

In the belief that recognition and honor should not wait to be awarded until one is at death's door, it might behoove the Municipal Council to issue certificates of recognition to both Cruz and Hunter now, while they can still enjoy and benefit from the recognition.

<center>* * *</center>

We'll leave it to the transition team to decide who should get the assignment, but among the issues needing attention by the new administration are:

- the municipal councils, which don't seem to do much but issue proclamations;
- the homestead program, which is already crippled by abuse, and will soon be even more so by a lack of land;
- the need for zoning, lack of which continues to be an irritant and of concern not only to the residential sector but also to the business sector;
- the lack of attention given, by the Marianas Visitors Authority, to "improving the product" it spends all its money trying to sell;
- the need for protection and preservation of the CNMI's natural resources (from lagoon and reef to groundwater and wildlife habitat) if it wishes to continue attracting tourists.

<center>* * *</center>

Instead of rejecting the idea of the CNMI's use as a holding area for terrorists because of its possibly negative impact on tourism, people might want to consider the benefits that could accrue. If terrorists were to be housed here, the federal government would have to come in and build accommodations for them - as well as supply the necessary infrastructure. Since the need to house large number of terrorists is only temporary - a year or two - after that time, the federal government could, in exchange for having used our islands, turn those buildings over to the CNMI - infrastructure and all.

If those buildings happen to have been located on one of the northern islands (an ideally isolated place for housing terrorists...) the CNMI would have, when it was all over, not only infrastructure, but housing accommodations on one or more of the northern islands. Even if the federal government built only "temporary" accommodations - such as the "temporary" home FEMA provided after the CNMI's last major typhoon - as have the typhoon houses, those buildings would last for many years.

If the terrorists were housed on Tinian, the same would apply - infrastructure and buildings would be built that could be turned over to Tinian after the need for them no longer existed. And large as Tinian is, the whole complex required to house and guard the terrorists could easily be kept safely separated from the island's villages.

In addition, housing the terrorist holding areas - prisons? - in the CNMI would earn the Commonwealth substantial revenue - with all the construction that would take place first, and the materials and equipment and manpower and food and power and water that would be needed to

support the prisons after they were built. If tourism is such a fragile and volatile revenue resource, why not take advantage of another one when it is offered?

Eventually, if not immediately, the existence of the prisons could become a tourist attraction in itself. Wasn't Alcatraz once a major tourist attraction?

Using the CNMI as the site for the tribunals is not nearly as appealing - legal issues aside. Little in the way of new construction or improved infrastructure would be required, providing no benefit in that regard. And the flow of judges, attorneys, marshals, guards, witnesses and prisoners to and from the island for the proceedings would put quite a strain on the capacity of our immigration facilities.

As an old song used to say, "You gotta eliminate the negative, accentuate the positive...."

<center>* * *</center>

Seems this column's recent piece about the Administrative Order issued by the CNMI's Chief Justice earlier this month has touched a nerve in more than one office. The Chief Justice responded rather promptly by (faxed) letter; since then other comments have been received as well.

The latter have focused on provisions in the Order that require mandatory attendance at meetings among justices, or justices and judges - which are not regularly scheduled but held only at the call of the Chief Justice. Unhappiness has also been expressed at the provision in the Order that noncompliance with the Order (such as not attending mandatory meetings) could require attendance at a show cause hearing before the Supreme Court.

Another cause for unhappiness: the apparent usurpation of the authority of the Chief Judge of the Superior Court by the Chief Justice.

So - who is there to speak for other than the Chief Justice?

<center>* * *</center>

The coconut wireless has it that John Rosario did not resign from the <I>Tribune</I> voluntarily, but was asked to leave so as to smooth the way to better relations between Willie Tan and the incoming administration. While the <I>Tribune</I>'s attacks were often "below the belt" so to speak, I'm not sure that the alternative is any more desirable. Willie Tan pandering to the B&B team? The B&B team willing to be bought off by Willie Tan?

So - who will speak for the opposition?