

Remarks By  
The Honorable BJ Penn  
Acting Secretary of the Navy  
Guam Industry Forum  
Sheraton Hotel  
Tamuning, Guam  
Tuesday, 28 April 2009

Hafa adai! Thank you Captain Fuligni.....

Governor Camacho, Congresswoman Bordallo, Lieutenant Governor Cruz, Vice Speaker B. J. Cruz, distinguished guests..... Ladies and gentlemen...it's a pleasure to return to Guam for our third Industry Forum.

I want to thank all of you for attending today. I regret that my visit will be short, as I have a meeting in DC, where I will be discussing Guam and many of the same issues being addressed this week.

Nonetheless, this forum is important to me and to the Department, and I am glad I can be here with you.

Your participation enables us to move toward the construction phase of the marine relocation. It's great to see your growing interest in making it a success.

This forum will provide you with better idea of what we are planning, so that you can plan for your potential participation in this historic endeavor.

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Today, I'd like to stress that we are close to finalizing plans, receiving the requested funds, and should begin the first stages of the procurement process in the next few months.

Notably, the Government of Japan has been, and continues to be, a phenomenal partner in this effort. They have put their first team forward for this mission, and it shows. Together, we remain committed to a successful realignment, and I look forward to continued cooperation and progress.

In February, Secretary of State Clinton and Foreign Minister Nakasone signed an agreement which reaffirmed our mutual commitment to this program.

Indeed, it's not just a matter of national security - the stability of the entire pacific region depends upon this successful mission. Let me repeat that -- it's not just a matter of national security - the stability of the entire pacific region depends upon this successful mission.

Success will require continued partnership with Guam's leaders, agencies, and industry. This will ensure that both the execution phase and the end-state (after the marines move) have an enduring, positive effect on Guam.

Each step of the way, we must implement cost-effective solutions that will provide a long-term benefit to the community.

Throughout this forum, I encourage everyone to network, share ideas, and engage the local business community, whose expertise brings so much to this effort.

Clearly, relocating over 8,000 marines and their dependents will bring unprecedented opportunities for businesses large and small.

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We remain committed to building a program that meets our national security interests, provides stability in the pacific region, and benefits the people on Guam and its surrounding islands.

So, to Governor Camacho, Congresswoman Bordallo, Guam leaders, and members of the local community, I want you to know that the Department of the Navy will continue to work to ensure that this mission has a positive impact on the community – a community our Marines and their families will soon call home.

Our goal is for Guam to become a duty station of choice for our service-members.

I'd also like to acknowledge the Government of Guam's efforts, as well as NAVFAC Pacific, NAVFAC Marianas, and the Joint Guam Program Office. They have put together what promises to be another productive Industry Forum.

And I would be remiss if I didn't personally extend my thanks to the people of Guam for their warm hospitality and continued support for our men and women in uniform.

Finally, thank you all for coming to Guam. Your participation will help make this program successful.