Negative and Positive Effects of a Military Build-up on Tinian and Guam in Relation to Saipan.

EN 202-002

Instructor: Dr. Kimberly Bunts Anderson

Research Project

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Special Thanks to all the people who assisted in the process of research and to the brave men and women who served or are currently serving.

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**Abstract**

A student researcher and veteran attending college in the Northern Marianas Islands conducted a study on the impacts the military build-up on Guam and Tinian would have on Saipan. After reviewing articles on the issue of military build-ups, the student researcher felt there was a gap in the information. Utilizing surveys, interviews, and literature, the student researcher attempted to provide data to fill in the gap. Initial research and collection of data conveyed a sense of urgency on the issue of military build-ups in the Marianas, but interviews with key people provided clarity. The initial perspective was that of an ever-increasing military presence, however that was inaccurate. Information gleaned from the research provided an accurate description of the current military build-ups in the Marianas. Although there are no plans to increase military facilities on Saipan, the military’s need for expansive training sites may still have an impact. A clear understanding of the facts are paramount to allow the people to make informed decisions. The main objective was to provide information for the people of the Marianas.

*Keywords: military build-up, Tinian, Guam, Saipan, divert airfield*

**Introduction**

The events of World War Two and the Northern Mariana Islands are synonymous. Military strategic goals of the time required the taking of the Mariana Islands. The historic events that followed led the NMI to becoming the Commonwealth seen today. Guam is already in the preliminary stages of a major military build-up accompanying a proposed plan for a military divert air station on Tinian (C.A.E Villahermosa, 2015), leaving Saipan caught in the middle geographically. The objective of the research is to conduct an analytical look into the benefits and detriments of military developments as it relates to Saipan. With these two military developments so close to home, research into this topic and its impacts become invaluable. Current data from a recent survey on Guam (Daily Post Staff, 2017) suggests high public confidence in the economic boost a military build-up could potentially bring. Additionally, a committee made up of local politicians approved the proposed airfield on Tinian. There will be two questions to be answered over the course of research.

Analyzing the cost and benefits of the two proposed military developments will be the first objective of the research. The increasing military presence brings about big change. According to press releases, a projected 5000 servicemembers and their families are being relocated to Guam (Daily Post Staff, 2017). The same article describes the potential for jobs and new businesses in the form of 7031 temporary jobs and 1438 permanent (Daily Post Staff, 2017). That could be a tremendous boost to the economy and a dramatic increase to population. These would be some of the changes affecting Guam and Tinian, but the data falls short on the effects it would have on Saipan. This research would describe the highlights of current and past information to draw evidence driven conclusions on just how Saipan would be affected with all the changes happening nearby.

After collecting and analyzing the data on a military build-up, the next step would be to investigate the relationship between the islands. Tinian and Saipan are united under a covenant, with Guam being a U.S territory in close proximity. Data will be collected on the political relationships between islands. Additionally, key figures like the Military Liaison of the CNMI, Delegates from Tinian, and the head of any anti-military development groups, can provide varying perspectives on the topic. Analysis of the data collected will be used to provide supporting facts towards two ideas: What are the advantages and disadvantages of a military build-up in the islands and what is the relationship between islands in politically. Thirteen weeks over the course of the semester will be utilized; the last four weeks will be devoted to putting together the research project for presentation and peer review. Although the objective is to collect data, the reason is to inform people. This will be research into an issue that will affect the people of the NMI.

**Literature Review**

The conclusion of World War Two saw more land occupied by the United States of America than ever before. As a result, territories and commonwealths were established in the Pacific, giving independence to some, federal influence for others (Owens, 2010). Today, the Mariana Islands are facing an increase in military developments. This could be related to tensions between countries in the Pacific (O’Hanlon, July 28, 2015). Using multiple academic databases and the local news archives, countless sources were found regarding the topic of military developments in the islands. Available sources on the topic include televised news segments, articles, academic papers, blogs, polls and editorials. The sources that pertained most to the research are local articles and research papers that gave both local perspectives and academic data. Although the sources are numerous, there are two primary categories one can sort these sources into: those in opposition to military developments and those who support it.

