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United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20240

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September 2, 1971

The Honorable
John N. Irwin II
Chairman
Under Secretaries Committee
Department of State
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Mr. Secretary:

In accordance with my "Terms of Reference" for the forthcoming Micronesian status negotiations, forwarded by Dr. Kissinger on July 20, I should like to advise the Under Secretaries Committee of my plans for consultations with Congress before the next meeting with the Micronesians which is scheduled to begin in Hawaii on October 4th.

The White House, in the persons of Mr. John Lehman and John Holdridge, believes that consultations with the Congress prior to the talks should be kept to a minimum. Moreover, Mr. Lehman said that the White House would not be able to agree at the present time to the inclusion of Congressional staff observers at the Hawaii talks. The presence of Congressional observers has been requested by the Congress at a number of important negotiations, including the SALT talks, and the Executive Branch does not wish to set an undesirable precedent.

A complicating factor is the planned trip to Washington of the Micronesian delegation Chairman, Senator Salii. He plans to visit a number of U.S. Congressmen during the period September 6 to 10. The Department of the Interior is handling his appointments on a routine basis.

Before Mr. Salii visits his Congressional contacts, which include Senator Jackson, Representatives Aspinall and Burton (Interior Subcommittee Chairman), and others, it is advisable that my office, State, Interior, and Defense inform the appropriate Congressional Committee staffs that there will be a round of talks on Micronesian status. State has offered to notify the Foreign Affairs and Foreign Relations Committee staffs of our planned meeting in Hawaii. Similarly, the Defense Department would notify the Armed Services Committee staffs at an appropriate time and, in general terms, outline the basic DOD interests to be protected.

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I plan to offer substantive briefings to Representative Aspinall and his ranking minority member, Representative Saylor, on the Interior Committee of the House, and to Senator Jackson and his ranking minority member, Senator Allott, on the Senate side. With these gentlemen, I anticipate being as candid as possible about our negotiating strategy and asking them to hold the information very closely. I shall also inform them that, in accordance with White House instructions, I do not plan to have any pre-negotiating briefing for other members of Congress. I shall, of course, promise a full and detailed briefing for the interested committees after the talks have been held.

It seems likely that Representative Burton and perhaps other interested Congressmen will press for pre-talk briefings, and in that event the White House has stated that it would support my refusal to do so, possibly with letters to the Congressmen.

The above course has the concurrence at the working levels of all the Agencies concerned. Time is very short if we are to notify the Congressional staffs that are involved, and I hope to begin the above process about Friday, September 3.

Sincerely,

Franklin Haydn Williams

Franklin Haydn Williams
The President's Personal Representative
for Micronesian Status Negotiations

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