

The State of
Guam's Agenda
in Washington, D.C.

The Annual Address of
Delegate Robert A. Underwood
gi me'nan i Liheslaturan Guahan
yan
i Taotao Guahan Siha

Session Hall
Hagåtña
July 23, 1998

STATE OF GUAM'S AGENDA IN WASHINGTON
Delegate Robert A. Underwood
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STATE OF GUAM'S AGENDA IN WASHINGTON

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Buenas tâtdes yan hâfa âdai todos hamyo taotao Guahan. Para I man onorapble siha na ufisiales, I man distengge siha na bisita, todos hamyo ni' mane'ega' pâ'go na bunitun ha'âne, hu sen agradezi I atension-miyu.

Tâya' mas gâtbo na tâno' ki I tâno'-ta, yan tâya' mas bunitu na taotao gi hilo' tâno' ki mismu taotao-ta. Gigon tumunok I batkonaire guini giya Guam ya hu ripara I trongkon niyok, gigon hu hungok I fino'-ta gi anunsiu siha gi hâlom I batkonaire yan gi kombetsasion gi uriya-hu, gigon hu li'e' I famagu'on yan I manâmko', hu tungo' na gaige yu' gi sagâ-hu, na gaige yu' gi tâno'-hu yan hu kumprendi na maseha malak manu yu' gi entiriru I mundu, tâya' parehu-na este I lugât ni' ta fanana'an Guâhan.

We are in the middle of many things in July of 1998. We are in the middle of a campaign season which demands much of our energy as elected officials; we are in the middle of an economic downturn in Asia which threatens our livelihood; we are in the middle of a protracted struggle to achieve a new stage of autonomy in our relationship with the federal government and some of us are even comfortably in the middle of middle age.

We are also in the middle of the Centennial commemoration of the raising of the American flag over our island. It is a commemoration full of uncertainties but full of promise. It is a commemoration, not of a single event, but of a relationship that has not been fully consummated. It is not like a wedding anniversary, but more the recognition of the date when two people first met and began a relationship. It is more anticipatory than celebratory and this accounts for the uneven coverage and attention we gave to June 21, 1898, even here on Guam.

We have raised flags, we have lowered flags. We have saluted various banners and sung the anthems, but we still have much unfinished business. It is the unfinished business of determining who we are as political beings and what the nature of our relationship should be with the federal government -- a relationship which has an important influence in every issue we face as a society. There are those who say political status issues must take a back seat to more immediate issues. But the immediate issues they talk about are affected by our political status, whether it be

telecommunications, immigration, federal assistance for schools and public health, military relations or maritime law. There are those who argue that we should settle for what we have. Well, I believe such voices are wrong. We must aspire to full political adulthood and we must perfect democracy, for ultimately that is the measure of what we do in legislative halls, in executive chambers and in community centers around the island. The price of freedom is patience when things go poorly, and the reward of democracy is knowing that our children and grandchildren will have a better chance to fulfill their aspirations.

I know that there are times when we feel we are trapped in the middle of a maze. We have taken what appears to be dead-end after dead-end in our quest for commonwealth. We went down the administrative route, the Senate route, the United Nations route. All of these routes have added to our experience, have made us wiser, made us wearier and contributed to our frustration. But it is the natural aspiration of people to improve their lot, to make progress and to move towards greater autonomy and for us, for Guam, our colonial status is simply untenable.

We must not be a colony much longer. It may take some time, and when the time comes, there may be different officials who will sign the documents -- but for those of us who went down the blind alleys and who kept hope alive -- we have to keep on keeping on. We must recognize that we are part of a continuum which goes back to the 32 petitioners of 1901 and men like B.J. Bordallo, F.B. Leon Guerrero, A. B. Won Pat and the members of the Guam Congress. They played their part and we must do ours. We must reaffirm our commitment to Guam's political advancement without reservation, in the spirit of our forefathers and in the name of our children and grandchildren.

Last month, we commemorated the Centennial as an event involving an exchange between an American named Glass and a Spaniard named Marina. We had men named Ballendorf and Rodgers playing them in our re-enactment. The commemoration of the next hundred years may feature exchanges and faces of people named Aguon, Cruz and Tedtaotao. This will be progress and I have no doubt that this is in our future.

