Guam. The late Senator Paul J. Bordallo authored the Chamorro Land Trust Act. The legislation was passed into law in 1975 by the 12th Guam Legislature, and it mandated that all available public lands, not specifically designated for public use within three (3) years, would be deeded to the Chamorro Land Trust for distribution among indigenous people of Guam through ninety-nine (99)-year leases. The intention of the Trust was to make sure that the lands are held in perpetuity for the Chamorro people and never sold.

Prior to the enactment of the Chamorro Land Trust, what fueled the late Senator Bordallo was the treatment and disregard of Chamorro homelands. We saw an “administering power,” the United States, relinquish its responsibility to uphold the protection of the land for the native people, and instead acquire lands for its own purpose and at its own disposal. Senator Bordallo fought hard and proposed that the land should stay in the hands of the local people forever. Not only for ninety-nine years as the law says. I believe he said, *forever*. So that every Chamorro, no matter where he or she is on this planet, can come back to this place, call it “home” and through land, be rooted here. That really was the concept and the theme behind the Chamorro Land Trust.

But for twenty years the law lay dormant. And what we saw happening during that time was purposeful inaction. Then, the popular phrase used at the legislature with regard to land issues was, “Notwithstanding any other provision of law.” This phrase was so powerful and, ultimately, at the same time, so disempowering for Chamorros. It was a clause that specifically allowed bypassing the legal constraints of the law enacting the Trust and avoided violations of any Trust provisions. Basically, this meant that since the Commission had not been empaneled, lands that should have been registered with the Trust could be accessible to anyone, for any purpose and, subject to the political maneuverings of the Governor and the Legislature during this time.

Various efforts came about, perhaps to thwart the very program that would protect the Chamorro people in their own homelands. In the 1980s, the Land for the Landless Program was initiated, which allowed the government to sell (what should have been Trust) land to *all* residents of Guam. The Land for the Landless Program would render the land open and available to everyone – perhaps some would argue this was a way of ‘leveling the playing field’, giving everyone access to land. But, the critical missing part in the Land for the Landless effort was the disavowal of Guam’s historical experience

of US military takings of indigenous Chamorro lands. The Chamorros were and continue to be the landless in their own homelands.

For the period between 1980-1990, there were numerous cases concerning the return of lands deemed “excess” by the US Navy. Many issues regarding the taking of land by the military came about, but rarely were there discussions about the Chamorro Land Trust. This was the political climate at the time regarding land. Often in government, the true intent gets buried due to competing interests. But, we were compellingly reminded that the Chamorro Land Trust was enacted to restore land taken from the Chamorro people and to guarantee an avenue towards self-sufficiency and self-determination.

There were many individuals that pushed forward the Land Trust issues. In the early 1990s, *Nasion Chamoru*, through the leadership of Angel Santos and Ed Benavente, again highlighted the landlessness of the Chamorros, the injustice of the land takings by not only the military, but the government of Guam itself, and began to inform the public of the dormant Chamorro Land Trust law.

The memory of Angel for me is that the power is in the hands of our people. He galvanized the people on street corners passing out fliers. They were broadcast in the news, where *manámko*’ would hear and see *Nasion Chamoru* members explain what laws they wanted implemented. They were nonviolent, non-threatening and popular with our elders and the youth; they walked the streets, the malls, and groceries stores in a petition signing campaign that culminated in thousands of signatures on petitions asking the Governor to appoint board members to the Chamorro Land Trust.

The Governor refused to act on the petitions or nominate anyone to the Commission. Instead of giving up, *Nasion Chamoru* stepped up the pressure. They protested and camped out at Adelup for 38 days and on March 25, 1992, Angel Santos and *Nasion Chamoru*, with assistance of their attorneys Mike Phillips, Mike Bordallo, and Therese Terlaje, appeared and argued before the Superior Court of Guam to order Governor Joseph F. Ada to implement the act by appointing members to the commission. Gov. Ada objected, saying the act was “unconstitutional.” On June 8, 1992, after more than four hours of televised arguments presented by attorneys for both sides, Judge Benjamin J.F. Cruz issued a ruling upholding the validity of the act and ordering the governor to appoint the commission members. Shortly afterward, Gov. Ada nominated the first commissioners. By this time, there was no senator who dare thwart the willpower of the people and the court, and the Guam Legislature swiftly approved the

nominees to the Land Trust Commission. The commission held its first meeting in March 1993.

All this struggle galvanized our history and memories of land ownership and land tenureship. We remembered the land grab of the military, in which land was taken from the people without providing any access to attorneys, appraisers or professionals that could assist in negotiating the value of the land taken. Another land grab took place with the return of lands to the government of Guam under the Organic Act. Such lands should have gone back to the people via the Trust, but what we found was the doling out of land for its own political expediency. In spite of the snapshot of historical efforts mentioned here, we continue to find our connection to the land under attack today, now because of the land grabs from the Chamorro Land Trust inventory. Often, it is all too convenient to say we will use these lands for public convenience and public or governmental purpose, instead of the residential or agriculture purposes originally intended. This departure from the intended beneficiaries ignores the past injustices that the Chamorro Land Trust Act intended to rectify, and the generations of families that were made homeless and landless. In recent years, acres of Chamorro Land Trust property were removed from the Trust and given to a government agency for free, without any benefit accruing to the Trust, or its beneficiaries. We must remember that this land should be guarded and it should be sacred – that is the fight that we see less and less being fought for today.

The Chamorro Land Trust Act allows the economies of the 21st century to work with the development of property today, but it also maintains one basic feature – it will always be available to a native Chamorro, defined in statute as any person who became a U.S. citizen by virtue of the authority and enactment of the Organic Act of Guam or descendants of such person. I know it is working because I've visited many of the first generation of Chamorro Land Trust recipients. There are hundreds of people who currently benefit from the hard work of those before us. You will see them in their homes building and housing their families with the intention that generations to come will benefit from their efforts today. The law allows that the people can have beneficial and economical use of their property without allowing that property to be permanently alienated from the people.

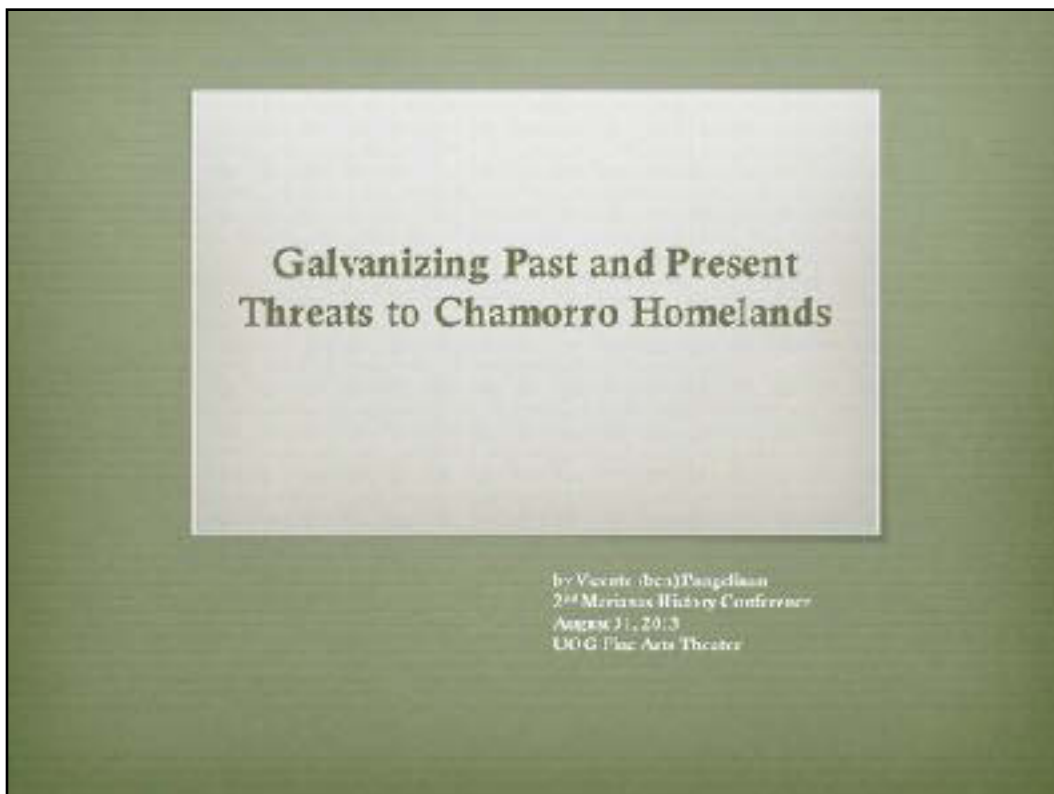
Like indigenous people around the world, our ancestors had a relationship with land that, today, is beyond what we could ever explain in words. All too many of us have forgotten those values, and thus, have exploited our relationship with the land. But I believe there are still a good number of us who maintain and fight to keep that

connection we care for the land, and in turn, the land sustains our families, our lives. What we need is to reinvigorate that connection to the land that was very much alive during all periods of Chamorro history. We must counter any threats to the land by galvanizing the people to stand and defend, *prutehi yan difendi i tano*. History has shown us that the larger and louder our group is, the more probable that political leaders will listen. I have witnessed that they do listen. These historical actions are not lost forever they are incited through our memory of what has been threatened and what has been done to counter those threats. It is in this way of remembering that the coming together is possible. And when we hold on to some of those most basic truths that there is the bond between indigenous people and indigenous land that does not and will not go unchallenged then struggle is just and those that come after us will follow our way.

Mantieni i tano'ya ta sostieni i taotao; Hold on to the land and we can ensure we sustain our people. *Si Yu'us Ma'ase'*.

Presentation slide begin on following page.

Presentation Slides



TWELFTH GUAM LEGISLATURE
1974 (Second Regular Session)

COMMUNICATIONS AND RECORDS
121 First Floor
Harris House, 1975

TEXT HISTORY OF PASSAGE BY AN ACT TO THE GOVERNOR

That in an assembly which held its 12th regular session on Monday, 27th day of January, 1975, and on 27th day of said session, said House of Guam did in public session at said time, pass an act to establish the Chamorro Land Trust Commission, and on the 28th day of January, 1975, said act regular session.

[Signature]
GOVERNOR

APPROVED:
[Signature]
LEGISLATIVE SECRETARY

This act was certified to the Governor this 27th day of January, 1975 at 2:00 P.M.

BY: ROBERT D. JACOB
ROBERT D. JACOB
Acting Governor of Guam

APPROVED:
[Signature]
SECRETARY OF GOVERNMENT
Secretary of State

DATE: 1-27-75
2:00 PM
1-27-75


MR. J. M. ...
LEGISLATION
HARRIS HOUSE

P.L. 12-226 Chamorro Land Trust Act of 1975



Twelfth Guam Legislature - 1975



At the public hearing, Mateo David Baston, speaking for the Chamorro Nation, right; Nito Phillips, behind statue, and Ed Donavente, third from right, listen to the testimony of an unidentified speaker during the public hearing on Bills 306, 317, and 318 yesterday at Adelup. Bobby Nason is seated by Scott, left, and other protesters talk right.

Testifying on Land Trust bills at Adelup



Naives Matano, right, helps Manuel Aguirre, left, and Paul L.G. Benavente sign petitions that state their positions on Bills 306, 317, and 318 yesterday at the public hearings on the bills at Adelup.

