

Testimony presented to the Sub Committee on Insular Affairs, Committee on Natural Resources,
United States House of Representatives

by

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Madam Chairwoman and Members of the Committee, thank you for inviting me to participate in your hearing on the military buildup on Guam and the challenges facing our community. My name is Felix Camacho; I am the Governor of Guam. My testimony today is to present Guam's perspective of the challenges that will accompany the military's activities here.

Madam Chair, I would like to express my appreciation to you and to the members of the Committee for holding this hearing here in Guam to better understand the needs and concerns of the single most important issue for the people of Guam since the Liberation of Guam from Japanese occupation in 1944.

As you are aware, the Territory is poised to receive a significant increase of U.S. military assets over the next 10 years. From the \$1 billion in activity at Andersen Air Force Base in Northern Guam to the \$1 billion in projects at U.S. Naval Station Guam in the South and the planned \$10 billion move of the 3rd Marine Expeditionary Force from Okinawa to Guam, the patriotic Americans of Guam stand in full support of this positive growth in our part of the Western Pacific.

But this growth will not just and should not happen inside the fences of the military bases.

According to U.S. Census Bureau estimates, Guam's population is expected to increase from 168,564 in 2005 to 180,692 in 2010, *without* factoring any increase to the local military population by the U.S. Department of Defense. Due to the normal increase, I have pushed the Government of Guam to begin the process of directing capital improvements throughout our island, specifically in those locations expected to develop more rapidly in light of the expansion as identified by military planners. Clean water and waste water infrastructure, power generation, a sanitary landfill, modern roads and improved social services are all priorities of this effort.

The Government of Guam has estimated the costs to support the military buildup at an estimated \$1.1. Billion dollars. But as an isolated U.S. Territory, dependent on military and tourism, we are facing a monumental challenge in finding this funding on an accelerated time frame and under a sense of urgency.

I commit to each of you that the individual agencies within the Government of Guam continue to seek all available funding sources to support projects that will improve the quality of life for all residents, both military and civilian alike. The Government of Guam also is taking cost-cutting measures and other approaches to maximize the limited funding opportunities afforded the island as a U.S. Territory-including but, not limited to, public-private partnerships.

As I stand before you here, I am encouraged by the fact that the Interagency Group on Insular Areas Working Group on Military Expansion convened recently at my request. The U.S. Department of the Interior Office of Insular Affairs, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of the Navy Joint Guam Program Office and the U.S. Department of Defense, leads this group. I want to take this opportunity to thank each of the members of the House Subcommittee on Insular Affairs for your participation in the first meeting of this working group. We must seek more opportunities to see representatives from the executive and legislative branches of our great nation in one room to discuss the future of Guam. Both Lt. Governor Michael Cruz and I are encouraged by the greater interaction between the Government of Guam and relevant federal agencies to guide the Government of Guam and the island's U.S. military commands in understanding what is needed to respond to this tremendous growth and the certain impacts to the Guam community now and our future generations.

But these efforts have not been without challenges. The Department of Defense entered into bi-lateral negotiations with the Government of Japan, which proposed to shift significant security assets to Guam, with little or no consideration of, or consultation with the Territory of Guam. It appears that the Nation's and the interests of DOD took precedence forgoing any consideration of the impact to the citizens of Guam and this underlying attitude has permeated the relationship between DOD and the Government of Guam to date.

Critical milestones negotiated and agreed upon between the Government of Japan and the United States, and embedded in the bi-lateral agreements, have created an externally driven sense of urgency for Guam, the U.S. Department of Interior and the other executive branch agencies. This sense of urgency may be contributing to this lack of consideration of the rights of the people of Guam affected by this DOD initiative. This approach could set up a situation to see us fail. This is unacceptable.

As Governor, I acknowledge there are many challenges that face Guam-challenges that are not the responsibility of DOD. However, I expect DOD to underwrite the costs directly and indirectly associated with DOD driven requirements for the move of the 3rd Marine Expeditionary Force to Guam. We cannot be expected to cover unfunded federal mandates or other substantial requirements of this military expansion. We have seen the effects of such mandates in other federal programs.

It is in the best interests of the Nation, the Department of Defense and the people of Guam that the military expansion be implemented so the outcomes achieved are sustainable, both physically and socially, for the foreseeable future. An integrated, holistic approach that considers the people of Guam, our rights, our health and our well being as well as the military value of our island is crucial. This holistic approach, one that takes into account that DOD's unprecedented expansion is being undertaken in this patriotic American community and one that integrates both the island requirements and the military requirements should not be significantly more expensive than an "inside the fence" approach, but the returns, for all stakeholders, will be much greater.

Ladies and Gentleman-The military expansion for Guam is simply this: a restored confidence in Guam and the strategic importance of Guam in protecting the security of the United States of America.

We have seen great examples of this over the past four years. In that time, there have been numerous carrier and battle group visits as well as increased interaction with foreign armed forces including China and Australia. This fiscal year alone, Congress has appropriated more than \$193 million dollars for military construction activities on Guam. That number is expected to rise to the billions of dollars a few short years from now.

This will greatly add to the forward deployed assets that are already on Guam to cover an area twice the size of the continental United States.

The activity will complement those assets soaring above the skies of our beautiful island including forward deployed B-1 and B-2 Bombers. We will welcome the Global Hawk Strike Force and a Rapid Engineer Deployable Heavy Operational Repair Squadron Engineer (RED HORSE) Squadron.

Joint Military Exercises conducted on Guam by all branches of service and the Australian Royal Navy, Royal Malaysian Navy, Peoples Republic of China Army/Navy, Russian Federated Navy, and Republic of Korea Navy will continue this year and beyond. These assets and activities will do much to ensure the security of Micronesia and the Pacific Rim.

As I stand here, I must reflect on the fact that all of these interactions could not have been possible without our efforts to bring Washington to Guam.

Former Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Peter Pace and numerous congressional delegations including you who are here today have come to Guam to see for themselves Guam's role and the challenges of a patriotic people who stand with America in the defense of democracy.

Summary

Madam Chairwoman and members of the Committee, military expansion for Guam means progress. Military expansion means a strong economy that is poised for sustained growth alongside our core industries of tourism and transportation. The move of the US Marines to Guam and the buildup at our current bases means a more developed local workforce and the benefits will include higher paying jobs filled by a skilled, educated local workforce that is skilled and educated.

Guam is a safe American community and is transforming into the Asia-Pacific Rim's center for Asian-American trade and the tip of the American military spear in this part of the world. However, in order for all of this growth to be mutually beneficial, our island, our community and our people must be viewed as relevant and important stakeholders-equal partners-as we embark on transforming Guam into one community which will transform our island paradise forever.

Thank you for your attention. I am pleased to answer any questions.