

Is the Yap/China Memorandum of Understanding a Good Thing?

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In the interest of spurring discussion, we put forth a small debate on this question: Is the MOU between Yap and China a good thing?

We're interested in your thoughts as well, please leave your thoughts in the comment box below or even start something up in the forum.

Here's a link to the article: ["Yap Chiefs Sign Tourism Project With Chinese Travel Group"](#)

PRO

Yap and China's MOU is just preliminary but it has potential—potential to turn a pretty penny for Yap if they play it the right way.

The Exhibition and Travel Group's resorts are world class. They aren't mom and pop's side motel where you can rest yourself for the night. The hotels they make cater to the wealthy. They make world class resorts. Yap is almost a diamond in the rough. With the right investments and developments, Yap has the potential to be the next big destination of the wealthy.

With the influx of money, jobs would be created that would go to the Yapese on the island. Of course land will be leased, meaning a large sum of steady income for some over a long period of time.

There are precautions that should be taken. Lets take into consideration the situation with the Hawaiian islands. Right now the tourism industry is their main driving force of economy. Maybe Yap shouldn't take that turn, but they can learn lessons from Hawaii and take the steps toward making it work for them.

Certainly, the attentions of China on yap has not gone unnoticed by the US. This could be an extra bargaining chip to deal with future compact negotiations. If politics is a game, might as well have some good pieces.

CON

Yap has seen positive growth in their finance and serves as a model to the other states in their handling of their funds. Yap is also the bastion of cultural integrity. Their culture fared best in Micronesia and persisted through 4 generations of cultural integrations by foreign powers, cultural integrations that were often forced. They now face a new form of cultural integration, one that suggests the preservation and promotion of native cultures, and is also a fast growing global industry.

I believe that tourism's ultimate guise is its very claim to be preserving culture. It is correct to say that the world is fast becoming globalize and even the historically resolute Yap is not immune to this new wave of cultural integration. But, is tourism the answer to saving or preserving culture and customs? And is it an economically viable investment?

Let's take a look at Hawaii. To accommodate to the large population of tourists their waters are over fished, they import food because local foods are at a shortage, the cost

of living is one of the highest in the world and the native population has been pushed to less desirable locations.

In the context of culture, let's take a look at hula. The performance has adapted to suit the foreign perception of what they want the Pacific islands to look like. Hula has nearly lost its meaning, it has been reduced to a dance, not unique to its people but a product of tourism, copied and performed by others in the Pacific.

An example closer to Yap is Palau. Palau sees many foreign experts and laborers brought into their islands to work in their industries. Additionally, many of the owners of their tourism businesses are foreigners (dive tours and hotels). Even with a large tourism population they are still heavily dependent on Compact aid.

Who ultimately wins in a tourism industry? The 1%, political players, big businesses and outsiders are the beneficiaries. And who then becomes the eventual loser... culture, and often times the native population.

So, in the case of Yap, an already efficient and effective state in our federation, a thriving cultural haven... is the risk worth the cost?

To adopt the analogy, Yap has definitely entered a game. They are now the chips, with China and the U.S.A. as the players.