Petitions on Land Trust bills at Adelup

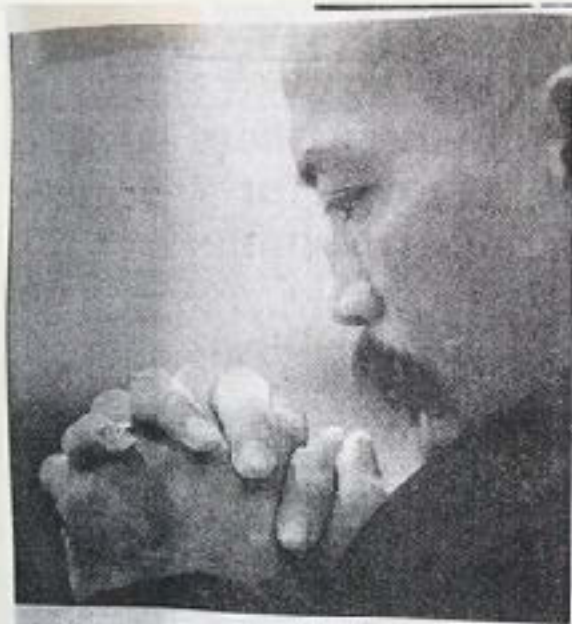
■ DeSoto family to leave disputed property

-Page 7

The DeSoto family stands in front of its temporary home in Yigo. The family has until July 29 to leave the premises. From left to right, with baby Mario,



DeSoto family ordered to vacate their family's land.



Angel Santos, a Chamorro rights activist, listens to government and defense officials argue the case.



Members of Nasion Chamoru jump the fence at NAS – Aug 15, 1992



Forcefully taken for the takings of Chamoru lands.



38-day Campout at Adeup protesting Governor's dormant action on CLTC



38-day Campout at Adeup



Families campout for 38 days at Adelp in protes. of inaction on CLTC



Tents set up at Adelp. Families protest CLTC inaction.



WHAT NEXT? Attorney Mike Borda (left) and Michael Phillips, at left, confer as attorney Theresa Teraja and Angel Santos appear thoughtful during court hearings.



Angel León Guerrero Santos and Jesús "Chamorro" Chafarres



Return of 300 acres of 'excess' lands at Nimetz





UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
WASHINGTON, D. C.

PL 25 15

DEED

To the Government of Guam:

I HEREBY certify to the Government of Guam, for its consideration as to title, that the land hereinafter described is the land owned by the United States of America, and that the same is being transferred to the Government of Guam, under the authority of the Act of Congress, approved July 1, 1946, (Public Law 478), and the Act of Congress, approved July 1, 1948, (Public Law 552).

The land hereinafter described is the land owned by the United States of America, and that the same is being transferred to the Government of Guam, under the authority of the Act of Congress, approved July 1, 1946, (Public Law 478), and the Act of Congress, approved July 1, 1948, (Public Law 552). The land hereinafter described is the land owned by the United States of America, and that the same is being transferred to the Government of Guam, under the authority of the Act of Congress, approved July 1, 1946, (Public Law 478), and the Act of Congress, approved July 1, 1948, (Public Law 552).

This instrument has been duly recorded in the Office of the Recorder of Deeds for the Territory of Guam, and the same is being transferred to the Government of Guam, under the authority of the Act of Congress, approved July 1, 1946, (Public Law 478), and the Act of Congress, approved July 1, 1948, (Public Law 552).

Witness my hand and seal at Washington, D. C., this 15th day of March, 1952.

Edward L. Chapman
Secretary of the Interior

The Acting Director
Bureau of Land Management
Washington, D. C.

25214

Transfer of Land to the Government of Guam
March 1952

as are made available for private use or ownership. Section 40 of the act directs that the following priorities shall be observed with respect to the sale or lease of Government real property for residential or agricultural purposes:

"First, persons who have had all their land acquired by the United States, the Naval government of Guam, or the government of Guam, and who have owned no other land since January 1, 1946;

"Second, persons who have had a substantial portion of their land acquired by the United States, the Naval government of Guam, or the government of Guam, since July 1, 1944, the remaining portion whose land is not adequate or sufficient for reasonable agricultural or residential purposes."

Priorities set forth regarding sale or lease of Government real property for residential and agricultural purposes.



Opposition to the Land for the Landless Program
 Support for Chamorro Land Trust Act



Continued protests at Adelpup



CLTC Rules and Regulations – September 1995



In protest of military training flights over our homes



Residential lease along Helle Road, Harrigada



Agricultural lease for Anot Farm, Eccebo



Amot Farm, Dededo



Residential lease in Lane Heights



Commercial leasing of Chamorro Land Trust lands



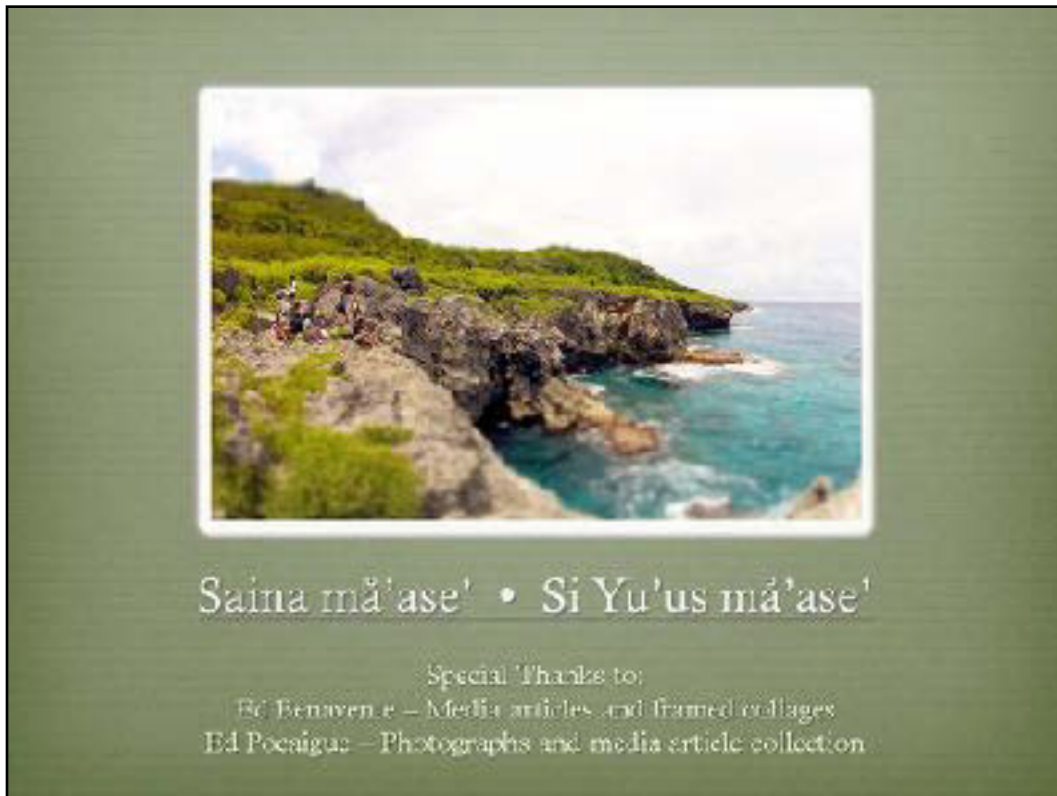
Commercial leasing of CLT Land – Guam Raceway Park



Commercial leasing of CLT land – Yigo quarry



Commercial leasing of CLT land – Yigo quarry





“Senator ben” was born in Saipan and grew up in Guam. He pursued a Bachelor’s degree in Government at Georgetown University, Washington, DC. Senator ben has always been dedicated to government service, as Staff Assistant to Congressman Antonio B. Won Pat in Washington, DC, and to the late Governor Ricardo J. Bordallo. Senator ben’s tenure with the Guam Legislature began in the 22nd term, continued through the 23rd, 24th, 25th, 26th, 27th (Speaker), 29th, 30th, 31st , and now 32nd Guam Legislature. Senator ben oversees the Committee on Appropriations, Public Debt, Legal Affairs, Retirement, Public Parks, Recreation, Historic Preservation and Land.

Guardians of Gani

Protecting Pagan for Future Generations

By John Castro Jr. and Diego L. Kaipat

Cultural Practitioners

Saipan and Pagan

linalanatibu@gmail.com

Abstract: *Pagan and all the Gani islands are of great importance to the people of the Mariana Islands. As Chamorros who live in the natural environment of their ancestors without modern conveniences and, having close family ties to the northern islands and have been blessed to have lived and visited the islands many times, these presenters share the wonders of Pagan. The presentation will include stories and pictures from trips to Pagan. This presentation discusses the many possibilities for sustainable progress in Pagan, but with the requisite indigenous knowledge and values that are connected to the sea and land.*

Editor's Note: This paper, presented at the Marianas History Conference, was not made available for publication.

Presentation slides begin on the following page.

Guardians of Gani
Protecting Pagan for
Future Generations

Marianas History Conference
8-31-2013

Diego I. Kaipat y an John S. Castro

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Munggi Pagan

NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

Farallon de Pajaros
Maug Islands
Asuncion
Agrihan
Pagan
Alomagan
Guguan
Sarigan
Anastahn
Farallon de Medinilla
Garapan Saipan
Aguigan Titián
Rota
GUAM

Philippine Sea
NORTH PACIFIC OCEAN
Marianas Trench

0 100 km
0 50 miles

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Largest of Northern Islands
 47.2 sq km or 18.5 sq mile
 Two Volcanoes and Two Lakes
 Almost 2000 feet above sea level

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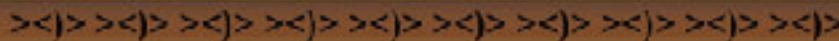
Tiempon Espaniot



Tiempon Aliman



Inse: Pagan, la der nördlichen Gruppe der Marianen,
Nordvulkan und Niederlassung



Tiempon Hapones yan Gera



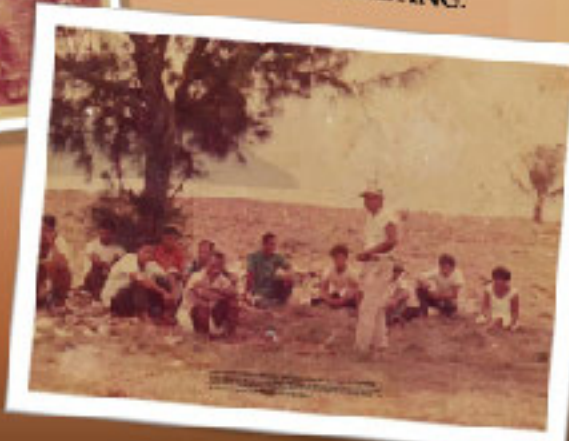
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Life on Pagan in this Lifetime



PAGAN ISLANDERS WORKING ON PAGAN AIRSTRIP IN 1968

ISLAND CHIEF MR. JUAN AGUON CONDUCTING THE VILLAGE MEETING.





Unloading Cargo at Pagan dock

Ferry used to get to Pagan post WWII



TWO BROTHERS 1958
Collecting Brass

FREEDOM AIR ON PAGAN
ISLAND 1976



1981 Eruption and Evacuation



PAGAN ELEM. SCHOOL BURIED FROM ASH MUDSLIDE DURING HEAVY RAIN

1990

HALFWAY BURIED WITH ASH. THE CHURCH WAS ONE OF TWO CONCRETE STRUCTURES SPARED BY THE ERUPTION.



Life on Pagan Today



Supplies!!!



BOTA!



Exports!



Gāga'!



See Food!





Hāfa Pago?



Work Cited

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Division of Historic Preservation, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. *Pacific Studies*. Volume 21. No 4. 1998.