The first perspective is support for the positive impacts of a military development. Interestingly, most of the articles used to support this perspective were sourced from local news outlets and papers. Research papers from both academic and military institutions were also used. In an article by Guam Daily Post in the November 15, 2015 edition, a poll taken by the news outlet showed sixty-nine percent of residents on the island of Guam supported the military build-up, eighty-two percent believed in the economic benefits. On the island of Tinian, the local government expressed enthusiasm in the proposed military plans (Pawlyk, February 11, 2016). In the global sphere, military installations in the Pacific could cut cost and increase the effectiveness of unit deployments by placing the troops near key locations around the world (O’Hanlon, July 28, 2015). The argument seems to connect economic growth and national security with the need for military installations in the pacific, including the Mariana Islands.

Not all literary sources describe the positives of a military build-up. After the covenant was established between the CNMI and the U.S in 1975, two-thirds of the Island of Tinian was leased as federal land (The Associated Press Staff, April 7, 2015). A military installation could be built on this land without any consent from the local government (The Associated Press Staff, April 7, 2015). According to research complied by Amy Owen and the University of Guam entitles *Guam Culture, Immigration, and the Military Build-up*, in 1898 the United States quietly acquired Guam. Immediately after, American Naval forces implemented strict martial law, performed forced medical treatments on the locals, implemented curfews, and enforced restricted access to military services according to the research. Incidents like these most likely caused animosity between U.S forces and the native people of the Marianas. Some articles, like the one by the Guam Daily Post referenced previously, mention an environmental group called Prutehi Litekyan: Save Ritidian, who opposes the weapon ranges planned for Guam, citing land destruction and pollution. Environmental concerns, a volatile past, and unresolved grievances seem to be some of the key points for opposition against military developments in the Marianas.

Many sources described the importance and benefits of military development, but there were also sources that argued the negatives. The article by M.E. O’Hanlon titled “Don’t Close U.S Bases Overseas,” supported the expansion of military installations into the pacific citing lower military operating costs and the improvement of national security through strengthening military influence on a global scale. However, “Guam Culture, Immigration, and U.S Military Build-up,” a research paper by Amy Owens, reiterates the volatile past between the people of the Marianas and the U.S military. It details the harsh living conditions after the United States took over ownership from the Spanish. It also describes Guam being left out of the deal for commonwealth status. The information from these two sources provided insight to the perceptions the people of the NMI have today.

**Methodology**

The purpose of the research project being undertaken is to fill a gap in the information available. Currently, military developments for the island of Tinian and Guam are underway, but there is hardly any information on the impacts these developments would have on the island of Saipan. Additionally, how does the political relationship between islands work with or against military build-ups. News articles, academic research, and literature sources were all used in this research, but there still needs to be new or unpublished information. There were three main research methods used to obtain data: surveys, interviews, and letters to experts off-island. There was a process that had to be performed to increase the effectiveness of data collection. On the topic of military developments in the Marianas, public opinion is an important element that needed to be addressed.

To collect data on public opinion, a pilot survey was created on the website www.surveymonkey.com to collect direct and indirect information through the use of carefully structured questions (refer to Appendix A and B). The sample size consisted of 4 different College English classes at varying levels of education. Ten questions were created covering those for and against military development. The questions also highlighted the personal issues of the person taking the survey, such as the greatest worry this person has in regard to the military build-up on Guam. Demographic questions were added at the beginning of the survey for organization purposes. Questions, in the form of the Likert Scale, were used to gauge the intensity of emotion the person taking the survey had in response to support for military build-ups or against. Questions that also try to confirm knowledge, such as true and false questions, were also used. The questions were also structured to collect separate data on the military build-up on Tinian and on Guam.