H.R.100, the Guam Commonwealth bill, had a hearing last October in Washington D.C. It was a proud moment to witness the voices of three Guam chief executives, community representatives and our legislative leaders. We were united in our expression of faith not only in American democracy but in Guam's capacity to be

autonomous and make the right choices for itself, if only it will be allowed to do so. Senator Murkowski introduced our bill in the Senate for the first time in history and made an historic commitment to draft new legislation after consulting with Guam leaders. But we must recognize that despite the attention, this bill will not pass in Washington over the next few months due to political concerns, and we are in a similar mood here in Hagåtña. Moreover, it is unlikely that it will pass in the form that we approved in 1987. We have yet to discuss in a public way whether we want to negotiate with the Congress on the details of the legislation. But we must come to a consensus about our next course of action and re-energize the process early next year.

We were able to get immediate attention to our political history in the form of H.Res. 494, a resolution acknowledging our one hundred year relationship with America and calls on Congress to "reaffirm its commitment to the United States citizens of Guam for increased self-government consistent with self-determination for the people of Guam." My resolution immediately received over 50 bipartisan co-sponsors which included Speaker Newt Gingrich and Minority Leader Richard Gephardt and other House leaders. They understand our unique history and our desire to clarify our relationship with the U.S. Senator Akaka introduced the companion resolution at my request in the Senate and we anticipate that the resolution will be marked up in the House Resources Committee next week when I return to Washington.

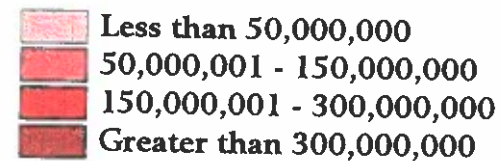
Guam's Geopolitical Advantage

As we assess where we stand in our political development, we must also remind ourselves of where we are in a literal sense - our geographic position in the world. We are a Pacific Island in the Western, Asian half of the Pacific Ocean. We are some 9,500 miles from Washington D.C. We are closer to Hanoi, Manila, Tokyo, Beijing and Koror than we are to our nation's capital, or to New York, Chicago, or San Francisco.

Our geographic position has worked to our advantage and it has worked against us. Historically, we have been in the thick of things and we will continue to be for decades to come. We are the first Pacific island to be colonized by the West because we happened to be a convenient stop in the lucrative Manila Galleon trade route between the Philippines and Mexico. We gained in international importance, but our ancestors suffered through the degradation of conquest and the forces of depopulation in ways other Pacific islands didn't have to endure.

Views Showing 3,500 Mile Radius Around Six Locations

Population of Countries



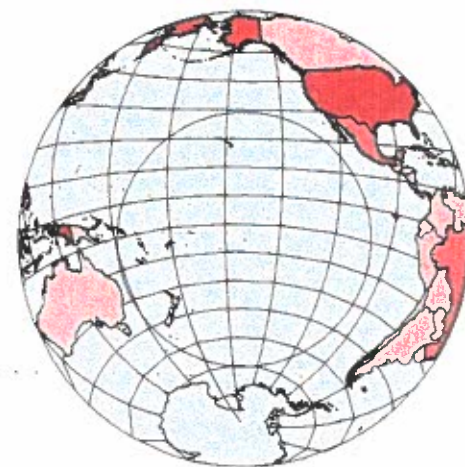
GUAM



HONOLULU



TAHITI



DENVER



NEW YORK



SAN DIEGO

Our geography shapes our world role and we sometimes think we are isolated. But nothing can be further from reality. I have repeatedly pointed this out on Capitol Hill and I did so again in my speech to the National Press Club last week. To illustrate my point, I asked the Congressional Research Service to develop maps showing a circle, with a 3,500-mile radius, around Guam and several other areas which we think of as strategically important, from both a military and economic point of view.

As you can see, there is a dramatic difference between Guam's potential sphere of influence and those of places like Hawaii, San Diego or even Denver. Guam's circle encompasses a healthy portion of the Asian continent, all of Southeast Asia and most of Australia. All the economic centers of Asia, and more than three billion people, are accessible within a few flying hours from Guam. Our circle also contains some of the major hot spots of the world which are potentially destabilizing. Isolation is sometimes a state of mind. We can stand on Mount Lamlam and see nothing but ocean all around us. Or we can stand there and visualize all of Asia lying just beyond our western horizon and all of America behind us in the east.

Defense

Guam has what I refer to as a 7-7 advantage over Hawaii in terms of military strategy. Guam is seven hours closer by air and seven sailing days closer to Asia than Hawaii. Our military value is shaped by this geographic reality and all war plans for this part of the world include our island as a major player. Admiral Prueher, CINCPAC, stated earlier this year that "Guam must be understood as a vital bridge linking CONUS-based forces and U.S. strategic interests in Asia." There is a \$10 billion military infrastructure on Guam and when the military wants to use their facilities, they don't need to consult with us like they do in neighboring countries. Guam offers unfettered access and utilization to military planners.