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Photo Credits

Jackie McMahon of pirate-enterprise.com

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Museum

Champedia.com

Personal Collections from Diego Kaipat and family

Resources for More Information

www.paganisland.org/

cmmjpointmuseytrainingels.com/

one-newsline.com/2013/08/19/u-e-marianes-plan-to-boost-gan-in-the-island/

Wenreguahan.com

**Si Yu'os Ma'ase yan Olomwaay
Northern Marianas Humanities
Council**

**Marianas History Conference 2013
Planning Committee**

**Northern Marianas Descent Group
Northern Island's Mayors Office**

Jackie McMahon

Monika De Oro

The people of Gani





John S. Castro Jr. (familian Mames Kurason) enjoys perpetuating Chamoru culture by living it. He has close family ties to Luta, Sa'ipan and the Northern Islands. Castro has extensive experience in natural and cultural resource management. He has worked in the fields of historic preservation and fisheries management. He is passionate about carrying on traditions of healing, farming, fishing, hunting, raising animals, speaking and singing in Chamorro.



Diego L. Kaipat was born on Agrigan Island in 1957 and raised on Pagan since 1963. Growing up on Pagan Kaipat had the chance to know the island and its landscape. He learned the sites of ancient latte stones, villages and the World War II artifacts. He later moved to Saipan to attend high school and graduated in 1976. Kaipat worked as a nurse from 1979 until retirement in 2003 when he returned to Pagan and stayed for a year. He wants to live out his life on Pagan.

A History of Marianas Reunification Efforts

By Don A. Farrell

Historian

Tinian

donfarrelltinian@gmail.com

Abstract: *In 1947, President Truman placed the former Japanese Mandated Islands of Micronesia into the United Nations trusteeship system. This guaranteed the people of those islands the right to self-determination. Differently, Guam's political status was defined in 1950 when the US Congress adopted the Organic Act of Guam, granting the Chamorros of Guam US citizenship and limited self-government. These two developments began a series of dialogues on reunification between elected officials from Guam and the Marianas District of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands. These dialogues culminated in 1969 in a joint plebiscite on reunification. The negative vote cast on Guam ended dialogues on reunification and drove the Northern Marianas toward an independent act of self-determination while Guam has yet to complete an act of self-determination. This paper discusses efforts that were made toward the political reunification of the Mariana Islands (1950-1969), the reasons they failed, and the possibility of future reunification efforts.*

Introduction

Partitioning the Mariana Islands was undoubtedly one of America's greatest foreign policy blunders. Despite sound advice from naval officers who had patrolled the region since Commodore Matthew C. Perry opened Japan in 1853, President William McKinley chose to give a portion of the spoils that America had gained from its war against Spain in 1898 to a European nation that did not even participate in the war. McKinley's decision subsequently allowed Japan to capture the Northern Mariana Islands from Germany in 1914, and ultimately supported Japan's decision for war with the United States in 1941. Today, the partition continues to cost American taxpayers, in both the Marianas and the US mainland, millions of dollars annually to maintain two separate territorial governments and federal offices for essentially one people in one archipelago. Moreover, the ongoing political partition of the Mariana Islands continues to separate the families and culture of the Mariana Islands.

Significant efforts have been made to reunify the Marianas since that artificial line was drawn through the Rota Channel over a century ago. Why have they failed? Is reunification still a viable political status option?

Although historian and author Barbara Tuchman did not choose America's leap into imperialism as an example for her book *The March of Folly*, the philosophy she put forward certainly applies to America's decision to acquire only Guam out of the Marianas Archipelago as a result of the Spanish-American War of 1898. She wrote prophetically, "A phenomenon noticeable throughout history regardless of place or period is the pursuit by governments of policies contrary to their own interests (Tuchman, 1984, p. 4)." The people of the Marianas and America are still suffering the effects of McKinley's Folly.

One Archipelago: One People

For three thousand years before the European "Age of Exploration," the indigenous Chamorro existed in the Mariana Archipelago as one people, with one language and one cultural heritage (Russell, 1998). By the time Spanish navigator Miguel de Legazpi visited Guam in 1565, the Age of Exploration had become the Age of Conquest and Colonization. Although Legazpi discovered no valuable exportable natural resources on Guam, he did find a safe anchorage, food and water on the route to Cathay (China). Recognizing the value of the islands' strategic location, Legazpi claimed not only Guam, but the entire archipelago for Spain (Rogers, 1995).

The Spanish-Catholic *reducción* of the Marianas (1668-1696) led to a drastic reduction in the Chamorro population and the temporary abandonment of the islands north of Rota after 1730 (Hezel, 2013). As a result of the Mexican War of Independence (1810-1821) and the end of the Manila Galleon Trade, various Marianas governors suggested that the colony be abandoned. However, the Spanish Court decided to maintain a colony, simply to ensure that no other country could take it. This established the policy that later became known as "strategic denial."

With the rise of the whaling industry in the Pacific, both Guam and Saipan became ports of call for ships needing refitting and re-supply. By the mid-1850s, international shipping companies established themselves in Hagåtña, providing regular and affordable transportation between Guam and the Northern Marianas. Guam Chamorros began moving to Saipan and Tinian to take advantage of business opportunities. Following the creation of a constitutional monarchy in Spain, the governor of the Marianas and his administrators established representative municipal governments in Saipan, Tinian and Rota in 1875. They enacted one set of regulations and fees for all the commercial ports in the Marianas, and one tax code for all. Businessmen both north and south of the Rota channel enjoyed inexpensive access to

all the natural resource of the Marianas. Business grew and the standard of living improved.

McKinley's Folly: The Partition of the Marianas

In 1898, much to the surprise of the rest of the world, a growing and confident American republic joined the imperial club. After declaring war on Spain on April 25, 1898, to free Cuba from “barbaric rule,” and unbeknownst to either the US Congress or the American public, Assistant Secretary of the Navy Theodore Roosevelt received permission from President McKinley to destroy the Spanish Asiatic Fleet stationed in Manila Bay, Philippines, at the opening of the war. With orders from Roosevelt, Commodore George Dewey sank the decrepit Spanish Asiatic Fleet in the muddy backwaters of Manila Bay on May 1, 1898, and became Admiral Dewey a few days later. In the months that followed, the US Navy captured Guam for its Spanish coal supplies, while the US Army captured Manila from Spanish forces (Farrell, 1984, p. 37), and quickly defeated Spanish troops in Cuba and Puerto Rico in what Secretary of State John Hay called a “Splendid Little War” (Freidel, 1958, p. 3). Suddenly, President McKinley and his republican party found themselves in possession of distant lands inhabited by non-English speaking, non-Caucasian, Catholics and had to decide what to do with them. They had gone to war without an end game.

Ultimately, and despite the spirit of the Teller Amendment to the war resolution forbidding the United States from acquiring Cuba as a result of the war, President McKinley decided to acquire the Philippine Islands and Guam in the “Ladrones” (i.e., Marianas) as a coaling station (Rogers, 1995, p. 108; Farrell, 1986, second edition, p. 10).

Why take only Guam? The US had acquired all the Hawaiian Islands in 1897 by joint resolution of Congress, and now they were proposing to take the entire Philippine archipelago. According to the historical record, only Guam was taken from among the Marianas because President McKinley did not want to irritate Kaiser Wilhelm II, ruler of Germany and Prussia. The Kaiser had been aggressively acquiring islands in the Pacific for their natural resources. In 1898 the United States and Germany nearly came to blows over the question of the partition of Samoa (Pratt, 1951, p. 15, quoted in Farrell, 1994, p. 245). Germany had also occupied Kiaochow Bay in Shantung, China, and the Bismarck Archipelago to the northwest of New Guinea. The Kaiser expected to take the Philippines should war break out between Spain and the United States. Germany, like Japan, never expected the American Republic to acquire colonies, the antithesis of their democratic revolution. In order to assure his claim to the

Philippines after the war, the Kaiser sent Admiral Otto von Diederichs to Manila Bay with a fleet of ships. Tensions ran high and became so belligerent that Dewey threatened the German admiral to combat if he did not remain neutral.

Shortly after the war ended on August 12, 1898, German representatives quickly made it clear to American representatives in Paris that if the US was not going to take the islands of Spanish Micronesia as a result of the war, then Germany would like to buy them from Spain. Spanish representatives admitted to the American representatives that they were, in fact, negotiating a deal with the Germany, the outcome of which would depend on what concessions America demanded.

Senator Henry Cabot Lodge, junior member of the Republican-controlled Senate Foreign Relations committee, advised McKinley against taking only one island in the Marianas group, which he said “would open the door to many troubles. Because Germany, the European power most critical of American foreign policy, was casting longing looks at the Marianas, Lodge held that, “We want no German neighbors there,” (Garraty, p. 198; Farrell, 1994, p. 282).

When the Senate Foreign Relations committee met to hear testimony on the treaty, Commander R. B. Bradford represented the US Navy. He recommended taking not only the Marianas, but all the Caroline Islands in Micronesia as well. He used the annexation of Hawaii as an example: “Suppose we had but one, and the others were possessed of excellent harbors . . . [S]uppose also the others were in the hands of a commercial rival, with a different form of government and not over[ly] friendly. Under these circumstances we should lose all the advantages of isolation,” (Treaty of Peace, 1899, p. 477). In other words, it was in the best interest of America to have a unified Marianas and a unified Micronesia under American rule, if possible.

On February 6, 1899, despite Bradford’s testimony and Senator Lodge’s warnings, the Senate voted 57 to 27 in favor of ratification of the Treaty of Peace, one vote more than the necessary two-thirds majority. The president signed the treaty and Spain subsequently ceded Guam, Puerto Rico and the Philippines to the US in return for US\$20 million. When Germany discovered the US was willing to give up the Northern Marianas as well as the Caroline Islands, they paid Spain some US\$4.2 million dollars for the lot.

Could the President have faced down the Kaiser militarily? German historian Gerd Hardach, has stated, “If the US government had changed [its] mind and claimed all of

the Marianas, the German government would certainly have acquiesced, as they did not have a strong motive,” (G. Hardach, personal communication, March 22, 1993; Farrell, 1994, p. 293.)

Besides the less-than-subtle military pressures applied by Germany, historian Wayne Morgan (1965, p. 191) has offered another reason. In his opinion, President McKinley, who had been elected as “The Businessman’s President,” did not want to risk the embarrassment of a protest in Congress from “tariff protectionists and jingoes” during the treaty ratification hearings.

The bottom line is that all three of America’s new possessions became territories of the United States. Technically, at that time, gaining territorial status automatically guaranteed an eventual right to Statehood. The Land Ordinance of 1785 and the Northwest Ordinance of 1787 established that, “colonies were but the extensions of the nation, entitled, not as a privilege but by right, to equality,” (Morison, 1969, p. 233). They established that “the goal of all territorial acquisition eventually was to be Statehood . . . The emphasis on eventual Statehood and equality for the territories and their inhabitants was incorporated in the Northwest Ordinance of 1787,” (Leibowitz, 1989, p. 6). Out of this concept grew Article IV, section 3, of the US Constitution, the source of federal power to govern the territories. Territories would have appointed governors until they became ready to elect their own. The next step was gaining a Delegate to Congress; then, finally, Statehood, with two senators and as many representatives as were required for the general population – full and equal citizenship. And so it went for the next 37 states.

However, adding a group of distant islands to the United States that were inhabited by non-Caucasian, non-English speaking, Catholics was another story. In a series of court cases heard in the US Supreme Court between 1901 and 1904, dubbed the Insular Cases, the new territories acquired as a result of the Spanish-American War of 1898 were deemed “unincorporated territories,” as opposed to “incorporated territories.” The Supreme Court ruled that US Constitution does not fully apply and unincorporated territories were not destined for statehood (Rogers, 1995, p. 125). It also confirmed that the Congress of the United States had plenipotentiary powers over these territories according to the Territorial Clause. It should be noted, however, that the decision was split 5-4. Justice John M. Harlan’s dissenting argument was very strong and the issue continues to be contested.

Without the opportunity for statehood, there was no guarantee of citizenship. The Treaty of Paris only provided that the “political and civil rights of the native inhabitants will be determined by Congress.” The people of these territories, therefore, could be ruled as subjects of the United States indefinitely – even by the United States Navy.