The next method of data collection used was interviews (refer to Appendix D for excerpts). Expert knowledge on the issue of military build-ups could lend a credible base to which other data could be compared to. The professionals involved in the planning or negotiations of the current proposed military developments were most qualified. After contact was made and an interview scheduled, four open-ended questions were prepared to create talking points to discuss. During the interview, a recorder would be set up, only upon approval, and a note pad with the previously created questions written on it was utilized to provide context and to record highlights. After the interview, permission to follow-up on any additional questions and an offer to receive a copy of the finish project were asked. Two such experts, Brad Ruszala, Public Relations Specialist for the Joint Region Marianas Coordination Office and Stanley Iakopo, Executive Director for the Civil Military Liaison Office, were interviewed.

Some experts are not in the immediate area and a sitting interview would have been impossible. In this case, letters were created and sent out to these experts. The letters were in a formal correspondence format. First, the fact that the researcher was a student at Northern Marianas College was stated, followed by the purpose of the research project, then a brief explanation of the purpose of the letter, and then finally a request for a sitting interview in the off-chance this person happens to be available. In the case of unavailability, four questions where then placed in the letter and a request for a response to the questions. The questions in the letter was a summary of what the interview would have covered but would still provide qualitative information. Care was taken to ensure the questions were open-ended, but still geared towards the targeted information that lends to the research question (refer to Appendix C for sample letter).

The processes followed were in place to not only collect data, but to ensure effective gathering of data and proper courtesy when involving professionals. The surveys were designed to collect as much data from a single participant as possible. Interviews were structured to allow the information to come from the participating expert rather than the question itself. Lastly, the letters to professionals were intended to collect information that might not be readily accessible due to the participant being out of reach. All of these methods were used to collect a variety of information and to add to the epistemology of the research. This would greatly improve the information in the research. The steps taken were thoroughly explained in this essay to allow for others to follow the methodology of the research to perform recreations. It also gives credibility to the information being provided, allowing others to provide feedback or as a source of reference. As with any scientific experiment, explaining the steps that lead to the results is a concrete way to inform with accurate information without bias.

**Analysis/Findings**

During the course of research, it was interviews that provided the most information. The recordings of these interviews were then analyzed to derive any information that could lend credence to the research. Highlighted or referenced excerpts are transcribed in the Appendix. One interview with Stanley T. Iakopo, Executive Director of the Civil Military Liaison Office, provided vital information on the relationship between the CNMI and the proposed military development on Guam. Adequate training grounds are needed by the military to fulfill training requirements. This is in regards to using the northern islands as the site for military exercises. Currently, negotiations between the United States military and CNMI government are in abeyance. It is not currently in the Governor’s priority (Appendix D, Participant 2).

An interview with Brad Ruszala (refer to Appendix D, Participant 1 and Discussion section), clarified some misconceptions for the student researcher. Tinian is in the process of undergoing improvements to facilities to better accommodate military exercises. Tinian has been designated as a military divert airfield in support of military aircraft performing exercises in the Marianas. To better facilitate military training operations, improvements to the current airfield and airstrip are in the planning stages. Improvements to current road systems and other infrastructure are also encompassed in the plan. A proposed method for delivering fuel to supply the airport was the use of boat. As a result, Tinian port will also receive much needed repairs and upgrades. Community outreach and funding for the Tinian Health clinic will also be additional benefits.

A recent survey conducted by the student researcher (refer to Appendix B for results) showed a majority of participants showed concern for Saipan after the completion of the planned developments for Guam and Tinian. Interesting to see that despite the concern, a majority of respondents felt that the military developments will have a positive effect on Saipan. Environment and an increase in population were chief concerns among participants, while an economic boost and new businesses were top benefits. It was interesting to see that there were examples where some participants held some knowledge about the military build-up on Tinian but have little to no knowledge of the same for Tinian.