Despite these realities, I don't think we are getting treatment from the federal government in a way that is commensurate with our significance and value to the nation. In fact, given the nature of civilian-military relations during the past few years, we have traveled a rocky road with our military friends.

Guam is a small island and we consider everyone our neighbors, including the military. But imagine, if you will, a neighbor who grimaced every time you asked about returning the piece of land between your house and theirs that they wanted to borrow for a while in order to plant a few crops.

Imagine that the same neighbor suddenly decided to put their children in a different school from the one yours attend because the quality of your efforts was not to their liking. And imagine you had a neighbor who decided to stop investing in economic activities which provided jobs for people in the neighborhood. I doubt whether we would consider this neighbor to be a good neighbor.

In many respects this has been our experience with the military in the past decade. We can smile, shake hands and sit down together politely, they come over to our house for a fiesta, and they come over from time to time and help us fix things in the village, but the general relationship isn't reflective of being good, trusting neighbors.

We have the potential to acquire almost 6,000 acres of valuable property, yet the return is fraught with delays. The environmental screening process and/or the inadequacy of our plans have been used as tools of convenience to further the delays. We have a chance to acquire some specific, valuable economic properties but the answer has been No and we don't get to discuss alternatives. We are just supposed to take No for an answer. Well, our job here is not to take No for an answer, our job here is to push, and argue and, if need be, force that neighbor to be the good neighbor that we know he is deep down inside.

The military, our neighbor, has been changing the way they do business, not only on Guam but throughout the nation. Current Department of Defense plans, under the Defense Reform Initiative, call for subjecting more than 150,000 jobs -- 25% of the existing DoD workforce -- to competition through commercial activities studies, better known as A-76. Since 1978, DoD has conducted over 2,000 A-76 studies nationwide and DoD jobs have declined some 32% in the past decade. Despite our strategic importance, we are also subject to review and to cutbacks, and anyone who tells you differently is ignoring the realities of a post-Cold War military forced to compete for dwindling federal dollars while maintaining an optimal state of readiness. The concept is simple: employ more technology with less manpower.

Unfortunately, the Navy's A-76 study in Guam was marketed with a predetermined conclusion; they were going to end up with one big base operating support contract, known as a BOS. It was wrong for the Navy to announce that a study would be conducted, then describe the results in the same breath. This has made it very difficult to encourage our civil service employees' participation in the competition study. In spite of some criticism from some potential contract bidders, I called in the

Small Business Administration, to make sure that the Navy's conduct of this study included attention to small contractors. I even used the Typhoon Paka excuse to secure a 90-day delay in the time of the study. The Navy complied with my many requests, sometimes reluctantly, and sometimes without a smile, but we kept the pressure on.

My job in the face of this is to be proactive, to assist in the creation of new opportunities for our people as our neighbor decides to invest their money in weapon systems and computers rather than in people. We can delay, we can question, we can bring in the authorities to examine our neighbor's behavior -- and we did all that -- but we can't dictate where they are going to put their resources. The military is downsizing and we are going to feel the burden in much the same way as other communities. Military downsizing is not about punishing Guam; it is not about legislation to exempt Guam; it is about the military's bottom line: cut back and cut costs, not because they want to but because they have to, not just here but everywhere.

I will continue to pressure the military. Along with other members of the National Security Committee whose districts are undergoing dramatic downsizing themselves, I question whether the military is actually saving money. To that end, I supported a reporting requirement to make sure that commercial studies are open, honest and productive. I have been named to the Conference Committee which will be negotiating with the Senate on next fiscal year's DoD reauthorization and I will make sure that our interests are protected and our people are treated fairly.

My membership in the House-Senate Conference Committee will also allow me to protect provisions I placed in the DoD reauthorization bill. This includes a reporting requirement for the DoD regarding the privatization of utilities and DoD plans for the education of their dependents on Guam. I also inserted measures which will give military personnel car rental reimbursement when their cars do not arrive on time when they have a permanent change of station, and an item which will give our Guardsmen and women commissary privileges when called up for duty in a federally-declared disaster. Regrettably, our Guard personnel were not given these privileges during recovery efforts following Typhoon Paka. Well, we will solve this problem. I also assisted in giving our Reserve and Guard personnel an additional twelve days of commissary privileges annually. They guard our nation, help our community, and they deserve every break we can give them.