When the Attorney General of the United States was asked for an opinion on the political status of America’s new territories, he stated:

“The political status of these islands [Guam and Tutuila] is anomalous. Neither the Constitution nor the laws of the United States have been extended to them and the only administrative authority existing in them is that derived mediately or immediately from the President as Commander-in-Chief of the Army and Navy of the United States.” (Leibowitz, 1989, p. 329)

Thus, the Mariana Islands and the people living there were politically partitioned between the US Territory of Guam and the German Northern Mariana District of German New Guinea. Although Guam Chamorros attempted to form a local government for the Marianas, President McKinley designated a US Naval Officer to become Commander, Naval Station, Guam, and Naval Governor of Guam. Captain Richard Phillips Leary arrived at Guam on August 10, 1899, with two companies of US Marines to establish and maintain order on Naval Station, Guam, which suddenly comprised not just a coaling station at Apra Harbor, but the entire island (Farrell, 1986, p.82). Some 10,000 Guam Chamorros began studying the English language and Navy law, while the Northern Marianas Chamorros and Carolinians began studying the German language and German law.

World War I: An Opportunity for Reunification

The lackluster German administration of the Northern Marianas was cut short by World War I. When England declared war on Germany in 1914 and requested its ally Japan to use its navy against German shipping and military outposts in the Pacific, Japan saw an opportunity to vastly expand its Pacific empire at little cost. The Japanese Imperial Navy quickly captured not only the German naval base at Tsingtao, China (now [Kiautschou Bay](#)), but also the German Mariana and Caroline islands. All German citizens were gathered and deported to prisoner-of-war camps in Japan. The Northern Marianas Chamorros and Carolinians quickly found themselves studying the Japanese language and law.

Suddenly, just as Commander Bradford and Senator Lodge had feared in 1898, a commercial rival had gained control of Micronesia in 1914, surrounding Guam and crossing America's lines of communications to the Philippines Territory. All was not necessarily lost, though. Japan announced that its intentions were perfectly honorable and in keeping with its alliance with Great Britain. Japanese Prime Minister Count Shigenobu Okuma addressed a telegram to *The Independent* stating, as premier, that Japan had "no desire to secure more territory, no thought of depriving China or any other peoples of anything which they now possess," (Pomeroy, 1951, p. 45; quoted in Farrell, 1994, p. 295).

In January 1918, after America had begun sending its boys "Over There," the General Board of the US Navy looked east, where Japan had cut off America's lines of communications to Guam and the Philippines. The board recommended acquisitions in the Marshall Islands, Carolines, and Marianas: "The Marianas were of outstanding importance, because of their proximity to Japan and to the American island [Guam]. Their position in the immediate vicinity of Guam is capable of development into submarine bases within supporting distance of Japan, and, in the event of war, this would make their continued possession by that country a perpetual menace to Guam, and to any fleet operations undertaken for the relief of the Philippines," (Pomeroy, 1951, p. 69; quoted in Farrell, 1994, p. 295).

At the end of World War I, November 11, 1918, the idealistic democrat President Woodrow Wilson personally drafted the Versailles Peace Treaty – in particular, the section creating the League of Nations, leaving the issue of decolonization to that international organization. Wilson was not aware that by the spring of 1917, Japan had secretly collected pledges from England, France, Russia and Italy to support their claim to German Micronesia after the war (Peattie, 1988, p. 47; Weller, 1944, p. 80). Wilson was not surprised when Japan asked the League for permission to continue governing the former German islands of Micronesia. However, he was surprised when the League of Nations dialogues began and Great Britain, France, Russia and Italy announced their secret pledges to Japan and supported Japan's request for annexation of the German possessions north of the Equator. In May, despite Wilson's protests, the League awarded a Class C Mandate over German Micronesia to Japan.

Senator Lodge, who had supported the US acquisition of Micronesia after the Spanish-American War, now chided President Wilson for not taking the islands from Germany, despite warnings from Japan. However, when Wilson's treaty came to the Senate for ratification, Lodge (then chairman of the Foreign Relations committee) was

more dedicated to defeating the democrats in the 1920 presidential election than ratifying Wilson's treaty with its League of Nations organization. "Throughout the entire proceedings," wrote W. Still Hult, "runs the theme of party politics which ultimately decided the action of the Senate." (Holt, W. Stull. *Treaties Defeated by the Senate: A Study of the Struggle Between President and Senate Over the Conduct of Foreign Relations*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1933, p.249). On March 19, 1920, the United States Senate rejected for the second time the Treaty of Versailles by a vote of 49-35, falling seven votes short of a two-thirds majority needed for approval. Therefore, the United States did not become a member of the League of Nations. Wilson's later appeals to the League in opposition to the Japanese Mandate fell on deaf ears. As non-members, America had no voice.

It is interesting to note that a young Senator Lodge had led the fight in 1898 to ratify the Treaty of Paris for President William McKinley (R), acquiring the Philippines, Guam and Puerto Rico for the United States. Then, as Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee twenty-three years later, Lodge led the fight to defeat President Woodrow Wilson's (D) Versailles Peace Treaty with its League of Nations. Republican candidate Warren Harding won the 1920 election. Lodge subsequently ratified President Harding's treaty agreeing to non-fortification of Guam and the Philippines and essentially giving control of the western Pacific to Japan (Garraty, 1953).

The US Navy had been quite vociferous about the need to prevent Japan from taking the Marianas. Could the combined US Fleet have forced the issue? When the Senate failed to ratify the treaty, the United States had no obligation to the ill-fated organization. Could the same "gunboat diplomacy" wielded by Perry in 1853 and Roosevelt in 1907 have produced a split-mandate over Micronesia, with the US taking the Marianas and Japan taking the rest of German Micronesia? Did America's failure to ratify the treaty and become a member of the League of Nations doom Japan and the United States to a war for control of the Pacific? If the Marianas had been reunified and fortified a Gibraltar of the Pacific might Japan have decided to choose war with Russia, their age-old enemy in Asia, rather than the United States?

World War II: Reunification by Force of Arms

As Bradford and Lodge had feared in 1898, as well as the Navy General Board in 1918, Japan eventually became an even more unfriendly Pacific neighbor than Germany. Japan invaded the Chinese province of Manchuria in 1931. When this led to censure by the League of Nations in 1933, they walked out. They quit the democratic League of Nations in 1935 and signed an anti-communist pact with Germany in 1936.

Unrestrained by Tokyo, the Japanese Imperial Kwantung Army invaded Southern China in 1937, raping and pillaging its way into the quagmire of a war they could not win. In 1938, the Japanese Imperial Navy began building bases in Micronesia, including a naval base at Tanapag Harbor, Saipan, with supporting airbases at As Lito, Saipan, and Hagoi, Tinian. Japan committed national *hara-kiri* on December 8, 1941, (December 7 in Hawaii), and the United States and the people of Guam paid dearly for McKinley's Folly. Japanese aircraft from Saipan strafed and bombed Guam in preparation for a December 10 invasion. Before noon that day, Japan had reunified the Marianas by force of arms and some 20,000 Guam Chamorros suddenly found themselves studying Japanese language, law and customs (Liebowitz, 1989, p. 325). Guam became Ōmiyatō, "the island of the Imperial Court or Shinto Shrine," (Higuchi, 2013, p. 17). The closest remnant of America in the Pacific was Hawaii, 4,000 long miles away and under attack.

Japanese naval planners anticipated the problems of establishing a government on Guam – managing the island's infrastructure, in particular the power plant, the water system and the communications system; and of assimilating the Guam Chamorros into the Japanese way of life – just as they had done with Northern Marianas Chamorros over the previous three decades. Guam's public works systems had been constructed by US Navy contractors and were being operated by US Navy military personnel and Chamorro civilian personnel. The obvious solution was to replace the US navy operators with Japanese-speaking operators and bring loyal Chamorro-Japanese from the NMI to translate for the Guam Chamorro civilians until they could learn Japanese.

The Chamorros on Saipan and Rota who were chosen for these jobs had worked their way up the Japanese civil service ladder since 1914 to become technicians and police officers. They had been born and raised during the Japanese administration and wore their uniforms proudly. Although the Japanese did discriminate against the Northern Marianas Chamorros, they still had a better standard of living than most Guam Chamorros.

The lack of private economic development on Guam had driven many Guamanians to the Northern Marianas after 1922. The burgeoning sugar industry on Saipan and Tinian was providing work for anyone who wanted it. The National Origins Act of 1924, also known as the Oriental Exclusion Act, almost completely barred Japanese and Chinese immigration to the United States (Dudden, 1992, p. 70). This racist legislation gave the Japanese administrators excellent evidence to convince the Chamorros that they were better off with the Japanese and to predict that the

Americans would never fight for Asians. More ammunition was given to the Japanese administrators on Saipan, Tinian and Rota when the US Congress adopted the 1936 Philippine Independence Bill, granting independence to the Territory of the Philippines ten years hence. To the Japanese, this meant the United States was pulling out of Asia, and would be leaving the Filipinos and Chamorros behind. It is no wonder then that when the Chamorro police from the NMI arrived on Guam, they encouraged their Guam counterparts to learn how to deal with the Japanese, rather than resist assimilation. As the war progressed, the Japanese pushed the “Caucasian imperialists” out of Asia. International news releases asserted that things did not look very good for America’s biggest military ally, England. Germany was bombing London and poised for a cross-channel invasion of that island-nation. It appeared that the US would be trapped within its own continental boundaries, while Japan gained control of all of Asia and Germany took Europe and Africa. The Chamorro-Japanese nationals from the Northern Marianas felt proud (or perhaps fortunate) to be on the winning side.

The vast majority of NMI Chamorros who were sent to Guam to work for the Japanese administration were not police officers. Chamorro police were, in fact, only a small handful of the total. The larger number were civil service employees or employees of the Nan’yō Kōhatsu Kabushiki Kaisha (NKK), the company contracted to manage public utilities and economic development in the Marianas. Many of these Northern Marianas Chamorros had relatives on Guam. Many were very sympathetic with the Guam Chamorros, providing them with secret information and food.

Yet, it is true that some of the NMI translators, particularly zealous police officers, informed on loyal Chamorro-Americans who were hiding flags or radios. Some Guam Chamorros were executed. Many were beaten. Even at the time of the reunification plebiscite in 1969, 24 years after war’s end, many bitter feelings remained. It was undoubtedly a factor in the vote.

By February 1943 and the loss of Guadalcanal in the Solomon Islands, the Japanese knew they could not defeat the United States, but would not quit the war. Operation Forager, the Campaign for the Mariana Islands in June and August 1944, maintained the unity of the Marianas under military law, albeit US Navy law instead of Japanese Navy law.

From the ashes of war, the United States Navy reestablished its naval base in Apra Harbor ten times over and established advance naval and air bases on Saipan and Tinian.

Guam returned to its prewar status as an unincorporated US Territory, the 18,000 Chamorros who survived the war on Guam regained their status as US nationals, while the political status of the Northern Mariana Islands would have to await war's end. Admiral Chester W. Nimitz, Commander-in-Chief of the Pacific Fleet and Pacific Ocean Areas, appointed Vice Admiral John H. Hoover as military governor of the Marianas. The American military established a rudimentary local government in Saipan, via elections, and the Northern Marianas Chamorros began learning English and the fundamental principles of democracy.

The Second Partition: The TTPI

Even before Japan surrendered, the debate began over which agency of the US federal government would gain administrative control of the former Japanese mandated islands after the war. The US military had no doubt about it. "Those islands belonged to the Japanese before the war and as we capture them they belong to us," stated Secretary of Defense James Forrestal. The Department of Defense (DoD) was adamant that the age of "Title by Conquest" was still alive and well. However, the late president Franklin D. Roosevelt had made a pledge to decolonization and self-determination in the Atlantic Charter, which both he and Prime Minister Winston Churchill had signed in August 1941. As President Wilson's 31-year-old assistant secretary of the Navy during World War I, Roosevelt had believed in his president's vision of an international organization that would arbitrate disputes and oversee self-determination for conquered peoples. As President of the United States during World War II, Roosevelt re-created Wilson's vision, but changed the name to the United Nations. After Roosevelt died on April 12, 1945, President Harry Truman stood by his late president's vision. Despite DoD's position in favor of annexation, on July 18, 1947, Truman placed the former Japanese mandated islands into the United Nations trusteeship system, to be administered temporarily by the United States Navy. He subsequently decided the islands would be transferred to the Department of the Interior with civilian administrators.

