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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

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Old Executive Office Bldg.
Room 365
Washington, D. C. 20506

September 10, 1971

The Honorable Melvin R. Laird
Secretary of Defense
The Pentagon
Washington, D.C. 20301

Dear Mr. Secretary:

Thank you for the letter of 9 September, 1971, setting forth the long term requirements of the U.S. for military basing options in the area encompassed by the TTPI. I am aware of the careful and detailed consideration that has been given this important matter and I wish to assure you again that I recognize fully the significant strategic interests that are involved.

The contents of your letter and the attached documents will materially assist the U.S. Delegation in the difficult tasks of negotiating an agreement with the Micronesians that protects our vital defense interests. Of particular help to the negotiations is the fact that DOD has been able to set forth its specific needs.

While I can assure you that every effort will be made to satisfy the requirements noted in your letter and attachments, I do believe that I should note one divergence from the NSC-USC paper which served as the basis for the President's decision and the negotiating instructions which I have received.

[REDACTED]

(Handwritten initials)

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I expect that this contingency fallback position as described in the paper that went to the President for his approval is unlikely to arise during the next round of exploratory talks in Hawaii beginning in October. In the event it were to become an issue, I shall, of course, be in touch with you and with the White House before taking any action to recede from insistence on basing rights in Palau.

Once again may I express appreciation for your letter.

Respectfully yours,

Franklin Haydn Williams

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

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