When our military personnel get out of uniform, we shouldn't forget the sacrifices they made and we shouldn't forget the commitments we made about health

care. In the House, I supported the extension of federal employee-type health care plans to our retirees on an experimental basis, and we must continue to support other alternatives. On Guam, as a result of last year's visit of two good friends of Guam in Congress, Representatives Lane Evans and Paul McHale, we convinced the General Accounting Office to study the problems of health care delivery to eligible veterans and the retiree population. We also asked them to identify available resources in the Departments of the Navy and Veterans Affairs to support the Guam Naval Hospital's ability to provide treatment thereby diminishing the need for medivacs to Tripler Hospital in Hawaii. The GAO team came to Guam in April, they met with veteran and retiree representatives and the study will be issued in the course of the next few weeks. I am sure that it will contain many valuable suggestions.

Our veterans also voiced concern about the Guam Veteran's Center, noting that Guam has a higher incidence, per capita rate, of combat experience veterans than elsewhere in the U.S., yet unlike other centers in the U.S., the Guam center did not employ anyone with Vietnam experience. They cited this as one of the reasons why Vietnam veterans do not utilize the Guam Center's services. As a result of several meetings with the Department of Veterans Affairs, I am pleased to report that the Guam Veteran's Center now employs a Vietnam veteran.

I have also been working for Filipino veterans who fought in U.S. uniforms but were not accorded veterans benefits as promised by President Franklin D. Roosevelt over 50 years ago. To date, this solemn promise still has not been kept by America. This week I entered my support to resolve issue at the veterans hearing on H.R. 4168.

Economy

Our military value is well understood. However, Washington policy makers and U.S. business interests have been slow to recognize the economic potential that Guam's location offers to further American interests in the region. We have a vibrant economic base which responds directly to Asian trends.

The current economic downturn in Asia has serious consequences for America and for us. Some observers predict that the region is on the verge of an economic meltdown. This will have serious consequences worldwide and create new military security challenges, a situation which will be of no benefit to those of us who live here and will eventually create economic problems inside the United States.

This is why I see it as my responsibility to argue for support of the International Monetary Fund programs for currency reform in the region and to continue participating in caucuses and organizations such as the Congressional Study Group on Japan, the Travel and Tourism Caucus and Human Rights Caucus in order to raise the profile of the economic needs of our region in Washington. I continue to work with the leadership of the Guam Hotel and Restaurant Association and the Guam Chamber of Commerce to assist me in these efforts and to be of assistance to their projects.

Our work on the Telecommunications Act of 1996 led to our inclusion in the North American numbering plan and as a direct result, we can now call the U.S. mainland at dramatically lower rates. Uniting families and doing business is now much more affordable. This is a prime example of how healthy competition improves our lives. Congress will soon address the deregulation of electric power production. The military will continue the process of getting out of the utilities business except when absolutely necessary. We have to continue close dialogue on these issues in order to see that similar benefits come to our people through the development of a strong competitive environment.

Earlier this year, I joined the Merchant Marine Panel of the National Security Committee as the ranking Democrat. My new status empowers us to examine Guam's unique status under the Jones Act and it allows us a new place from which to articulate, educate and be educated on the complexities of this act. With the recent victory in front of the Federal Maritime Commission, we stand a better chance to develop a special policy for Guam. I congratulate Governor Joseph Ada and Governor Carl Gutierrez for their efforts in the FMC case and the recent victory.

Recently, I had the opportunity to speak to Labor Secretary Alexis Herman. I expressed to her that while the United States is enjoying one of the lowest unemployment rates in its history, our island is experiencing its highest. Our unemployment rate has increased some 500% in this decade alone. We attribute our misfortune to military restructuring and the downturn in Asian economies. I am concerned that our displaced employees lack skills necessary to capitalize on other job opportunities. I believe vocational education and job retraining programs are necessary to prepare them for new careers. Labor Secretary Herman has committed to developing a comprehensive program for Guam similar to programs for other areas which have experienced dramatic increases in unemployment. I am committed to exhaust every avenue and fight for every resource available for our workers.