In signing the trusteeship agreement, the United States recognized that the people of what would now be called the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands (TTPI) were inherently sovereign and had a right to self-determination. That sovereignty could only be changed by the free choice of the island people, not through unilateral action by an outside power—even the United States Congress.

At that time, Guam did not fall under the definition created by the great powers at the United Nations. Rather, as “recaptured” territory, Guam was excluded and did not have a right to self-determination.

The partition of the Marianas was redefined. Guam returned to US “unincorporated” territorial status, delegated by the President of the United States to the Department of the Navy for administration, while the people of the Northern Marianas became residents of the sovereign Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands.

Guam Campaigns for US Citizenship and Self-Government

On July 4, 1946, after the Japanese, Korean and Okinawan refugees and POWs had been repatriated, the gates to the civilian stockade at Chalan Kanoa, Saipan, were opened and the Chamorros and Carolinians who had been surviving there for two long years were liberated. Many requested transportation to Guam, where they could discover what happened to their families living there. Naval Civil Affairs accommodated them as best they could, arranging transportation on navy ships headed to Guam. Between 1947 and 1950, Guerreros, Camachos, Sablans, Tenorios, Untalans and other Chamorros from the Northern Marianas moved to Guam to reestablish contact with their families. Some chose to stay. Others moved to Hawaii and Fiji for education or on-the-job training. They became fluent in English. They liked the things Americans enjoyed (Willens, 2002, p. 9). They learned about the American form of government and the economy that had funded a two-ocean war.

These Chamorros who “returned” from the Northern Marianas also learned about Guam’s enduring quest for self-determination and self-government. As early as 1902, Guamanians had petitioned for US citizenship (Leibowitz, 1989, p. 330). The United States Navy did not grant the people of Guam their first measure of self-government until the gavel sounded opening the 1st Guam Congress on February 3, 1917 (Farrell, 1986, p. 163). That day, Thomas Calvo Anderson stood before the House of Assembly and advised Naval Governor of Guam Captain Roy C. Smith, USN, that their goal was, above all, to get the US government to define the political “status of the Chamorro people, in a word, that we may know whether we are to be members of the American people or their servitors, . . .” (Farrell, 1986, p. 173.)

The United States entered World War I two months later on April 6. The armed German Cruiser SMS *Cormoran* had been interned at Apra Harbor. When America declared war on Germany on April 7, 1917, Captain [Adalbert Zuckschwerdt](#) scuttled

his ship rather than surrender her. The crew of the German ship that had been Guam's guests became prisoners of war. With Naval Station, Guam, on a war footing, Guam's quest for a defined political status was put on hold.

In 1925, eleven members of the US House of Representatives visited Guam and received a petition from the Guam Congress requesting citizenship, which produced no results. When the residents of the Virgin Islands were granted citizenship in 1927 but Guam was ignored, political status efforts on Guam were heightened once again. In 1929, newly arrived Naval Governor Captain Willis W. Bradley strongly supported Guamanian requests for citizenship (Leibowitz, 1989, p. 331). When he received no response from Washington, D.C., Bradley took it upon himself to proclaim the people of Guam to be citizens of Guam. He also created a Bill of Rights for Guam on December 4, 1930, modeled after the first ten amendments to the US Constitution. It never went into effect, however, because the Secretary of the Navy voided it. However, when the Guam law codes were revised in 1933 many of the provisions in Bradley's Bill of Rights were incorporated (Guampedia).

The fires of self-determination were rekindled when Franklin D. Roosevelt became president of the United States in 1933. A petition seeking political recognition was sent to Roosevelt that year, which garnered no response. However, Congress did become receptive to US citizenship for Guamanians in 1937. Bills were introduced into both houses of Congress. However, when the Navy Department announced that citizenship for Guamanians "would be prejudicial to the best interests of both the United States and the native population of Guam," the issued died, again. (Leibowitz, 1989, p. 331; Souder-Jaffrey, 1987, p. 14).

A new system of civil rights for Chamorros – consisting of virtually no rights – was established by the Japanese when they captured the island in 1941. Life became a matter of survival and hopes that the Americans would return dimmed as the Japanese won battle after battle. The Chamorros persevered during America's darkest year, 1942, then were occasionally caught smiling as the tide of war turned and the Americans returned to the Pacific. Then came the holocaust of World War II and the atrocities it engendered (Farrell, 1984, p. 27). The Chamorros of Guam rose from the ruins of war with a unified common desire – rather, demand – for respect and the dignity of US citizenship and self-government. Committed community leaders like F. B. Leon Guerrero and Baltazar J. Bordallo led a delegation of prominent Chamorros to Washington, D.C., to request citizenship and an organic act that would give them self-government. The Guam Congress reopened and sent a resolution to Washington

requesting US citizenship and an organic act for Guam, which met with some success but no tangible results.

Continued discord between the postwar Guam Congress and the Naval Governor of Guam eventually drove President Harry Truman to direct the Department of the Interior to draft an organic act for a civilian government of Guam. On June 18, 1947, the president's Undersecretaries Committee recommended "Separate Organic Legislation for Guam to provide civil government and grant citizenship, a bill of rights, and legislative powers to Guamanians should be enacted forthwith," (Souder-Jaffrey, 1987, p. 13).

The Northern Marianas Chamorros watched these proceedings closely. Only one month later, July 18, 1947, Truman placed the Northern Mariana Islands into the UN Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, along with the rest of the Japanese mandated islands. Thus, the Marianas were partitioned once again. At least this time they were both associated with the same country!

The Northern Mariana Chamorros also began to learn about Guam politics during these early postwar years. In 1949, the civil affairs administrator for Saipan took the Saipan High Council to Guam to study the Guam Congress. When they returned to Saipan, they established a new Saipan Congress, in which the old unicameral High Council became the upper house of a bicameral legislature. Herein, the people of the Northern Marianas, through their elected representatives, began to discuss their own future political status.

The spirit of self-determination for the Northern Mariana Islands was sparked on August 1, 1950, when President Truman signed the Organic Act of Guam into law (64 Stat. 384 [48 USC. 1421, et seq.]). By the Organic Act, the people of Guam received US citizenship and limited self-government. Residents of Guam could move to the mainland United States to seek education or employment, at their own will and without permission from the navy. The new Guam Legislature, a unicameral body, replaced the old Guam Congress and could make laws for Guam. Even though the new civilian governor of Guam, appointed by the president, could still veto laws, most residents of the Northern Marianas saw Guam's new political status as a great step forward for Guam. They saw that gaining US citizenship gave the Guamanians the opportunity to go to school, live, and work in the United States (Willens, 2000, p. 22). The Northern Marianas Chamorros did not want to leave their homes to gain

American citizenship on Guam. They wanted their islands to have the same political status as did their families on Guam.

For the Chamorros of Guam and the Northern Mariana Islands, political development beyond “unincorporated” territorial status was both inhibited and enhanced by a federal policy that restricted entry to and from the Marianas between 1950 to 1962

”[N]o one, even US citizens, could visit the island of Guam except with permission of the US military,” (Leibowitz, 1989. p. 325). The same held true for the Chamorros and Carolinians of the Northern Marianas. This greatly restricted economic development and the political maturity that comes with a strong public-private dialogue. On the other hand, it so irritated the Guam business community and the elected members of the new Guam Legislature that it made them recognize they needed something more than “unincorporated” status to achieve the island’s full potential. Being essentially held captive on a military reservation was a slap in the face to the Chamorros who had sacrificed so much for America during the war. These travel restrictions demeaned the Organic Act. The Chamorro leadership studied American history and decided to climb the territorial ladder, aggressively a locally elected governor, a non-voting delegate to Congress, then two US Senators and a member of the House of Representatives with a full and equal vote: Statehood.

With Guam and the Northern Marianas at least under the same flag, and the Guam Chamorros becoming US citizens, it is interesting to see how the Chamorros of Guam and the Northern Marianas, now under the United Nations, sought an improved political status with the United States, sometimes separately, sometimes together.

Marianas Reunification Efforts Begin

It is not surprising, therefore, that the first political status preference expressed by the people of the Northern Marianas was that their islands be incorporated into the United States either as a possession or a territory, and that their people be given United States citizenship. The Saipan House of Council and the House of Commissioners presented this vision to the first visiting mission from the United Nations when they arrived in 1950 to examine progress in the Marianas District of the TTPI (Spoehr, Alexander, 1954. p. 181). Unfortunately for the hopefuls on Saipan, Tinian and Rota, the members of the Visiting Mission advised the people of Saipan that they could not make a political status decision separately from the rest of the TTPI.

The UN Visiting Mission explained that the TTPI had been created as one political unit by the United States and the United Nations Trusteeship Council, just like the ten other Trust Territories then existing around the world, regardless of population or location, language or culture. The boundaries of nations emerging from colonial status were defined by the boundaries of that country at the time of independence (Willens, 2000, p. 26). Some international leaders were also concerned that if Micronesia fractured into several little countries, each would want an equal vote in the United Nations. Thus, the creation of the TTPI forced the Northern Mariana islanders to associate politically with the rest of the TTPI.

After 1950, the people of the US territory of Guam steadily advanced in their political and economic development, while the people of the Northern Marianas District of the TTPI began to lag behind. The US Navy was building up Guam, while US military personnel left Saipan and Tinian, other than the navy administrators. The people of the Northern Marianas faced a depressed economy and a dim outlook for the future. Nonetheless, they pressed forward with their campaign for political self-determination. In fact, they upped the ante.

Although the TTPI had been transferred to the Department of the Interior in 1951, as Truman had pledged, the islands north of Rota were returned to the Navy in 1952 when a CIA operation unit was established there, the Naval Technical Training Unit. The Chamorros who worked for the new clandestine operation, or as household employees for the NTTU employees, may have learned some tricks from their American mentors.

When the second United Nations Visiting Mission arrived on Saipan on March 11, 1953, they received a petition requesting the physical restoration of war-damaged property, compensation for the occupation of private property from July 10, 1944, to June 30, 1949, and an organic act for the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands. Unfortunately, as members of the visiting mission recognized, the other districts of the TTPI were not ready to make a political status decision. Once again, the visiting mission rejected the NMI petition.

Now the forces of reunification began to emanate from Guam. Having gained citizenship and having spent time in Hawaii, many of Guam's leaders began to eye the possibility of statehood for the Marianas, with two senators in the United States Congress just like the Hawaiian archipelago. In the aftermath of the 1957 Popular Party victories in both Guam and the Northern Marianas, the joint party leadership

decided to test the waters with an unofficial poll on reunification. The people of Saipan voted 63.8 percent in favor of reunification. This prompted the Guam Legislature to adopt Resolution No. 367 requesting the US Congress to incorporate the Northern Marianas within the governmental framework of the Territory of Guam. It was adopted by the 4th Guam Legislature on July 8, 1958, and was transmitted to the Northern Marianas and to Washington, D.C., on July 23. It read in part:

“WHEREAS despite this unfortunate and perhaps accidental division of one race, the people of the Marianas have never lost hope that a day will come when all the Chamorros once again will be reunited within a homogenous political and economic union under one governmental administration.”

Antonio “Tony” Borja Won Pat was Speaker at the time. The petition set in motion another series of political activities that would not culminate until 1969.