**Conclusion**

The combination of an interview with Stanley Iakopo, Executive Director of the Civil Military Liaison Office (Appendix D, Participant 2), and literature on the topic, has lead the student researcher to believe that any direct impacts the proposed military development on Guam will be minimal (refer to Appendix D, Participant 2 and Discussion section). Travelling military personnel and the shipping of military assets through Saipan are probable interactions as a result of the military expansion on Guam. The current military build-up on Guam can provide a good case study that the current CNMI administration can refer to in our future dealings with the United States Military. Conversely, if the negotiations between the CNMI government and the U.S Military does result in the northern islands being designated as a training site for the military, then impact for Saipan will be more certain. As for now, such negotiations are on hold.

Through the interview with Brad Ruszala (appendix D, Participant 1., it was established that the proposed for Tinian is not a military build-up. However, the proposed improvement plans have the potential to improve the economy of Tinian. Improvements to the local infrastructure will definitely assist the local businesses. Military personnel participating the exercises can provide a stream of capital. Hotels, restaurants, car rentals and entertainment will see new customers coming in with money to spend. The project is an investment being made. As part of the CNMI, the improvements on Tinian could bode well for Saipan. A boost in economy for Tinian could strengthen the CNMI as a whole, adding another strong economy. This could ease some of the tension in the economy.

**Discussion**

Preemptive assumptions made by the student researcher were corrected after the interviews completed and transcribed. What started out as a search for information, evolved into more of a correction of the misinterpretations of information. A misconception was created after reading the initial literature. The student researcher found it important to provide collected information that might lend some clarification on the proposed military developments happening in the Marianas. It is important, as experienced by the student researcher, to keep an open mind while searching for the truth.

In the initial stages of the research, most of the data collected came from literature. Articles and research papers that were relevant to the current issue of military developments in the Marianas were then read and referenced. After analyzing the articles, the student researcher then made an inaccurate description on the current plans for Tinian.

It is of note that the Civil Military Liaison Office and the Office of the Governor are determined to ensure that the resources and lands of the people of the CNMI maintain its natural state. Despite the pressures being felt, the student researcher was assured that the current administration is dedicated to ensure that the covenant between the CNMI and the United States is recognized and enforced. The concerns of the public are the priority.

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Appendix

EN 202-002

Instructor: Dr. Kimberly Bunts Anderson

Research Project

Ignacio Camacho Ada Jr.

February 13, 2018

Appendix A

Pilot Survey Questions: link to survey: https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/VF6NKMM

1. What is your age?
2. What is your gender?
3. Select which answer applies to you: After the expansion of the military base on Guam is completed, I am worried about the impact it would have on Saipan. \*
4. After the completion of the new military divert airfield on Tinian, I am worried about the impacts it could have on Saipan. \*
5. I believe that an increased military presence on Guam and/or Tinian will have a positive effect on people here on Saipan. \*
6. Select one: My greatest worry regarding the military development in Guam and Tinian affecting Saipan is: \*\*
   1. Land and environmental
   2. Increased population/overcrowding
   3. Change in the flow of visiting tourists
   4. Other
7. I believe the greatest positive impact military development on Guam and Tinian would have on Saipan is: \*\*
   1. A boost to the local economy
   2. Attracting new businesses to the island
   3. More opportunities for the local population
   4. None, I believe the impact will be minimal
   5. Other
8. True or False: The U.S military holds leasing rights to two thirds of the total land on Tinian.
9. True or False: The military is bounded by regulation to follow strict environmental laws.
10. Any last comments on the topic of military developments on Guam and Tinian and its effect on Saipan? \*\*\*

\*This question was in the form of a Likert scale. Answer choices consisted of the following: Strongly disagree, Disagree, Agree, Strongly Agree, and Neither agree nor disagree.

\*\*This question allowed for multiple answers with optional “Other” answer.

\*\*\*Optional comment section placed at the end.