I am sure we are all Paka'd out, but it would be a disservice not to thank the many who worked hard, and continue to toil, to bring us back from the effects of the storm. Our economic recovery is remarkable and attracts repeated notice in Washington, D.C. Despite several simultaneous disasters nationwide, Congress moved swiftly to provide funding to repair storm damaged military facilities in Guam while FEMA and SBA helped us in the civilian sector. I continue to work for the funding of port repair projects from the Economic Development Administration and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Our port is our lifeline and we need to protect it from potential future damage.

Resources: Water and Land

No one disputes our island is a paradise. However, our limitation is that we are in the middle of the blue waters of the Pacific, within a finite land base and limited access to alternative sources of energy, water and natural resources. We need to reexamine our relationship with our environment and be mindful of our community's responsibility to be good stewards of water and land. We also need to explore how these can be of greater economic and social benefit to our people.

With respect to the environment, I am proud of the many organizations on our island which promote conservation on behalf of ourselves and future generations. The work of academics at the University of Guam's Marine Lab and community groups like Kids for Coral are an inspiration for all of us.

After Typhoon Paka I was able to persuade federal officials to support the cleanup of our reefs with a grant of \$150,000. This will help the work of local agencies and the diving community to restore the reefs damaged by the storm. I attended the recent National Oceans Conference in Monterey, California, where President Clinton reaffirmed his commitment for the funding and restoration of American coral reef ecosystems. This effort needs to be refined since it is tilted towards reef systems in the Caribbean and Atlantic, yet we know that the majority of American reef systems are in the Pacific.

This Oceans Conference was held to recognize and promote the role that oceans play in the lives of all Americans. A statistical fact is that over half of the American population lives within 50 miles of water. I commented, at the conference, that 10

of Guam's population lives within four miles of the ocean. It is abundantly clear that we need to be sensitive and aware of the role that the ocean, and other resources play in our island life. It is there for our recreation, transportation, a source of food and a part of our cultural identity as an ocean people.

I also believe we have a great opportunity to capitalize on our ocean resources. In the coming years, there will be economic opportunities available to our island from the mining of manganese deposits in the deep waters off our eastern shore. Equally important for our economic health are the industries of aquaculture and fisheries. Our people should not neglect these chances to learn from and harness the natural process of raising fish. In this case, it is more advantageous for us to cultivate nature rather than deplete it. Along with a small group of members of Congress, we continue to push for U.S. ratification of the Law of the Sea Treaty. This will facilitate Guam's participation in international arrangements for seabed mining and fishing.

Our island is big at heart, but small in land size. The return of federal lands still remains one of the most difficult issues we face even after the passage of federal law and even after a basic decision has been made to return military land which is no longer needed. Bureaucratic delays and inertia account for much of these problems and we will continue to work together with the Governor, the Legislature and the Reuse Authority to recoup lands for our people.

One of the largest conceptual impediments in Washington, to the land return issue, is "fair market value." This phrase appears in federal law today and in nearly every proposal drafted by federal officials with respect to Guam land return. Basically, they argue that if land were to find its way to private landowners as opposed to public benefit, then fair market value must be paid. I have frequently stated that if this were applied to Guam, it would make the federal government not only the greatest land baron in our history putting the Spanish crown to shame, but make it the greatest land speculators since the railroads gobbled up the Western United States.

As an alternative, I propose that if the property finds its way to private hands, then the federal government should get back what they paid for it originally, plus the amounts from the so-called compensation of the 1980s. This proposal has attracted some interest, but it is still difficult to navigate without the full understanding and support of original landowners and the elected leadership of Guam. In land issues, the federal government should get back everything they gave us, dollar for dollar, but it is really more like penny for penny.

together, to raise healthy children in safe homes and to make sure that they go to good schools, safe from violence and illicit drugs. Guam families, whether in Humatak or Dededo, whether in public housing or in the latest housing subdivision, whether on family property held for centuries or Chamorro land trust land, all want the same things for their families and homes. They want water to flow from their taps, they want the lights to go on when they flip the switch, they want reliable jobs and decent wages. They want good schools and good health care systems for their children.

Government service is public service. I believe that we are elected to make sure that government improves our lives; I believe that our job is to expand opportunities through education, to make sure that our families stay healthy and that they live in villages where neighbors are friends and not potential problems. Problems with crime and drugs rob us of our innocence and better nature. Robert Kennedy said that no nation hiding behind locked doors is free, "for it is imprisoned by its own fear." Having had the experience of being robbed last year, I understand.