Following the Guam resolution, the Saipan Committee on Reunification published a report on May 5, 1959, which led to a resolution from the Saipan Municipal Congress inviting the members of the Guam Legislature to Saipan for a meeting on reunification. Members of the Guam Legislature and the Saipan Congress sat together in Saipan’s Congressional Hall from September 11 to 14, 1959. Speaker Olympio T. Borja of the Saipan Congress and Senator James T. Sablan, chairman of the Fifth Guam Legislature’s Select Committee on the Saipan Mission, co-chaired the meetings. On September 25, 1959, the Saipan Congress officially forwarded their Resolution No. 7, modeled after Guam’s Resolution 367, to the United Nations, requesting incorporation of the Mariana Islands within the framework of the US territory of the Guam. Once again, their effort was met with denial.

The international political status of Guam changed in 1960, even if its political relationship with the United States did not. The United Nations adopted Resolution 1514 (XV) on December 14, 1960. Better known as “The Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Territories,” it put Guam on the list of non-Self Governing Territories. Immediate steps were supposed to be taken “in order to enable them to enjoy complete independence and freedom (Unpingco, 1987, p. 47; in Souder-Jaffrey, 1987).” As we will see, some efforts were made, but with no significant success to date.

Meanwhile in the Northern Marianas, and despite continued rejections from both DC and New York, the Chamorro leadership continued to impress on any listeners that they had made their political status decision and were ready to move forward. When they received news that a special United Nations Visiting Mission was scheduled to arrive in 1961, the Northern Marianas leadership prepared for another unofficial poll on political status for Saipan and Tinian. Rota could not participate because at that time it was a separate district of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands. Registered voters on Saipan and Tinian could choose from one of three different political-status preferences.

Of the 2,847 registered voters on Saipan and Tinian, 2,404 cast their ballots. The results indicated that the voters were overwhelmingly in favor of gaining US citizenship and some form of permanent affiliation with the United States. A significant number wanted a status similar to but separate from Guam. Of course, these results were officially presented to the visiting mission when it arrived. Once again, however, they repeated that, “The Trusteeship Agreement treats the Trust Territory as one single Territory and there is no likelihood of the United Nations considering at the present time any proposal which looks like a premature effort aimed at ‘cessation’ or ‘partition.’” In essence, they told the people of the Northern Marianas that they had to work with the other Micronesians toward a joint resolution of political status issues, whether they liked it or not.

The Northern Marianas remained persistent, planning for the 1964 UN Visiting Mission. In October 1963, another unofficial plebiscite was conducted, and again the people voted for reunification with Guam. Once again, the results of the plebiscite were presented to the United Nations visiting mission. Not unexpectedly, the 1964 mission’s report stated that secession, or separation, was not possible under the trusteeship agreement. The 1964 visiting mission was “no less firm in rejecting Saipanese pressure for secession,” than had been the 1961 visiting mission.” They hoped “the issue may simply wither away,” (Willens, 2002, p. 66).

In 1966, the Guam Chamorros and the NMI Chamorros got together for another joint effort on reunification. Tony Won Pat was speaker of the 8th Guam Legislature. He and other political leaders on Guam still had a vision of American statehood. They felt their chances would be better if they had a bigger population and a bigger land area. Reunifying the Marianas would help their cause. Members of the Guam Legislature once again visited with the Marianas District Legislature to discuss the possibility of reunification. Subsequently, the Guam Legislature adopted Resolution No. 177,

requesting that the president of the United States reintegrate the Mariana Islands. A delegation attempted to personally deliver the resolution to officials in Washington, D.C., but were rejected by both the State and Interior Department representatives. The issue was also presented to the 1967 UN Visiting Mission, which repeated that any integration of the Northern Marianas with Guam “cannot be contemplated so long as Micronesia remains a trust Territory,” (Willens, 2002, p. 22).

A visiting congressional mission provided another opportunity for the people of the Northern Marianas to push their position. On January 19, 1968, the Second Mariana Islands District Legislature adopted a resolution requesting the delegation of congressmen to support US citizenship for the inhabitants of the Northern Mariana Islands and a reunification of the Marianas. They explained that economically and culturally, a reunified Marianas would improve the standards of living for the people of the Northern Mariana Islands. The request produced no results.

It should be kept in mind that all through their efforts to reunify directly with Guam, the NMI participated actively in the Congress of Micronesia. The Northern Marianas District had been ably represented in both houses of the Congress of Micronesia since it had been formed in 1965. When the Congress of Micronesia Future Political Status Commission met in July 1969 and “flatly rejected” the unincorporated territorial status for Micronesia and adopted a position in favor of free association (Willens, 2002, p. 19), the Northern Marianas delegation managed to incorporate language into the joint communiqué to the effect that the Congress of Micronesia would not oppose separate negotiations between the US and the Northern Mariana Islands.

Shortly afterwards, Vicente Santos, president of the Marianas District Legislature, and his colleagues created the Pacific Conference of Legislators as a mechanism to push forward their political status issues. Membership was offered to members of all the legislative bodies in the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, hoping to promote the exchange of dialogue in support of reintegration of Guam and the Northern Marianas, or Guam and the TTPI. In reality, it was primarily an opportunity for leaders from the 9th Guam Legislature under Speaker Joaquin C. Arriola and the Northern Marianas District Legislature to get together and discuss a common political-status goal. At the time, the Democrats (formerly the Popular Party) were in control of the 10th Guam Legislature and the Popular Party remained in control of the Mariana Islands District Legislature.

With another United Nations visiting mission expected to arrive in the TTPI in early 1970, these leaders decided to conduct a joint referendum on reintegration in November 1969, only two months away. In a meeting conducted on Saipan in August 1969, they created the Leaders of Guam and Marianas Reintegration Conference. Guam Senator William D. L. Flores was named chairman of the special committee on reintegration. Other members of the committee included Senators George Bamba, James T. Sablan, Joaquin Perez, Florencio Ramirez, Leonardo Paulino, Richard F. Taitano, and Manuel Lujan, all among the leading members of the strongest political party on Guam. They were charged with studying the question of reintegration, reporting their findings to the people of Guam, and conducting public hearings in all the villages of Guam.

The committee, in its report to the people of Guam, said the principal motivations for the push to reintegrate were political, economic, social, and cultural. The members wanted eventual statehood for Guam. If Guam was expanded to include the Marianas and even the rest of the trust territory, statehood could be achieved much more quickly. A reunified Marianas Islands would also provide greater opportunities for investment, particularly in the tourism industry. The standard of living would be improved. Most important, the cultural unity of the Chamorros would be reestablished.

Hurried public hearings were conducted in all the villages of Guam in October 1969. The members of the Guam Legislature's select committee on reintegration, which conducted the meetings, tried to convince the public that reintegration was in Guam's best interest. At most of these meetings the reaction from the public was favorable. Members of the committee were confident that the people of Guam would vote in favor of reintegration. If both Guam and the Northern Marianas voted in favor of reintegration, as they expected, the island's leaders would petition the United Nations and the United States Congress for separating the Northern Marianas from the TTPI and reintegration with the US Territory of the Marianas.

The people of Guam voted in a special election conducted on November 4, 1969. The question put to the voters was: "Should all of the islands of the Marianas be politically reintegrated within the framework of the American Territory of Guam, such as a new territory to be known as the Territory of the Marianas?" Voters could mark either "Yes" or "No." The turnout for the election was very low. Only 32 percent of the 20,000 registered voters actually cast ballots (Rogers, 1995, p. 249). Speaker Joaquin Arriola

was shocked at the results, as were many of the other pro-reunification leaders. There were 3,720 “No” votes, compared to 2,688 “Yes” votes.

Several theories have been offered as to why the Guam voters rejected reintegration. One reason given for the poor turnout was that there were no candidates for election, and thus no aggressive drive to get out the vote. Another reason for the failure may have been the poor political education process that occurred on Guam. Public hearings were conducted for only one month. Had they begin earlier, more people may have felt more confident about going to the polls. Another reason given was that many Guamanians had not forgotten the pro-Japanese actions of a few of the Northern Marianas Chamorro translators and police officers employed by the Japanese. Other Guamanians simply felt that Guam’s money would be diverted to the undeveloped Northern Marianas. Guam did not want to accept the burden of developing the Northern Mariana Islands. Guam at the time was having serious difficulties with its utilities and school system. Some Guamanians were also concerned with protecting their jobs. The wage scale in the Northern Marianas at that time was much lower than that on Guam. Many Filipinos who had arrived on Guam after the war to rebuild the island had become voters and feared that Northern Marianas residents might move to Guam and take jobs.

Perhaps, however, the major factor influencing the outcome of the plebiscite was the upcoming 1970 election on Guam. This was to be the island’s first election for governor. The Popular Party, which had dominated politics on Guam since the Organic Act, split three ways. The frontrunner was Speaker of the 10th Guam Legislature Speaker Joaquin C. Arriola and running mate [Vicente Bamba](#), a retired judge and popular former senator, who favored reunification. Running second was the team formed by Senator Ricardo J. “Ricky” Bordallo and Senator [Richard “Dick” Taitano](#). Running third was the team of former governor [Manuel Guerrero](#) and his running mate [Dr. Antonio C. \(Tony\) Yamashita](#). Although the Bordallo/Taitano team did not openly oppose reunification, a whisper campaign was launched that “a vote for reintegration was a vote for Arriola.” Their supporters were told that if they were not really sure about reunification, then just do not vote at all.

Chamorros in the Northern Mariana Islands, unaware of the underlying political currents on Guam, were very upset by “the Guam rejection.” They had read positive reports in the *Guam Daily News* about the possibility of a favorable vote. Regardless, on November 9, 1969, 3,233 of 4,954 registered voters in the Northern Marianas 65%, twice that on Guam, cast their ballots. Reintegration received 1,942 votes: freely

associated state 1,116; independence 19; unincorporated territory of US107. There was 1 vote for integration with the US; 5 for remaining a trusteeship; 1 for unincorporated territory of Japan; 1 for integration with Japan; and 40 invalid votes. Ironically, a single write-in vote was cast for commonwealth status.

Surprisingly, it would be the US Department of Defense that would pave the path to Commonwealth for the people of the Northern Mariana Islands.

A “Totally New” Political Status: The Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands

The Northern Marianas leadership faced difficult decisions. The Department of the Interior had created the Congress of Micronesia in 1964, with the Northern Mariana Islands as one district among six in the TTPI. In 1968, the Congress of Micronesia had created a political status commission to consider future political status alternatives. While the Marianas District had been working toward reunification with Guam as the most direct route to US citizenship and a permanent political relationship with the United States, the 1969 Congress of Micronesia political status commission announced its intention to move forward with independence or free association for the entire TTPI. The 1969 plebiscite for reunification failed. Then the 1970 UN Visiting Mission stated that, “There could be no question of the Mariana Islands being separated from the rest of the Trust Territory while the Trusteeship Agreement is still in force, (Willens, 2002, p. 22). What to do?

Foreign affairs once again stepped into the path of political development in the Marianas, thanks to Mother Nature. The raised limestone islands of the southern Mariana Islands had grown up in the most strategic location in the Western Pacific, and were imbued with excellent natural harbors. The Spanish-American War, World War I and World War II provide testimony to their intrinsic value to strategic military, economic and political concerns: location, location, location. The ever-changing geopolitical atmosphere in the Western Pacific would now cause an American president with an ulterior motive to cast aside the position taken by United Nations Visiting Missions since 1950 against the partition of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands.

