

A major transition for the tiny island of Guam

ANDERSEN AIR FORCE BASE, GUAM (AP) - Sprawling toward the horizon, Andersen Air Force Base is surprisingly quiet, leaving the impression of a big, empty parking lot.

For now, anyway.

During the next six years, nearly 25,000 U.S. Marines, soldiers, family members and civilian Defense Department employees are to descend on the tiny Pacific island of Guam, transforming the sleepy tropical outpost into a hub of America's military in the Pacific.

But the metamorphosis seems as fragile as it is ambitious.

Guam's transformation will cost at least \$15 billion - with Japan footing more than \$6 billion - and will put some of the U.S. military's highest-profile assets within the fences of a vastly improved network of bases.

The newcomers will find an island already peppered with strip malls, fast-food franchises and high-rise hotels serving Japanese tourists who want a closer-to-home version of Ha-



Long-range B-2 bombers have begun regularly deploying to Guam.

Photo by Paul Blas

waii. The plans for the base are fueling a fresh construction and real estate boom, which Guam hopes will accelerate its prosperity.

Guam, however, is smaller than some Hawaiian islands, with a population of just 155,000, and many of its officials are worried the military influx could leave the island's infrastructure - water, highways and seaport - overwhelmed and underfunded.

Felix Camacho, the elected Republican governor of the U.S. territory, says he thinks the troop influx will be "tremendous" for Guam's economy in the long run, but it will be "a difficult and complex process."

"I remain hopeful," he said. "Our challenge is that we know that the Department of Defense and Japan will build a first-rate base," while Guam has "limited capacity" to develop its own infrastructure to absorb the influx, he said.

Collapse

The whole plan could collapse, however, if Japan fails to build a replacement for a busy Marine Corps air base on its southern island of Okinawa - a festering issue that one senior U.S. military official acknowledged is fraught with difficulties.

The buildup in Guam is designed, in large part, to ease the long-standing over-concentration of forces on Okinawa, the U.S. military's key Pacific outpost since the 1950s, without pulling them back too far from such potential flash points as Taiwan and North Korea.

Although China and Russia, the U.S.'s main rivals in the Pacific, have been quiet, North Korea is characteristically wary. In an editorial, the state-run Minju Joson newspaper said the shift is meant to enable the Pentagon "to carry out its strategy for a surprise pre-emptive attack."

But keeping the Marines at their present levels on Okinawa has become unrealistic.

By treaty with Tokyo, more than 50,000 U.S. troops are stationed throughout Japan, which pays billions of dollars each year to support them, more than any other country with a U.S. base on its territory.

Okinawans have long complained their crowded island has to absorb too much of the presence - and of the crimes and other misbehavior - of U.S. personnel stationed there. More than half of the U.S. troops in Japan are on Okinawa, as is Kadena, the biggest U.S. air base in the region.

Practical

In U.S.-Japanese negotiations, Guam has emerged as the most practical alternative.

Okinawans have generally

welcomed the move, and Tokyo has pledged to invest nearly \$3 billion in building barracks, offices and other facilities for the troops on Guam, and to lend another \$3.3 billion for developing supporting infrastructure.

Roughly 10,000 Marines are to stay on Okinawa, however, and Tokyo has run into serious opposition in trying to move the Futenma Marine Corps Air Station to a less congested part of Okinawa. Many Okinawans want it off the island altogether.

Lt. Gen. Edward Rice, commander of the U.S. forces in Japan, says the whole move to Guam depends on Futenma getting new premises on Okinawa.

Historically known as a harbor for U.S. bases, Guam is a strategic stopping point for ships and aircraft. In addition to being the westernmost territory of the United States, it houses Apra Harbor, one of the largest protected deep water harbors between Hawaii and the Philippines.

Guam has served as an important U.S. military outpost since World War II, but is taking on increased importance with the relocation of Marine forces from Japan. The island is set to become a rapid-response platform for problems from pirates to terrorists to tsunamis, as well as a highly visible reminder to China that the United States is nearby and watching.

Buildup

The buildup plan, to be carried out by 2014, represents a major realignment of U.S. forces in the Pacific.

➤ About 8,000 Marines are to be shifted 1,200 miles southeast, from Okinawa to Guam, making it the Corps' second-largest permanent overseas staging and training area.

➤ The Navy has already deployed three nuclear-powered submarines to Guam and is seeking improvements to accommodate the nuclear-powered aircraft carrier USS George Washington, which carries about 5,000 sailors and airmen.

➤ The Army wants to deploy a ballistic missile defense task force, which would bring roughly 630 soldiers and 1,000 dependents to Guam.

➤ Military planners are considering bringing in the new F-22 fighters as well - though details remain sketchy - along with Global Hawk unmanned surveillance aircraft and a dozen tankers.



REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS FOR ARCHITECTURAL AND ENGINEERING SERVICES

RFQ09-GOV-035



Central Garapan Waterline Replacement

Governor Behigno R. Fitial and Lt. Governor Timothy P. Villagomez, through the CNMI Water Task Force, are soliciting statements of qualification (SOQ) from licensed architectural and engineering firms (A&E) for the Design of the Central Garapan Waterline Replacement Project, Garapan, Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI).

The full Request for Qualifications (RFQ) documents may be obtained by contacting Pedro Sasamoto, WTF Program Manager, by telephone at (670) 664-2274 or by email at psas@saipan.com. All questions concerning this proposal shall be submitted in writing no later than 4:30 pm, January 27, 2009 to Mr. Sasamoto by facsimile at (670) 664-2279.

The design and construction of the Central Garapan Waterline Replacement Project is made possible by a grant from the Economic Development Administration (EDA), U.S. Department of Commerce. All element of the construction process shall meet standards of the EDA. The EDA grant is matched by a grant from the Office of the Insular Affairs (OIA), U.S. Department of the Interior and requires a National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) clearance.

One original and four (4) copies shall be submitted to the Office of the Director, Division of Procurement and Supply, Lower Base, Saipan, MP 96950 no later than **2:00 PM, (CNMI local time), on February 13, 2009.**

The SOQ shall be marked "Central Garapan Waterline Replacement Project, RFQ09-GOV-035". For firms within the CNMI, one (1) original and four (4) copies of SOQ must be submitted to the Director of Procurement and Supply, Lower Base, Saipan, no later than **2:00 p.m. (CNMI local time), on February 13, 2009.** Firms located outside of the CNMI may obtain an additional seven (7) working days for receipt of their proposal by submitting a **Notice of Intent to Propose.** Notices of Intent to Propose must be received by the Director of Procurement & Supply no later than **2:00 p.m. (CNMI local time), on February 13, 2009,** and may be transmitted via facsimile to (670) 664-1515 or email procurement@pticom.com. For firms located outside the CNMI, one original and four (4) copies of SOQ must be postmarked by the U.S. Postal Service or the official government postal service of a foreign country no later than **February 13, 2009 AND** must be received no later than **February 25, 2009.** Note that failure to submit the required number of copies may be cause for rejection of a proposal.

The CNMI reserves the right to reject any and all SOQ and to waive any imperfections in any SOQ if to do so shall be in the best interests of the CNMI. All SOQ shall become the exclusive property of the CNMI government.

/s/ Timothy P. Villagomez
Lt. Governor, CNMI

/s/ Herman S. Sablan
Director, Procurement & Supply

Marianas Variety Guam Edition is circulated by home and office delivery, consignments, and vending machines throughout Guam, as mail delivery to the Federated States of Micronesia, the Marshall Islands, South Pacific, Hawaii, Japan and the U.S. Daily coverage also can be read from our Web site via www.myvariety.com.

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