

Hita La'mon: Hasso Independence

"Today, in a time full of cynicism, political sound bites and press releases, we must remember who we are as a people. We once mastered the navigation of the seas; surely we can determine our political future. We survived a world at war; surely we can build an economy which leaves no hardworking families behind. We are the inheritors of an ancient land; surely we can leave this place better than when we found it."

-Vicente "ben" C. Pangelinan
from "ben's pen", MV, March 13, 2013



image source: www.senbenp.com

Transitioning to Independence

If we choose independence, will the United States just pack up and leave?

- NO, there will be a transition period which could last between 10-30 years.
- We will negotiate the terms of our current and future relationship with the United States.
- The U.S. has a "sacred trust" to ensure the "political, economic, social, and educational advancement" of our people even as we transition to independence (United Nations Charter, Article 73)

Has a transitional period ever been done before?

- YES! The Philippines had a commonwealth status for 10 years in order to prepare them to be independent. During this time they:
 - Negotiated taxes and fees
 - Negotiated future policies
 - Negotiated military and defense agreements
 - Negotiated educational policy
 - Wrote a constitution for the Philippine Government

What will happen to my citizenship? Will I still be a U.S. Citizen?

- Citizenship can be negotiated during the transitional phase.
- We can give up our U.S. citizenship and have full Guam citizenship.
- We can negotiate to obtain dual citizenship (for Guam and the U.S.), similar to Israel.
- We can also be granted the status of “habitual resident”, like in the case of the FSM, the Marshall Islands, and Palau.

Will I have to give up my passport? Will I still be able to travel?

- Guam will develop our own passport and system of travel.
- As an independent nation we will have the negotiating power to ensure that we will still be able to travel freely.
- Palau, FSM, and the Marshall Islands all have their own passports and all negotiated travel conditions even as Freely Associated countries.

How will our economy survive without the U.S.?

- We will be able to capitalize on our location in the Asia-Pacific region and work with our Asian counterparts in terms of trade, investments, telecommunication, tourism, etc.
- We will collect fees that currently go to the U.S. including landing fees for airlines, over flight fees, shipping fees, taxes, telecommunications fees, etc.
- We will be able to get rid of the Jones Act and create our own shipping industry.
- We could negotiate land leases with the federal government for military bases and fees for access to our resources, such as water, for military use.

How will we maintain social services (like welfare and food stamps) for our people?

- We will negotiate the transfer of these services to the Government of Guam, but first we will train our people to run these agencies and programs.
- We can use other sources of revenue like shipping, trade, and telecommunications to replace the loss of federal funds.
- We can re-envision our current system to make it something that better fits our needs – like using farm-to-table programs to replace food stamps or community home-building projects to replace public housing.