There is a federal role in making our streets safe and in helping rid ourselves of the scourge of drugs. In my capacity as Chair of the Health Task Force for the Congressional Hispanic Caucus, I continue to monitor anti-drug programs and I carefully examined the recently announced national program against drugs. I noticed that the messages did not include Asians and Pacific Islanders as part of their target populations. I have contacted the National Drug Policy Office and they will be examining the production of messages tailor-made for Pacific island communities.

The federal crime bill has provided us the resources to acquire specially trained dogs for drug interdiction and the manpower and vehicles to fight the war on drugs. But we need to include rehabilitation in our struggle against drugs and I will be working on securing additional funds for 'round-the-clock facilities to assist those who have fallen prey to drugs.

As many of you know, I am a teacher by trade. It is ironic that after working in schools and at our University of Guam for over 20 years in what I consider to be a very honorable profession, I was never called the Honorable Robert Underwood until I put my name on a ballot and got more votes than anyone else. I still think that teachers are the truly honorable people.

My background has enabled me to include our issues in this year's reauthorization of the Higher Education Act. In the House, I included a provision

which will allow Guam postsecondary education institutions additional flexibility in the applicability of regulations so that we will stand a better chance to obtain grants and contracts. I also participated in supporting increases in Pell grants so that our young people attending the Guam Community College and the University of Guam will have an immediate increase of \$1,500 next year and an additional \$800 by the year 2003 in their Pell Grant awards. I also continue to support the granting of Pell Grants to Micronesians both here and in the United States, in conformance with the spirit and letter of the Compacts of Free Association.

The bill is now in the Senate and, by working with Senators Jeffords, Kennedy and Reed, a provision is now included which allows the Guam Community College to get clear title to more than 300 acres to build a new campus. For years, reversionary provisions and restrictions have kept GCC from engaging in private-public partnerships for funding a new campus. This may mark the first time that we have been able to eliminate reversionary clauses on the acquisition of land from the federal government.

We continue to do well in receiving federal assistance. Our federal support amounts to 15% of our local educational budget which far exceeds the 6% national average. We have facilitated close contact with federal officials including the teleconference last year with Education Secretary Riley and this year with Assistant Secretary for Special Education, Judith Heumann. I have also completed a videotaped program with Assistant Secretary for Elementary and Secondary Education, Gerald Tirozzi. This will be aired next week on Marianas Cable Vision and KGTF.

When the typhoon hit last year, my wife, Lorraine immediately went to work in Washington acquiring books from the Reading is Fundamental program for distribution to the children at Liheng-ta. She also spearheaded the effort to get computers from the U.S. Department of Education for St. Francis and other public and private schools severely damaged by the storm. She tells me that she will continue to function as a valuable staff member even though she reminds me that she isn't on the payroll.

We spend too much time lamenting the condition of our schools and the quality of our education. We should push education officials and prod ourselves to make improvements, but we should not lose sight of our successes. There are many communities that are ten times larger and richer who cannot boast that their Mock Trial team came in second in the nation. There are only 141 communities who can claim to

have a Presidential scholar and only one can lay claim to Neil Weare. Our academic challenge bowl teams, geography bee champs, Congressional art contest winners and the SKIP Kids are all products of Guam schools. To be sure, we have our problems, but their successes prove that there is nothing wrong with our kids.

I wish you could have seen their faces and felt their enthusiasm when I invited NASA astronaut, Dr. Leroy Chiao to address them at the UOG field house a couple of months ago. Their "oohs" and "aahs" spoke volumes about our young people's enthusiasm and bright future. Our island is in good hands because of them.

The health of the people in Guam is a priority for me. That's why when I was invited by the Director of the National Institutes of Health, Dr. Harold Varmus, and by the Acting Director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Dr. Claire Broome, to visit their organizations earlier this year I welcomed the opportunity to raise health disparities which affect the people of Guam. NIH and CDC make major decisions about diabetes, cancer, infectious diseases, strokes, mental health, and other illnesses, and we must continue to fight for fair funding for Guam. We must make our presence known and we must seek ways to ensure that Guam is included when these programs are being funded.

I am deeply concerned with the increasing number of teen-age smoking and the high incidence of adult smoking in Guam. The Hispanic Caucus and the Asian Pacific American Caucus asked me to lead their work on the minority tobacco issue last fall. I organized forums with public health groups and anti-smoking experts in order to produce a consensus bill to address this issue head on. The Minority Community Tobacco Reduction Act was introduced last month. It includes, among other things, statistics for the territories and intervention programs which Guam would be eligible to participate.

