

us valuable to the U.S. As an independent country, that value would remain and it would give us a form of leverage in terms of negotiating the terms of any defense agreement, and ultimately our relationship with the U.S. into the future. Another option is that Guam could have its own small military force to guard our coast and maintain civil order. Given our historical relationship to the U.S. military, we would most definitely have the skills needed to form a local defense force. Along with this, we can also choose to be a neutral or a non-aligned country such as Switzerland, Vanuatu, and Fiji.

Taimanu para ta sustienen maisa hit?
How will we sustain ourselves?



An independent Guam would mean that we can decide where our money goes and who benefits from that money. Guam has many ways of developing its economy. Becoming independent and no longer a possession of the U.S. does not mean that these possibilities go away. Rather, it opens new avenues for us to pursue new models of development. We will also have the opportunity to choose how we invest our money and which industries we create and support. Once independent, Guam will have the opportunity to boost our tourist base by negotiating our relationships with more nations than ever before, especially within Asia and the Pacific. Enhanced transportation and trade links to Asia and throughout the Pacific would also open new markets for Guam products and services, and vice versa. This increase in air and marine transport will provide for the

expansion of Guam’s revenue base, as we will be in full control of our port and our airport. All fees collected through air and sea travel to Guam will go directly to our government. As an independent nation, Guam would also be able to negotiate terms for the U.S. to lease land for its military bases. We will also have the power to establish relationships with nations we feel will be economically beneficial for our island.

Håfa siña ta cho’gue på’go?
What to do now?

We know that this document did not answer every single question one may have about independence and what it could mean for our island. However, we hope that it has at least cleared up some important issues and most importantly, has opened the door for you to talk about independence with your family and friends. If you have any other questions you feel should be addressed and/or added to this document, please email us at independentguahan@gmail.com.

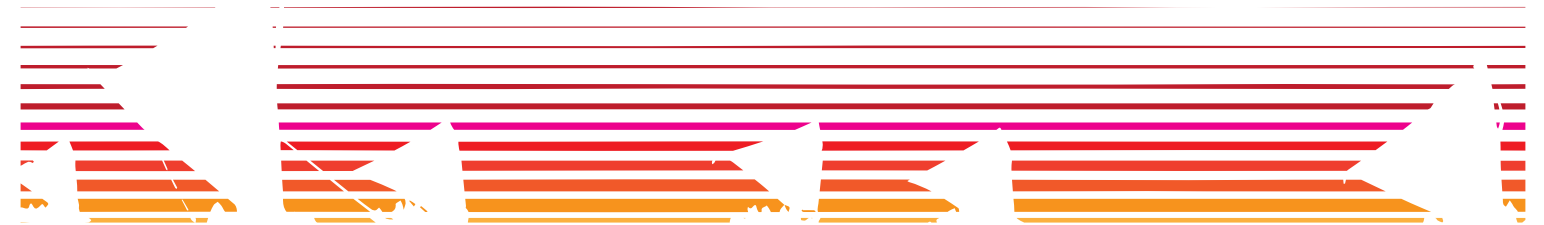
Independence may seem scary at first, lao fanmanhongge Guåhan sa’gof magåhet na esta guaha håfa ta nisisita! Niha ta usa i higam yan ta lakse i tiempon mo’na para hita.

Guåhan means “we have” — we have to believe in ourselves and know that we have all we need for an Independent Guåhan! Let us take out our adze and carve our future.



NA’LA’LA’

Independent Guåhan



Na’la’la’ means to give life. Independence is not just a political status option, it is a way of life. It means making our own decisions and shaping our own future — giving life to the dreams we have for our island and our children. Na’la’la’ can also mean to make grow. We hope that as you read and learn more about the possibilities of an Independent Guåhan, your commitment to decolonizing our island will grow. In this booklet, we provide answers to some of the most commonly asked questions about decolonization and independence. We hope this will be the beginning of many conversations you will have with us and others about independence.