Appendix B

Final Survey Questions: Link to survey: https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/WD3338F

1. What is your age?
2. What is your gender?
3. Select which answer applies to you: After the expansion of the military base on Guam is completed, I am worried about the impact it would have on Saipan. \*
4. After the completion of the new military divert airfield on Tinian, I am worried about the impacts it could have on Saipan. \*
5. I believe that an increased military presence on Guam and/or Tinian will have a positive effect on people here on Saipan. \*
6. Select one: My greatest worry regarding the military development in Guam and Tinian affecting Saipan is: \*\*
   1. Land and environmental impacts
   2. Increased population/overcrowding
   3. Change in the flow of visiting tourists
   4. Other
7. I believe the greatest positive impact military development on Guam and Tinian would have on Saipan is: \*\*
   1. A boost in the local economy
   2. Attracting new businesses to the island
   3. More opportunities for the local population
   4. None, I believe the impact will be minimal
   5. Other
8. True or False: The U.S military holds leasing rights to two thirds of the total land on Tinian.
9. True or False: The military is bounded by regulation to follow strict environmental laws.
10. Any last comments on the topic of military developments on Guam and Tinian and its effect on Saipan? \*\*\*

Note: Some of the questions were edited for the final survey so a broader range of information can be interpreted.

\*This question was in the form of a Likert scale. Answer choices consisted of the following: Strongly disagree, Disagree, Agree, Strongly Agree, and Neither agree nor disagree.

\*\*This question allowed for multiple answers with optional “Other” answer.

\*\*\*Optional comment section placed at the end.

Results

1. Demographics- A total of 17 people responded to the survey.
   1. 1 person was in the 45-54 age group, the remaining 16 were 18-24.
   2. 3 were male while 14 were female.
2. Position on the topic
   1. A total of 8 respondents showed concern over the military build-up in Guam impacting Saipan, while 5 expressed no concern, and 4 neither agreed nor disagreed.
   2. 7 respondents showed concern for Saipan after the completion of the divert airfield on Tinian, 4 showed no cause for concern, while 6 showed no concern for or against.
3. Effects on Saipan
   1. 10 respondents believed that the military build-ups on Guam and Tinian will have a positive effect on Saipan, 4 believe the contrary, while 3 had no opinion.
4. Specific Concerns
   1. Among the respondents, environmental impacts rank highest in concerns for Saipan, while an increase in population size or overcrowding came in second.
   2. It is interesting to see that 1 participant admitted to being uniformed about the issue with military build-ups.
   3. A boost to the economy is a benefit that a majority of respondents selected as the top positive impact, attracting new businesses to the island was second.
   4. It is of note that security for the island in case of war was mentioned.
5. Comments
   1. Concern for the environment was the chief topic for the comments section.
   2. Generally, the respondents that did leave a comment, expressed optimism when it came to military build-ups.

Appendix C

Ignacio C Ada Jr.

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Name of Recipient

Official Title

Address

Dear Recipient,

I am currently a student attending Northern Marianas College and a Marine Corps Veteran. As part of an assignment for English 202 and personal interest, I am conducting research on the effects of military development on Tinian and Guam in relation to Saipan. I feel that there is a gap in available information and I seek to fill it.

I believe that your experience and expertise would provide invaluable information. It would lend credibility to the research project as a whole.

I would greatly appreciate if we can schedule a video teleconference on skype. If a conference is not possible, then it would be a great addition to my research if you could answer these three questions:

1. Regarding the Marine relocation to Guam, will there be a bleeding effect of any kind into Saipan or any other of the islands?
2. How, in your opinion, will the increased military presence affect Guam’s relationship with the CNMI?
3. Could military developments, like those planned form Guam and Tinian, spread to the other islands in the Marianas like Rota or even Pagan?

I do plan on using your responses in my research. If you would like to remain anonymous, please indicate that in your response. I would also be honored if you would allow me to send you a copy of the completed research.