Diabetes is a serious disease in Guam. People with diabetes suffer many complications and they incur health care costs that are more than four times greater than those without diabetes. That is why I am seeking ways to bring diabetes education, prevention and treatment programs to Guam through our work with NIH and CDC.

Constituent Services

We try to improve the quality of life one constituent at a time, through personal

assistance to those experiencing problems with the federal government. Many of our civil service retirees continue to ask for help in locating missing checks, revising their benefits and making inquiries about the status of their retirement packets, health insurance and survivors' benefits.

We also assist our men and women in uniform. After Typhoon Paka, many service members returned on emergency leave to help with recovery efforts. We were able to help several extend their leave time because their families suffered great losses. We continue to help our veterans and retirees through the maze of bureaucracy and even recover lost service awards. One constituent finally received the awards he deserved. These included the Air Medal, the Bronze Star and the Silver Star.

We have even assisted some businesses in dealing with the Internal Revenue Service, but please don't count on too many successes with them. Misplaced checks and missing persons are easier to find than a friendly face at the IRS.

Improving the Government

Public service is difficult and sometimes the politics that accompanies it is even tougher. But it is the people's business and disagreements and jockeying for position is part of the landscape. Political leaders live in exaggerated circumstances in which both blame and praise is heaped out in heavy, frequently disproportionate doses. As elected officials, as politicians, we sometimes make our individual activities sound a little more heroic and difficult than the circumstances will allow. But we can't let the heat of the moment take away from the necessity to collaborate for the long haul. I am realistic enough to know we all fall into this trap from time to time, but I am idealistic enough to believe that, all of us, from governor, to speaker, to your delegate to Congress, to each and every Senator carry the best interests of the people of Guam at heart.

I am happy to work with the Governor, the Legislature and community leaders throughout the island on important issues. But there are times when we may differ. H.R. 2370, the Judicial Empowerment Act, is one in which not all of us see eye to eye. I remain convinced that the current organization of the Guam court system violates the separation of powers and allows undue legislative influence in the organization of a co-equal, third branch of government. Congress intended for Guam to have a Supreme Court, but the expectation was that it would follow the historical pattern of all such

courts in the fifty states and territories. I recognize the authority of the Guam Legislature, but the current authority over the judiciary comes from an anomaly in U.S. public law, and the only real remedy is to change the Organic Act. After consulting the legal profession and the public, I developed legislation which met those concerns. I will continue to pursue this in a respectful way, in a way which acknowledges the differences but holds true to the strongly-held view about the appropriate nature of government.

Senator Forbes asked that I not take the Legislature to task and I won't. But I will take the time to thank all of the Senators who have worked with me on various issues, ranging from Senator Pangelinan and Senator Lou Leon Guerrero on Pacific health concerns and changes in the Organic Act, to Speaker Unpingco on Chamorro lepers and Senator Carlotta Leon Guerrero on regional issues. I have enjoyed and learned from my many consultations with Senators Salas, Flores, Aguon and Felix Camacho on land and war restitution issues and Senator Lamorena on economic issues.

Improving government includes collaboration with fellow elected officials but is based primarily on communication with the public. I continue to have village meetings on a regular basis. I've had audiences of more than a hundred people and one occasion when only one constituent showed up. He got my undivided attention. I remain committed to using every possible telecommunications advancement to enhance my interaction with the public. I am on the internet and I also receive e-mail messages. I want to take this moment to thank K57, MVC, KGTF and Kuentos Communications for broadcasting this speech live on radio, television and on the internet.

Unless they are in the military or are federal civil service employees, most of our people are spared the day-to-day dealing with the federal bureaucracy. If and when the need arises, a letter to the agency or a call to a lawyer is enough to untangle the knot in the proverbial bureaucratic red tape. However, when the knot is just too tight or its location can't be pinpointed, frustrated residents show up at my Hagåtña Office. Or, since we're now firmly in the Communications Age, they send me their problems directly through electronic mail via the internet.

I marvel at this new technology. I get e-mail from a constituent, which I electronically forward to my staffers, who in turn send e-mail messages to their contacts in the various federal agencies, and in a short while, they receive e-mail responses, which we e-mail back to the constituent. Today in Guam, "Nihi ta chek I

mail" has a whole different meaning.

Over the next few months, we will be establishing a teleconference link between my office in Washington and here in Hagåtña. Our capacity to talk and interact may finally be accommodated by all of the technological advancements which we will be employing to benefit greater and more efficient communication between our people and Washington D.C.

