

Independent contractor urged for Guam buildup review

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IN REACTION to U.S. Sen. Jim Webb's concerns over what he called the "unexplained delay in contracting an independent study of U.S. security interests," Guam Delegate Madeleine Bordallo said Webb's statements recognizes that Senate provisions in the 2012 National Defense Authorization Act have slowed the military buildup and caused significant problems in Japan and Guam.

"Further, I appreciate that the Department is clearly reviewing the contract for an independent assessment but I would caution the Department of Defense to choose an independent contractor that we can all trust for a balanced review."

Bordallo said she was "skeptical" of some contractors that are being considered that have "a particular point of view."

During an Armed Services Committee hearing last Thursday, Webb questioned Department of Defense officials about the unexplained delay in contracting an independent study of U.S. security interests, force posture, and deployment plans in East Asia and the Pacific region.

In questioning DOD officials, Webb asked: "I remained to almost the end of this hearing because I was quite surprised, Secretary Mabus, to hear your response with respect to the



Senator Jim Webb has expressed concerns over what he called the "unexplained delay in contracting an independent study of U.S. security interests." Reuters

questions from Chairman Levin and Sen. McCain regarding the independent study for the layout from Okinawa and Guam that we had mandated. Perhaps this is just a mis-coordination because I know it is not under the jurisdiction of the Department of the Navy, but I hope what you said is not right. We have mandated by law that there would be an independent study and that they would report to the Secretary of Defense 90 days after the signing of the National Defense Authorization bill which was Dec. 31, which means that this indepen-

dent study not only was supposed to have been contracted but it is supposed to give its first report to the Secretary of Defense in about two weeks. Then the Secretary of Defense has up to 90 days after that to report to us."

'Un-stick'

"This is not a small thing, as you know. We are not in any way up here attempting to kill the program; we are trying to un-stick it," Webb added.

Webb said he will be visiting Japan in April and he assumed there would be "some sort" of preliminary report from this

study. "Now we are hearing that apparently there has not even been a contract. I hope we can clarify this," Webb said.

Webb said the delay in the buildup "is being misunderstood on Guam" and that the situation in Okinawa is one of probably the top two most volatile domestic political issues in Japan.

"We need to get this going. I know there are continuing talks; we follow them every day in my office. But this is a part of it and it is designed to get an independent set of eyes on this because there are so many turf battles over in

the Department of Defense, quite frankly," he added.

Webb said one of the big questions on Guam was what the Marine Corps laydown would look like.

"I had my own questions about this when I first revisited Guam a couple of years ago because they were doing a laydown that included dependent personnel — family personnel — which was driving up infrastructure and the numbers from 8,000 to potentially more than 20,000 people. We know this needs to be redone, but I cannot emphasize strongly enough how important it is that first of all, the law be obeyed and second of all that we reach an endpoint on this for the good of our strategic posture in that part of the world, and also for our relations with the Japanese and the people of Guam," Webb said.

Study

The study was to be provided to the Defense Department by the end of this month.

The independent study was one of a series of congressional reporting requirements mandated in the Fiscal Year 2012 defense authorization bill to ensure a strong U.S. presence in the region — while reducing costs and impacts on local communities. The independent study will inform a final report that the Secretary of Defense must submit to Congress by the end of June.

Bond bill...

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to clear away all legal obstacles so that Calvo can issue additional bonds for the purpose of paying tax refunds.

Because some senators in the Legislature believed that the current budget sets aside enough revenues to pay for tax refunds, Bill No. 414 was introduced by Sen. Ben Pangelinan to use the remaining borrowing authority for school repairs and for other purposes. But many other senators, including Respcio, strongly felt that people should not have to wait for their tax refunds because of disagreements between the Executive and Legislative branches, according to the release.

Compromise

"This is why I worked for a compromise which gives the

governor complete authority to use the bond proceeds for refunds if he so chooses, but also gives him the option to use these bond proceeds for other purposes such as school construction, including Sen. Tom Ada's amendment to procure school buses," Respcio said.