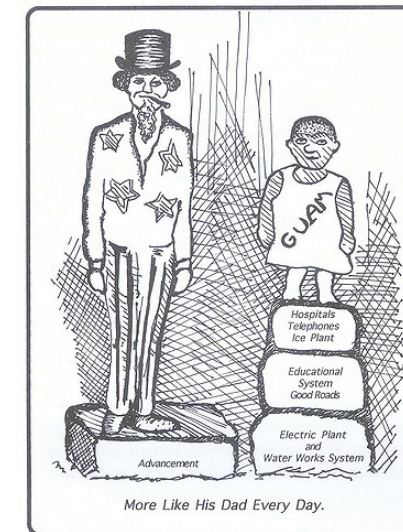
I Mas Takhilo’ Na Finaisen Siha

Håfa hit på’go?
What is Guam’s current political status?

Guam is currently an organized, unincorporated territory of the United States. This means that Guam is not a part of, but rather belongs to the United States as articulated in the Insular Cases. Living in an unincorporated territory, we are not given voting representation in either Congress or the Electoral College, and the United States Congress has control over the affairs of our island via the Territorial Clause of the United States Constitution: “Congress shall have power to dispose of and make all needful Rules and Regulations respecting the Territory or other Property belonging to the United States ...” (U.S. Constitution, Article IV, Section III, Clause II). The status quo is something we do not have any control over, and any comforts it may provide us can disappear with an act of Congress or a decision from a U.S. federal agency.

Taimanu mafå’tinas este na estao pulitikåt “unincorporated territory?”
How was the unincorporated territory status created?

In 1898, Guam, the Philippines, and Puerto Rico were given to the United States as spoils of war after Spain lost the Spanish-American War. Prior to this, territories acquired by



the U.S. were considered “incorporated territories,” meaning they would eventually be admitted into the nation as a state. However, the U.S. was hesitant to incorporate these newly acquired possessions from Spain as new states into the union. This struggle culminated in the Insular Cases, which are still in effect today. Beginning in 1901, the Insular Cases are a series of legal cases that

developed and legitimized the idea of the unincorporated territory status “in order to enable the United States to acquire and govern its new ‘possessions’ without promising them either statehood or independence.” The Insular Cases also led to the development of the “doctrine of incorporation,” which holds that “the inhabitants of territory acquired by the United States are not entitled to the benefits, privileges and immunities of the Constitution until Congress sees fit to extend these rights.”



Håfa este na dineteminan maisa yan decolonization?

What are self-determination and decolonization?

In its most basic sense, self-determination is a basic human right to choose how one will be governed. In 1960, United Nations Resolution 1514 outlined, "All peoples have the right of self-determination; by virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development." This right then became binding through both the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, (the 1966 Human Rights Covenants), ensuring self-determination as a right of all peoples. According to international law, decolonization is a remedy for colonization which occurs when people exercise their right to self-determination.

Kao taigradesimento este na kinalåmten?

Is pushing for independence being ungrateful?

Åhe'! One of the most common attacks on those advocating for independence is that we are being ungrateful to the United States who "liberated" us during World War II from the Japanese. This could not be further from the truth. While we appreciate the defeat of the Japanese during the war, we want to continue the work of liberation. There are still many economic, political, and social problems in Guam that affect us every day. Independence is the best chance we have to further liberate our people from these problems. We do not need to be a colony of the U.S. in order to be grateful for what they did. As an independent country, we can stand beside them, as an ally in gratitude and equal partnership.

Håfa para u masusedi anggen ta ayek independensia para Guåhan?

What does choosing independence for Guam mean?

Independence will allow the people of Guam to exercise full self-governance or sovereignty. We will determine what happens in our lands, our air, our waters, and to our people. This means we will not only make decisions for ourselves locally, but also on the world stage. We will represent our nation in regional and global forums as equal partners with close to 190 other independent nations. This will expand our economic possibilities, particularly in terms of the shipping and tourism industries. The world's economy relies on the Asia-Pacific region, and as an independent nation, we would be able to build economic relationships with our neighbors that we currently do not have as a colony of the United States. We will have the power to regulate and manage all of our internal and external affairs without foreign dictation.