Appendix D

The following are transposed excerpts from an interview with Brad Ruszala, Public Affairs Specialist for the Joint Region Marianas Coordination Office, conducted 20th of April, 2018 at 12:28pm at The Shack Café in Beach Road, San Jose. Interview took roughly an hour. Total recording time: 37:08

* Participant 1: *“in the event that the air force base in Anderson is unusable……they [U. S Air Force] need a place to land…...Initially the Air force wanted to use Saipan*” (as a divert airfield, referring to Tinian)
* Participant 1: “*Cost them [Air force] about another ninety million dollars for their new plan to move it from Saipan to Tinian, because there’s already a whole lot of infrastructure on Saipan*.”
* Participant 1: “*We’re [military entities involved] looking at doing road work projects…to go tour some of the roads where the road works projects are*” (referring to a project spearheaded by the United States Air Force, to improve road infrastructure on Tinian).
* Participant 1: “*there’s two projects that are going on right now*” (referring to both the road projects and repairs being done to the Tinian Port\*).
* Participant 1: “*In order to get Tinian, you have come through Saipan…. all those visiting folks [military personnel] that come in, they’re here, they’re spending money at the hotels, they’re spending they’re per diem on meals*” (referring to a stream of military personal participating in exercises on Tinian adding revenue to the local economy).
* Participant 1: *“that’s where [Anderson Air Force Base] the Marines are going to have their multi-purpose range…. that’s all within the Air Force Base.”*
* Participant 1: “*There are people in our local government who are really passionate about making sure that the CNMI gets the best out it [proposed divert airfield in Tinian]*.”
* Participant 1: *“I wanted to do a story, but they [ Joint Region Marians Coordination Office] don’t want to put that out yet…. wait till we [JRMCO] actually lock it all down.”*

Note: Comment in parenthesis gives the context of the excerpt, all based on the interpretation of the student researcher.

\*As part of a plan to use boats to deliver shipments of fuel for the airfield, the Army Corps of Engineers are planning to repair the port of Tinian and to implement ocean current control.

The following are transposed excerpts from an interview with Stanley T. Iakopo, Executive Director of the Civil Military Liaison Office, conducted 24th of April, 2018 at approximately 08:34am in his office at the Office of the Governor, Capitol Hill. The interview took roughly an hour and a half. Total recording time: 42:12.

* Participant 2: *“There is no build-up here in the CNMI [Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Island] soil.”*
* Participant 2: *“We [Office of the Governor] do the CJMT [Commonwealth Joint Military Training\*] …that is on abeyance, it’s on hold.*
* Participant 2: *“Late last year …. the Marines are looking into conducting training for the Northern islands and for Tinian…. Governor Torres put that on hold.”*
* Participant 2: *“They [Guam build-up Military Office] wish they were doing what we’re [Office of the Governor] doing now.”*
* Participant 2: *“There’s a difference between a military build-up and coming here for military training… what they [Marine Corps] are interested in, is training grounds.”* (Refers to the Marine Corps interest in Pagan for training use, no current negotiations in constructing any additional military installation in the CNMI)
* Participant 2: *“it [military exercises] will do a lot of damage when they [Marine Corps] do their training …...we [CNMI Administration] support and we welcome the military, but they [military] will have to do their due diligence to make sure and ensure everything [is] well protected.”*
* Participant 2: *“Even the ones [the public] that are saying no, they still say yes, if the military provides all of this.”* (referring to the experiences Iakopo has had talking with different members of the public, there seems to be and agreement in welcoming the military, but there are those with some apprehension)
* Participant 2: *“The people of the CNMI are very smart, very intelligence, and are very aware of what’s going on. They’re in tune to the military coming through, to the issues, to the government, and current issues that’s going on…...they [the people] have a reason why they say no or why they say yes.”*
* Participant 2: *“our people support the military and welcomes the military, but the military has to feel the same…...and respect and honor what our people want.”*