In 1947, just as the Trust Territory was being formulated, the US slid from World War II into the Cold War. The Department of Defense realigned its forces in the Western Pacific to deal with the new situation, maintaining strength in Guam, while developing its bases in the Philippines and Okinawa, and eliminating its bases on Tinian and

Saipan. Adjustments were made as the Korean War erupted in 1951. The Navy Technical Training Unit was established in Saipan in 1952, and America quietly ventured into Vietnam in 1955. As the Vietnam War escalated in 1965, Guam and Okinawa began serving as a geographically strategic launch pad for covert bombing missions over Cambodia and Laos. Okinawa had remained under American control since World War II. B-52s stationed at Kadena Airbase, Okinawa, bombed North Vietnam and it was reported, but not confirmed, that the US had nuclear weapons stored on Okinawa. For some Japanese leaders, this made Okinawa a potential target for Chinese missiles, should the communist government there feel threatened by the United States. Some Japanese political leaders began talking about not renewing the US base agreements. This caused the US Joint Chiefs of Staff to begin paying attention to the Micronesia's political status dialogues. In October 1968, when the Congress of Micronesia started talking about free association, the Joint Chiefs reminded the Secretary of Defense of the strategic value of the central Pacific Ocean and of the potential need to redeploy American forces to Guam or the TTPI after the Vietnam War (Willens, 2000, p. 125).

In November 1968 Richard Millhouse Nixon, a conservative Republican, was elected president of the United States. The Cold War with China and the Soviet Union was escalating. The Vietnam War was going south. Nixon decided to open relations with China, thus tilting the balance of power in Asia against the Soviet Union. Before he could play the China card, however, Nixon recognized the need to maintain a strong alliance with Japan. The US-Japan Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security was due to expire soon. Article Three of that agreement required the United States to return all Japanese territories acquired by the United States during World War II to Japanese sovereignty. To avoid the loss of military bases on Okinawa, Nixon favored the rapid return of the Ryukyu Islands, including Okinawa, to Japan. If accomplished quickly, he believed the US would be able to retain base rights in Okinawa under favorable terms. Nixon agreed to return Okinawa to Japanese sovereignty, setting a deadline of 1972. However, he also instructed his staff to find (if necessary create) a fallback base on sovereign American soil. Guam did not have enough.

On March 13, 1971, Nixon pushed things forward by formally appointing Franklin Haydn Williams as his Personal Representative to the Micronesian political status negotiations, with the rank of ambassador (Willens, 2002, p. 25). Williams was a former assistant secretary of defense. During their initial meeting at Hana, Hawaii, the Department of Defense revealed its land requirements for Guam and the TTPI. Secretary of Defense Melvin R. Laird advised Williams that the strategic interests of

the United States were to implement “defense-in-depth” in the western Pacific, carry out treaty commitments, defend lines of communication through the central Pacific, and maintain “a credible nuclear and conventional deterrent to armed aggression” against the United States, its allies, and countries considered vital to its security. Defense wanted land in the Marshalls, Palau and the Marianas that would be “sovereign American soil.” In the Marianas, Defense was interested in a multi-service base on Tinian. They wanted the whole island, but would settle for the northern part and joint-use of the harbor.

On April 12, 1972, Ambassador Franklin Haydn Williams formally announced, “that my Government is willing to respond affirmatively to the request that has been formally presented to us today to enter into separate negotiations with the representatives of the Marianas in order to satisfy a desire which the Joint Committee has already recognized,” (Willens, 2000, p. 245). Williams, obviously authorized by Washington, D.C., had thrown out the United Nations Visiting Missions’ refusal to allow the Marianas to enter into separate negotiations from the rest of the TTPI. This was a huge breakthrough for the people of the CNMI who had fought so long and hard for citizenship and self-determination.

In preparations for sovereign negotiations, the Marianas District Legislature created the Marianas Political Status Commission on May 13, and it was approved by the district administrator on May 19, 1972. The law authorized the Northern Marianas Political Status Commission to negotiate with the United States, to perform public education, to hire consultants, to study alternative forms of democratic internal government, and to make periodic reports.

The Northern Marianas Political Status Commission held its first meeting on September 7, 1972. To prevent a possible problem with Guam political leaders, Haydn Williams had only been authorized to help create a political status for the Northern Mariana Islands that would be similar to the organic act that Guam had received from Congress. However, when the first plenary session of the Marianas political-status negotiations opened on December 13, 1972, at Saipan’s Mt. Carmel school auditorium, the Northern Mariana negotiator laid out their fundamental issues, including their “totally new” concept of mutual consent (Willens, 2002, p. 48). This took Williams aback. However, by Monday, May 21, 1973, Williams was ready to announce that the United States would be “willing to include in the agreement the provision for mutual consent on significant alteration in the basic structure of the relationship, . . .” (Willens, 2002, p. 86). This came three months after former Speaker

of the Guam Legislature Tony Won Pat took the oath of office as the first resident of Guam to serve as Delegate to Congress on January 3, 1973.

NMI Political Status Negotiations Stimulate a New Guam Political Status Initiative

In response to the ongoing political status negotiations in the NMI, the Guam Legislature created a nine-member political status commission in May, 1973. The six-member Democrat majority chose Senator Frank G. Lujan to chair the committee, which was obligated to study and make recommendations on Guam's future political status. Governor Carlos G. Camacho, a Republican, created his own advisory task force.

Political status discussions heated up both north and south of the Rota Channel following the second round of negotiations in July 1973. The US-NMI joint communiqué revealed the preliminary agreements with the Northern Marianas, including mutual consent, a locally drafted constitution, and assurances about maximum local self-government. Joe Murphy, editor of the *Pacific Daily News*, wrote that the Northern Marianas was getting a far better deal than what Guam had. He also thought that many in the US Congress would object to establishing two separate governments in the small Mariana Islands (Willens, 2004, p. 130).

As Williams had feared, Guam Senator Paul Calvo (a Republican who would run against Camacho in the next election) expressed concern about Guam not being involved in the negotiations and announced his intention to visit Washington, DC, to register his complaint (Willens, 2004, p. 7).

To resolve the problem, Haydn Williams advised President Nixon that something had to be done to improve Guam's political status. The Department of Defense agreed. The Joint Chiefs of Staff added their support on July 20, 1973. On September 12, the Under Secretaries Committee decided that "a study of US national objectives, policies, and programs in Guam be undertaken to identify a prospective course of action by which US interests may most effectively be fostered." The Guam study was supposed to be completed by December 17, 1973 (Williams, 2004, p. 10).

Meanwhile, Guam Delegate Tony Won Pat introduced a resolution into the US House of Representatives stating that Guam also had a right to choose its own political status and requested President Nixon to create a special commission to work with the Guam political status commission. According to Won Pat's unofficial polling, 86.2% of the people interviewed believed in reunification. Congressman Phil Burton reassured Won

Pat that they would get to the Guam question as soon as the Northern Marianas issue was resolved. Burton met with the Guam Legislature, which now asked for assistance reunifying with the Northern Marianas. Burton told them it was up to them to take the initiative.

As scheduled, the interagency group met on December 17 to consider Phase I of the Guam study. Then, on January 31, 1974, Won Pat took the floor of Congress and complained that the NMI was getting a better political status than Guam. Northern Marianas lawyers in Washington subsequently met with Won Pat's staff and assured them that whatever was being created for the NMI could surely apply to Guam. The Northern Marianas negotiators were concerned that if Guam made a loud enough complaint, some members of Congress might be convinced to insist that NMI political status should be put on hold until Guam's political status was resolved.

Joe Murphy opined:

“Many of us living on Guam view the proceedings with mixed emotions. We naturally welcome the addition of the Northern Marianas to the American community, and feel that we have, perhaps, contributed something to the desire of the islanders to become a permanent part of America. We have developed a small guilt complex, however, about the negotiations. We feel that somehow through the lack of leadership on Guam, that Guam has missed the boat. We feel that the Mariana Islands really should be re-integrated, politically, although self-governing. We certainly can't blame the people of the Northern Marianas for that. They tried, and it was Guam that dropped the ball.” (Willens, 2004. p. 6)

Congressman Burton, who had helped create the Guam Elective Governor Act and the Delegate Act for Guam, was impressed with the progress that had been made during the third round of negotiations between Williams and the NMI delegation and began to take a more aggressive role in NMI political status. While on Guam in January, before transiting to Saipan, Burton had made frequent references to the future reunification of Guam and the Northern Marianas. He wanted to reassure his friend Tony Won Pat that Guam would eventually benefit from the successful completion of the Northern Marianas negotiations. Burton was blunt on certain issues. He stated flatly that there was no possibility of achieving a nonvoting delegation in Congress for the new commonwealth of the Northern Marianas during these negotiations.

Won Pat responded to the political status issue in his June 1972 annual report to the people of Guam and the Guam Legislature:

“There is an alternative to statehood. Commonwealth status would provide Guam with a Constitution of our choosing, and our Legislature would have far greater autonomy in deciding our local affairs. We would have these additional benefits without the burden of federal taxation. My recommendation, therefore, is that commonwealth status be explored further as an interim measure until such time as our Territory can assume the full responsibilities of a state.” (Leibowitz, 1989, p. 336)

On August 8, 1974, following a long investigation into a break-in at the Democratic Party Headquarters at the Watergate complex in Washington, D.C., President Nixon chose to resign rather than face impeachment for lying to the people of America. Vice-president Gerald Ford was sworn in the next day.

That same day, President Ford received the Guam study from the Under Secretaries Committee. The committee advised him that it was important to “hold open options which would permit eventual merger of these units, particularly Guam and the Northern Marianas.” They should “seek a status for Guam which eventually would also be acceptable for the Northern Marianas, with the expectation that both administrations might be incorporated into one governing unit,” (Willens, 2004, p. 38). To do so, they suggested that “at the earliest possible date we assure the Guamanians that we are prepared whenever they are ready to work with them to establish for Guam a status no less beneficial than that which the Northern Marianas will get, and (2) that we give the Guamanians the opportunity to express their own desires,” (Willens, 2004, p. 56). On the issue of incorporated status, the commission stated that the option “appears not to be a course we should propose but which, under circumstances hard to visualize, we might accept,” (Willens, 2004, p. 55).

Perhaps in reaction to the federal overture, Governor Bordallo established Guam’s first political status commission in cooperation with Speaker Joseph F. Ada of the 12th Guam Legislature. The commission was chaired by Senator Frank G. Lujan and was comprised of nine senators, including: [Joseph F. Ada](#), [Antonio M. Palomo](#), Adrian C. Sanchez, Francisco R. Santos, Richard F. Taitano, [Paul M. Calvo](#), Jesus U. Torres, and Paul J. Bordallo. An informational report was generated and released in September 1974 supporting Commonwealth, with a future plebiscite to determine ultimate direction (Leibowitz, 1989, p. 335; Guampedia).

On December 23, 1974, the National Security Council sent their analysis of the Guam study to Secretary of State Kissinger, who advised President Ford that, “our essential needs in our political relationship with Guam are control over Guam’s defenses and foreign affairs and continued military basing rights. To achieve this, we need a political framework that will continue Guam’s close relationship with the Federal Government, but that will keep the island’s growing political demands within manageable bounds,” (Willens, 2004, p. 64).

On February 1, 1975, shortly before the last round of NMI negotiations, Kissinger directed the Under Secretaries Committee to “seek agreement with Guamanian representatives on a commonwealth arrangement no less favorable than that which we are negotiating with the Northern Marianas. If, however, Guamanian representatives prefer a modified unincorporated Territorial status, we will be willing to accept such an arrangement,” (Willens, 2004, p. 67). In other words, the door for Guam to achieve its desired political status was opened. However, Kissinger turned the study over to the Assistant Secretary of Interior for Program Developments and Budget to develop and implement a negotiating approach and organize a US negotiating team. That proved to be a death knell for the Guam study.

The Northern Mariana Islands Becomes a Commonwealth of the United States

Two weeks after Kissinger turned the Guam study over to the Department of the Interior, February 15, 1975, the NMI Political Status Commission met with Ambassador Haydn Williams in the Mt. Carmel Church auditorium to sign the commonwealth covenant they had negotiated for two years and two months. Williams signed for President Ford. The NMI Political Status Commission signed for the people of the Northern Marianas.