Ultimately, independence means having democratic control over our political system, and our social, cultural, and economic lives. As an independent country, we will be responsible for our successes and our failures, and we will have the ability to learn from both and grow into a better nation.

Kao kumekeilekña na kulan hita ha' na maisa?

Does this mean that Guam will be on its own?

Independence does not mean isolation. Independence instead allows Guam to enter a network of global interdependence as a nation equal to other nations in the international system. As mentioned above, there are over 190 independent countries in the world today. As a sovereign nation, Guam will be responsible for its own foreign affairs and will represent itself internationally. We will no longer be obligated to follow the international agenda of the United States. In fact, Guam will be able to negotiate a more harmonious and balanced relationship with the



U.S. as well as the rest of the world, as these relationships will be based on mutual respect and mutually agreed-upon sovereign ties. A common fear is that if we were to achieve independence, Guam would almost instantly be taken over by another nation like China. If Guam were sovereign and able to ally itself with other independent nations in Oceania and throughout the world, another country would not be allowed to simply conquer Guam. As a sovereign state, Guam would become a member state of the United Nations and would be able to appeal to the International Court of Justice. The essence of independence is captured best in the Chamoru phrase, "Hita La'mon," which means, "it is up to us." We, and nobody else, will decide the type of nation Guam will become.

Kao para u hãnao ha' si Uncle Sam? *Will America just pack up and leave?*

Independence does not mean we are kicking the U.S. out of Guam or that they will simply pack up and leave. A transitional/implementation period will take place whereby the United States will provide funds to help Guam transition to independence. This transition period could last anywhere from 10-30 years and will be a gradual and continuous process. The United States could not disappear from Guam overnight. U.S. interests in Guam, which are primarily strategic, would ensure that the U.S. would not simply leave the island or abandon it, as it can still have a beneficial relationship with an independent Guam. People commonly assume that independence would mean giving up American citizenship, but this may not necessarily be the case. Citizenship will be negotiated during the transitional phase, and we can choose to obtain dual citizenship as Guam and American citizens during this phase.

We could also be granted "habitual resident" status like the FSM, the Marshall Islands, and Palau. Eventually, as our economy grows and we achieve full autonomy, we will be able to build the strength of our own citizenship and passport. People from independent nations all over the world successfully travel and study in other countries, including the U.S. with their own unique passports and citizenship. A U.S. passport is not the only way for us to have these opportunities.

Dikike' i isla-ta, taimanu ta cho'gue este? *Aren't we too small to govern ourselves?*

Independent countries today represent a wide spectrum of possibilities. Being large, small, having natural resources or being colonized does not determine whether or not a country will be prosperous. Size is not necessarily an impediment to development. There are many smaller countries today whose economies are diversifying through production, foreign trade, and sources of investment. There is no correlation between the size (in terms of land mass or population) and the prosperity of an independent country.

Singapore and Luxembourg, two countries that are regularly ranked as being among the top-ten richest nations in the world, are similar to Guam in terms of size. Singapore, whose land mass is only slightly larger than Guam's (278 sq. miles) is considered to be the third richest country in the world. Luxembourg, which has a population of less than 500,000, is considered to be the fourth richest country in the world. These nations are successful because of the abilities that independence provides them in terms of taking advantage of and best utilizing their natural and human resources, as well as their location.

Taimanu para ta difenden maisa hit? *How will we defend ourselves?*

As an independent nation, we would be able to negotiate a formal defense agreement with the U.S. or any other country we choose. Most countries in the world do not have massive, expensive standing armies. They only have self-defense or national guard forces. They form agreements with other nations for their defense. Guam could also enter into a Status of Forces Agreement or SOFA with the U.S. negotiating the terms of their military presence here. A SOFA defines the legal status of the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD), and property in the territory of another nation and sets forth rights and responsibilities between the United States and the host government. Our strategic importance is what makes