Liberation Day

Two days ago we celebrated the 54th anniversary of Guam's liberation from the Japanese occupation. The parade was great and the carnival fantastic and it is always good to get a day off. But there is a serious purpose for this celebration which we should never forget. We must remember the sacrifices of the men who fought on our shores and in our jungles and the suffering of our own people who proved not only their loyalty, but their capacity to survive in the midst of adversity.

The story of liberation is about the meeting of two groups of liberators; the liberators from without who came in landing craft and ships built in far away places. They were met by our own liberators from within who came down from the hills and emerged from caves. In their meeting, the true meaning of liberation and freedom was forged in the crucible of the battle for Guam.

We attempt to recognize this nationally by laying a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknowns and I did so last week with the assistance of Senator Daniel Akaka of Hawaii and my own distinguished predecessor, General Ben Blaz. I have also endeavored to bring honor to Guam's experience by pointing out difficulties with the planned World War II memorial to be constructed in front of the Lincoln Memorial. After letters of protest and concern, I am happy to report that the memorial design has been altered to allow for the celebration of the experience of the territories and not just the fifty states. I told them that Guam was not just asking to be included as a jurisdiction, but as a major battle site and an important symbol of the very meaning of liberation and freedom for which the war was fought.

We continue to work on behalf of War Reparations, but I must point out that in this budget-sensitive climate in Washington, various estimates about what it would take to satisfy the costs associated with war claims remain a significant obstacle. Congressional Budget Office numbers, which in the absence of specific information,

has some wild estimates which take us over \$100 million. Consequently, I am working on establishing a federal review process which will validate the amounts necessary in a short time, so that we can work on an appropriations measure that is fair and accurate. We are working with the appropriators to make this happen and I hope that we can finally bring just compensation to our World War II generation.

We continue to bring recognition to our people and their experience in other ways. I am proud to see a wreath laying at the Memorial Wall overlooking Asan as part of our annual celebration of Liberation Day. The Memorial Wall lists by name our parents and grandparents who died and suffered during the war. The wall remains one of the most poignant reminders of the experience of our people. The wall is really the product of Beatrice Emsley telling the Guam story in Washington and helping me convince the authorities to fund this tribute to Guam's people.

Being in Washington

The complexities of trying to move a bureaucracy can be challenging, having to interact with major national leaders can be overwhelming and spending all of that time in the air between here and there can be exhausting; but there are people who keep me grounded -- there is my family, my wife Lorraine and my children who are not interested in the Congressional issue of the day, but in the family crisis of the moment; there is the Guam community in the D.C. area who remind me about who we are as a people; and there is the people of Guam who visit me in Washington and who I see here at the store, restaurant, driving down the street and in village meetings.

They remind me that my job is about representation, about telling the Guam story. They remind me that this job is about representing a unique people who have a story to tell, who have concerns that need to be met. My job is to tell that story and to make sure people know about us. I try to tell that story in floor speeches, committee hearings, meetings with key officials, and in speeches before various organizations. This story is also told through Guam's Christmas tree ornaments which we share with the nation every year, and by our Congressional art contest winners, our Centennial photo displays and in ceremonies we try to organize in Washington.

Success in representing Guam, in telling the Guam story, and in doing things for Guam can be difficult to measure. To be sure, we can catalogue individual accomplishments and we have done this today. We could also count the number of speeches, meetings and conversations I've had on and about Guam, but such a measure

I benefit only those who like to talk. Real representation is more about listening.

Success in Washington is about representation; it is about a relationship of trust between this island's sole representative in Washington and that individual's understanding of the complexities of Guam and the soul of a very special people, those who call Guam their home.

I trust the people of Guam to convey their concerns to me and they have and I encourage those who have not. And the people can trust me to convey those concerns on their behalf for them, and I will be honest and direct with the people about the problems dealing with Washington.

I began this address by reflecting upon the reality that we are in the middle of big things. Life, political issues, the art of representation are always works in progress. My own efforts are a work in progress. But I remain energized by faces; the faces of the people, the sea of faces I saw at the parade the other day, the faces of my wife and children, my mother and my relatives. I remain confident in the capacity of those faces to smile in happy as well as difficult times and to harden only as necessary.

Last week, the Taotao Tano' dancers came to Washington D.C. Their faces reminded me that while older faces are a bit more experienced and wiser, the spirit of vitality for our people remains in the hopeful eyes and beautiful faces of our young people, 100 years old under the American flag, 4,000 years old as a people.

Biba taotao tano'
Biba Guam.