

3/7/73

Howard:

Latest word is that the formal talks may take place either the week of April 16th or the week of April 23rd so we need a bit of flexibility here.

Jim

Phone: 3135

JAMES E. WHITE  
ATTORNEY AT LAW  
P. O. BOX 47, Capitol Hill  
SAIPAN, MARIANA ISLANDS 96950

01  
/5

March 7, 1973

Mr. Howard P. Willens  
Wilmer, Cutler & Pickering  
Farragut Building  
900 - 17th Street, N. W.  
Washington, D. C. 20006

Dear Howard:

With the completion of the Rate Review Board hearings and the shareholders' meeting, I now have an opportunity to more thoroughly handle the political status situation.

In reviewing your recent correspondence of January 16th and February 13th, several comments are in order. In reference to the United Nations Trusteeship Council's Visiting Mission, we had occasion a few days ago to have a short meeting with them. The climate of the group was somewhat chilly as they consider our organization to be maverick, at best, and they constantly tried to get us to rescind our position and go along with the Congress of Micronesia group. Enclosed please find a rough copy of a speech presented by our chairman at that meeting. Also enclosed is a legal opinion on the subject of the validity of separate status talks between the United States and the Mariana Islands District. Please excuse certain grammatical aspects in reference to this document, as per usual the time for all the niceties was somewhat limited. Also enclosed are several other opinions on the same subject.

In reference to the resolution passed by the First Session of the Fifth Congress of Micronesia, please find a copy of same enclosed along with a copy of the Committee's report. Again, our position on the previously stated legal opinion should suffice to overcome this objection from the Congress of Micronesia. The real problem here is most probably that the Congress of Micronesia is extremely uneasy about the fact that our negotiations might be successful--creating an untenable situation for the Joint Committee on Future Status in that they have worked toward a reasonable development for several years and have been unsuccessful. Also, the fact that our package could be quite productive of an approach that the Joint Committee is not even considering as an alternative is no doubt distressing to them. The Mariana Islands District Legislature introduced a responding

01- 03729

Mr. Howard P. Willens  
March 7, 1973  
Page 2

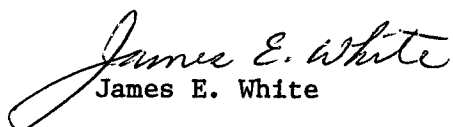
resolution that may have merit, "Go to hell". My personal estimate of the situation is that the Congress of Micronesia is worried, but their resolution will have no effect on our negotiations.

If we could have your basic written considerations and thoughts prior to April 1st; and if you could be available on Saipan April 1st with a total block out for our purposes for the first three weeks of that month, it would be appreciated. We plan to review this material initially with you, and move into committee hearings with the various committees. Additionally, we expect to have Jim Leonard here during that same three-week period.

I have been gathering material in reference to land, and I hope to have a summary completed in that area within the same time frame. We have requested that Ambassador Williams' group present us with answers to the questions raised at the first talks, and also that they present position papers as to the approach they would like to take in the major areas of political status, land and military, and economic development. Hopefully, this material will also be available on Saipan prior to April 1st so that our meetings with the various committees can be more productive to a realistic approach in each of these areas. To this end it might be appropriate for you and Jim Leonard to also contact the Washington members of the Office of Micronesian Status Negotiations to urge their compliance in reference to the above-stated materials. This would give us two weeks to work with the various committees and develop our approach for the formal negotiations expected to take place the week of April 16th. This date has not been totally firmed up as of yet, but it seems to be the desire of the Ambassador and our Chairman.

I would appreciate hearing from you as soon as possible so that we might be fully coordinated at this end.

Sincerely yours,

  
James E. White

Enclosures

01-03730