Five days later, the Covenant was unanimously approved by the Mariana Islands District Legislature. Working with Ed Pangelinan and Pete A. Tenorio, the status commission conducted the popular plebiscite on June 17, 1975. Ninety-five percent of the registered voters cast ballots. When the votes were counted, the covenant had been approved by 78.8 % of the people voting.

Shortly thereafter, the 13th Guam Legislature created a new political status commission designed to open negotiations with the federal government. Republican Senator Frank Blas was selected as Chair of the commission and members included Edward Duenas, Thomas V. C. Tanaka, Jr., former Lt. Governor Kurt Moylan, Dr. Pedro

Sanchez, and Democrats [Carl T. C. Gutierrez](#), Adrian Sanchez, Francisco R. Santos, Edward Charfauros, Delfina Aguigui, James McDonald, Eugene Ramsey and Joseph Rios (Guampedia).

Governor Bordallo then wrote to President Ford on August 2, 1975, urging the president to appoint a representative (as Nixon had done for the NMI) to begin dialogues with Guam. The letter ended up in the Department of the Interior where it went unanswered for thirteen months.

Meanwhile, Phil Burton used his seniority to move forward with a Congressional vote the Commonwealth Covenant, which would make the people of the Northern Mariana Islands US Citizens. On February 24, 1976, the US Senate called for a floor vote on Joint Resolution 549, the proposed Covenant creating the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. Passage of the Senate bill required only a simple majority, 50% plus one. However, some members of the political-status commission in the gallery were hoping for a two-thirds majority. Then, if anyone claimed that the covenant represented a treaty, the vote would not have to be called again. After all, this was the first time that a new territory would be added to the Union by mutual negotiation. Thus, the members of the negotiating teams were hoping for 67 of the 100 votes in the US Senate (Wytenbach, 197). The final Senate vote was 66 in favor, 23 opposed and 11 not voting, far beyond the 51 votes needed to approve the covenant, but one less than the number needed were it to be a treaty.

On March 24, 1976, surrounded by Covenant supporters from the Marianas and Washington, D.C., President Gerald Ford signed Public Law 94-241: 90 Stat. 263, approving the covenant. The Northern Marianas had exercised its right to self-determination and defined an agreement with the United States that would give the people United States citizenship and the maximum degree of self-government possible at that time. Most important, it contained a “Mutual Consent” clause that gave the people an assurance of fair treatment should there be a need for either side to change a fundamental part of the agreement at some time in the future.

Dialogues in DC relative to Guam’s political status dragged until July 1977, the end of the Ford administration. In a rather defeatist statement, the incumbent Republican leadership in the Department of the Interior suggested that the issue “will be referred to those in the next Administration who will be responsible for overseeing the negotiations on the Guam-Federal relationship. . . .” (Willens, 2004, p. 115). One can only speculate on what the current political status of the Marianas might be today, had

the Department of the Interior acted aggressively on President Ford's Guam study back then.

Subsequent Political Status Efforts on Guam Have Failed

In 1980, Ricardo Bordallo won a second term as Governor of Guam and created a Commission on Self-Determination, chaired by Professor Robert Rogers. According to Rogers, Bordallo's goal was to establish a commonwealth status for Guam, similar to that achieved by the NMI, then attempt to merge the two commonwealths into one which might become a state. Barely two years after its creation, the CSD organized a [status referendum](#). On January 12, 1982, 49% of voters chose a closer relationship with the United States via [Commonwealth](#). Twenty-six percent voted [Statehood](#), while 10% voted for the Status Quo ([Unincorporated territory](#)). A [subsequent run-off referendum](#) held between Commonwealth and Statehood saw 73% of Guam voters choosing Commonwealth over 27% for Statehood (Rogers, 1995, p. 271).

On April 10, 1983, the Marianas lost a great supporter in Washington, D.C., Congressman Phil Burton passed away, leaving behind a legacy of 10 terms on the US House of Representatives Committee on the Interior where he guided the legislation creating the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

Governor Bordallo and Carl Gutierrez, then Speaker of the 17th Guam Legislature, led a mission to Albuquerque with Congressman Manuel Lujan, Jr. and Tony Won Pat, to discuss a legislative approach to political status. The effort did not lead to action in Congress. In January 1984, Speaker of the 18th Guam Legislature Carl Gutierrez pushed through legislation creating a new bipartisan Commission on Self-Determination with Governor Bordallo as its chair. A draft Commonwealth Act was prepared by early 1985. It included removing the stigma of "unincorporated" status. A local activist group, the Organization of People for Indigenous Rights (OPI-R), introduced the concept that only Chamorros be allowed to vote on the draft Commonwealth Act, and that the Government of Guam should have mutual consent on any changes to the act as well as control over the 220-miles Exclusive Economic Zone, immigration and trade far more than what the CNMI had received. In fighting over these issues dragged out the process. The 1986 general election on Guam forced a postponement of the plebiscite on the draft Commonwealth Act to August 1987. Meanwhile, Dr. Laura Souder-Jaffery and Dr. Robert Underwood, both popular Chamorro professors at the University of Guam published a collection of essays on Chamorro self-determination that was very powerful and not in support of the draft

Guam Commonwealth Act. Governor Joseph Ada defeated Bordallo in the general election and General Vicente Ben Blaz defeated Delegate Tony Won Pat, who passed away on May 2, 1987. With Won Pat's defeat, Guam lost the chairmanship of the House Subcommittee on Insular and International Affairs (Rogers, 1995, pg. 271-275).

A draft Commonwealth Act for Guam was ratified in two votes in 1987 and submitted to Congress for action. However, three significant provisions killed the act: control over immigration, a Chamorro self-determination process, and mutual consent for any changes in the document.

The 24th Guam Legislature established the "Commission on Decolonization" in 1996, theoretically to enhance the Commission on Self-Determination's ongoing studies of various political status options and public education campaigns. However, it also produced no results.

It should be noted that recently, attorneys fighting for Puerto Rico's future political status are leading the fight against the Insular Cases and the Supreme Court's decision to designate and label those territories gained as a result of the Spanish-American War, and later the CNMI, as "unincorporated" territories. Should they prevail in the Supreme Court, then a path to statehood would be opened to a unified Marianas, although it would undoubtedly be a long and bumpy road.

Conclusions and Speculations

The Chamorros of Guam successfully gained US citizenship and limited self-government in 1950 because they were unified and justified in their demand. Regardless of political affiliation or business competition, they expressed their desires for political status with one loud and clear voice.

The majority of Chamorros and Carolinians from the Northern Mariana Islands appreciated what the Chamorros of Guam had accomplished and wanted the same. To the Chamorros of the Northern Marianas, in particular, the fastest route to citizenship was to re-unify the Marianas and form the Territory of the Marianas. Every three years after being assigned to the United Nations' Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, the elected representatives of the Northern Mariana Islands presented petition after petition to the United Nations Visiting Missions requesting reunification, but were consistently blocked by the United Nations Trusteeship Council Agreement.

At the same time, many of Guam's leaders began to look beyond "unincorporated" territorial status. They developed a vision of the Marianas gaining the ultimate political status in the American system of democracy: Statehood. These Guam Chamorros knew that the elected leaders of Northern Marianas wanted to have their families reunited under one political roof. They decided that the best route to statehood, perhaps the only route, was by reunifying the Marianas. Around 1957, Guam's political leaders began to push for reunification, in cooperation with the Northern Marianas leadership. Unfortunately, at the critical moment the Guam leadership overestimated their strength and allowed the 1969 reunification vote on Guam to fail.

The people of the Northern Mariana Islands, generally, now see this failure as a blessing in disguise. Because of this "no vote" on Guam, the Chamorros (primarily) in the Northern Mariana Islands began their own campaign for citizenship and self-government, asking for more than was given to Guam by the Organic Act. As the Northern Marianas Political Status Commission began forging a "totally new" political agreement with the United States, Guam's leaders began to demand that they receive the same benefits that were being considered for the NMI. The federal government responded with a study that authorized a political status for Guam that would be at least as beneficial as that being given to the Northern Mariana Islands. Unfortunately, that study got shelved in the Department of the Interior and the Guam leadership has not demanded that it be un-shelved. As a result, Guam continues to be governed under its Organic Act, as amended, a unilateral act of Congress.

Meanwhile, the Northern Mariana Islands became a Commonwealth of the United States by mutual negotiation between sovereigns, with a clause in their Covenant providing for Mutual Consent on significant issues. This issue of Mutual Consent will undoubtedly be tested by the pending military buildup in the Northern Marianas.

Many people still talk about reunification. The question is: Is reunification still a viable political status option?

Times have changed. In the 1950 and 60s, both Guam and the NMI were underdeveloped and primarily Chamorro populations. Beginning in the mid-1970s, both Guam and the CNMI greatly improved their standards of living as foreign investment and immigration laws changed the financial dynamics and demographics of the islands. Today, both Guam and the CNMI are dominated by foreign nationals, although primarily indigenous individuals serve in elected positions.

Some suggest that the time for reunification has passed. Some say the separate governments for Guam and the Northern Marianas have become institutionalized; that the political leaders on Guam and in the NMI do not have the will to make the sacrifices necessary to fight for an idealistic goal: achieving Commonwealth status for Guam, then creating one elected government for one Marianas. Many people, particularly the business community, seem satisfied with the status quo and are indifferent to the indignity of “unincorporated” status. When asked about reunification today, most people respond by asking how reunification will benefit their pocketbooks today, rather than how it might benefit their grandchildren tomorrow.

Nonetheless, many Guamanians see the CNMI’s negotiated Covenant, with the protections it provides to the people of the Northern Marianas through its imbedded concept of Mutual Consent, as a significantly better political status than Guam’s unilateral Organic Act. The CNMI has its own constitution, Guam does not. They have become aware of the pledge made to grant Guam a negotiated commonwealth status. Many point to the military buildup in the Marianas as a potential reunifying force. After all, it was the Department of Defense’s perceived need for a fallback base for Okinawa that drove forward the Northern Marianas political status movement in 1972. Today’s US-Japan security alliance still calls for moving marines from Okinawa. It seems logical that having one bargaining team dealing with Marianas military issues would result in a better deal for the Marianas than two different groups negotiating separately.

Perhaps the time is not at hand for reunification. As Henry Kissinger suggested and Governor Bordallo agreed, perhaps Guam must first achieve its own Commonwealth status, negotiating their most critical issues with the federal administration and creating their own constitution. Meanwhile, Congress continues to align its two territories regarding wage and immigration laws. And, the people of the Northern Mariana Islands may be given a chance to repeal Article 12 of its Constitution in 2014, equalizing land laws. Then, if Guam can attain Commonwealth Status with their own Constitution, then, perhaps, the two commonwealths could consider merging into one Commonwealth of the Marianas – perhaps as a fully incorporated territory – opening the door for full statehood and complete equality as American citizens, should the people decide to take that route at some time in the future.

One way or the other, the Calvos, Camachos, Cruzes, Leon Guerreros, Sablans, Taitanos, Torreses and Unpingcos, among many others, still have family and businesses relationships both north and south of the Rota Channel. It seems that no damage

could be done and some good might come from a comprehensive, joint study on the financial and legal impacts imposed on our two territories from having two different governments for one people, living in one archipelago, with far more convergent than divergent.

Those prophetic words memorialized in the resolution adopted by Speaker Won Pat's 4th Guam Legislature ring as true today as they did in 1958:

“WHEREAS despite this unfortunate and perhaps accidental division of one race, the people of the Marianas have never lost hope that a day will come when all the Chamorros once again will be reunited within a homogenous political and economic union under one governmental administration.”

The question is: Do the embers of self-determination still burn as deeply in the hearts of Guam's people today as they did in 1950 and 1958, or are the people of Guam content to live with the indignity of being “unincorporated,” second class American citizens?

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