During session, Bill 423 was incorporated into Substitute Bill No. 414.

"This action will ensure that these resources are available, so that there are no further delays in people receiving their tax refund checks," Respcio said.

Respcio went on to say that he believes paying tax refunds should be the first priority in the use of these available bond proceeds.

"I look forward to the governor's prompt action on SB-414 inasmuch as it provides the measures Gov. Calvo has stated will allow for the prompt

payment of tax refunds for this year, and again as Gov. Calvo pledged will ensure that this government pays our people their tax refunds on time."

Speaker Judi Won Pat voted in favor of the substituted version, saying that a portion of the bond fund could be used to repair and renovate Untalan Middle School so that students, faculty and staff can return to their home campus.

"I fully support our tax payers being paid their tax refunds and this bill gives the governor that authorization, but it also presents an opportunity to meet another obligation by this government, and that's to ensure that our public school children are learning in a safe environment. This bill provides for that," Won Pat said.

Debt ceiling

Vice Speaker Benjamin J. F. Cruz voted against the measure, arguing that Guam would go

up to its maximum debt ceiling. Cruz also pointed out that Department of Defense cuts and a slower buildup could put Guam in great financial peril.

Earlier, Respcio made a motion to move the appointment of Monte Mafnas to be the Director of the Department of Land Management from the voting file and back to committee for further discussion and questions. Respcio had learned that two CLTC board members, Oscar Calvo and David Matanane, were allowed to participate in board decisions, even though their appointments had already expired.

In a letter to Respcio, Pangelinan stated that he wanted the body to have an opportunity to question Mafnas on any questionable actions that may have been taken while two board members continued acting after their terms had expired. The Legislature will resume session today at 2 p.m.

Davis...

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this year.

Davis is challenging the Guam political status plebiscite because he claims it is unconstitutional and discriminates against non-Chamorros.

Davis claims his voting rights were violated when he tried to register for the Decolonization Registry but was denied because he is not a native inhabitant of Guam.

The Guam Decolonization Registry was created to delineate Guam residents who are entitled to vote for Guam's political status plebiscite, or self-determination.

The only individuals who can register are those who became U.S. citizens under the 1950 Organic Act of Guam and their descendants.

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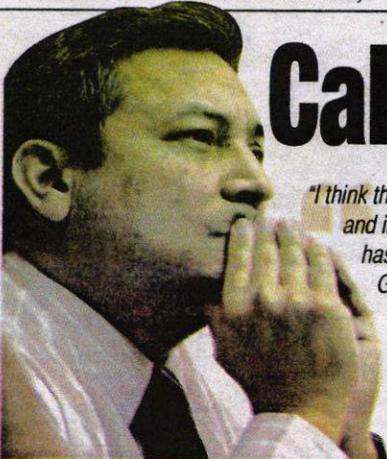
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Calvo reacts to probe

"I think the Chamorro Land Trust and its enabling legislation has given people who call Guam home an opportunity to have a piece of property and develop it either for homes or agricultural purposes."

- Gov. Eddie Calvo

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GOV. Eddie Calvo finds it ironic that the Department of Justice is investigating whether the Chamorro Land Trust Act is in violation of federal law when many of the Chamorro original landowners' properties were confiscated by the federal govern-

ment for use by the military. Besides, Calvo said most of the CLT properties are for low-income residents and those who are in real need. "I think the Chamorro Land Trust and its enabling legislation has given people who call Guam home an opportunity to have a piece of property and develop it either for homes or

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GOVERNOR SIGNS TWO PROCLAMATIONS

THE governor, along with the Office of the Attorney General of Guam's Child Support Enforcement Division, urged Guamanians to reach out and support the island's children.

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MADONNA ASKS LENIENCY FOR RUSSIAN ROCKERS



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ENVIRONMENT

YELLOW SAND: ASIA'S ANNUAL CROSS-BORDER HAZE

DUST and Sandstorm phenomenon occurs when fine soil particles are scooped up to thousands of meters by wind from arid areas. Page 14

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SUHR WINS POLE VAULT



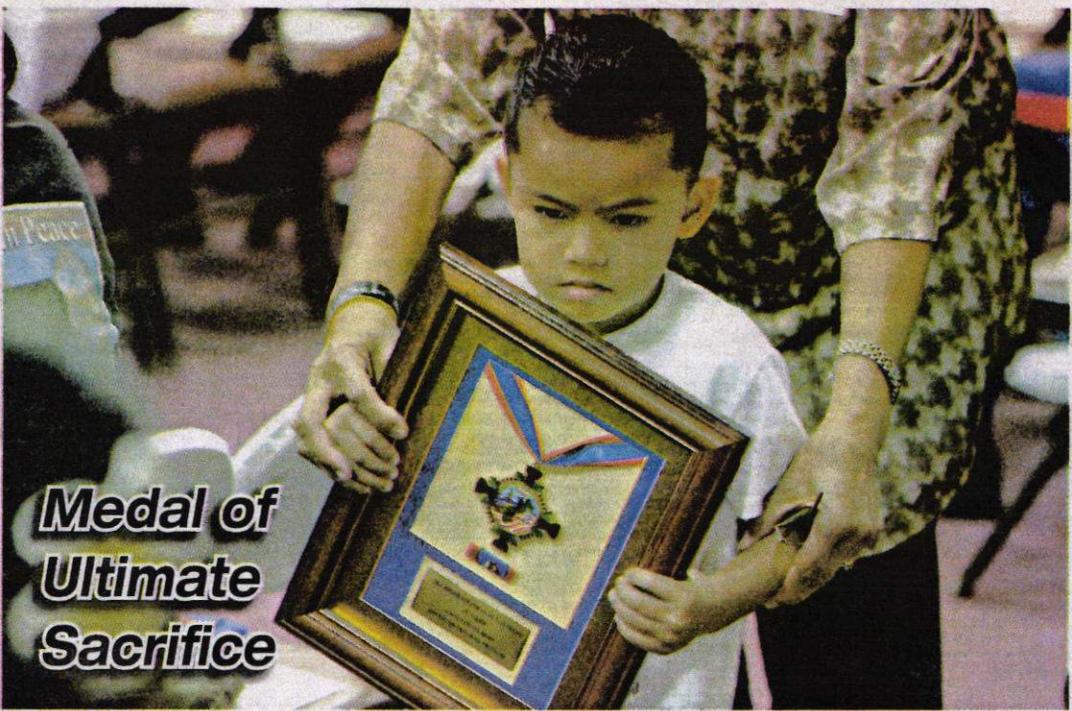
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Medal of Ultimate Sacrifice

Jude Steven Leon Guerrero holds the medal for his father, Sgt. Brian Steven Leon Guerrero, who died in Operation Enduring Freedom. Speaker Judi Won Pat called a Legislative session to present I Miñayan i Más Takhilo' na Sakrifisiu (the Medal of Ultimate Sacrifice) to the family members of at least 30 service members whose lives were lost in combat. See story and additional photos on page 2. David Castro / For Variety

SSHS

roof may be repaired soon

See story on page 4

Davis wants to proceed with trial

But AG wants delay in plebiscite suit

By Geraldine Castillo
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A YIGO man suing the local government in federal court wants his case to proceed to trial despite a magistrate judge's recommendation for dismissal, but the Attorney

"After plaintiff diligently prepared for trial by collecting evidence and providing such evidence to the defendants, defendants now seek to freeze the process, blocking plaintiffs from further diligently pursuing this case and providing defendants a respite from diligently preparing a defense."

- J. Christian Adams, Arnold "Dave" Davis' attorney

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