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September 7, 1973

Mr. Edward DLG. Pangelinan  
Chairman  
Marianas Political Status Commission  
P.O. Box 825  
Saipan, Mariana Islands 96950

Dear Ed:

I assume by this time that you have received a report from Jim White regarding his visit to Washington and the current state of our preparations here for the next session of negotiations.

Jim and I met with Jim Wilson last week for an informal review of the work of the various working committees and other matters. In particular, we raised the following matters:

- (1) We reminded Mr. Wilson of the previous request of the Commission regarding the need for consultation with Marianas' representatives before any long-term leasing of public lands. As you might expect, Mr. Wilson was somewhat vague in his recollection of either our request or any commitment by the Ambassador to take the necessary steps to ensure that such consultation would occur in a timely manner. I gather you raised the same matter with the Ambassador during your most recent meeting and I think it would be useful for me to embody this request in a letter to Mr. Wilson on behalf of the Commission.

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- (2) At our request, Mr. Wilson filled us in on the recent fact finding efforts in the trust territory with respect to public lands. Enclosed, for your information, is a report which he gave us reflecting the results of his consultation in the Marianas regarding the return of public lands. I told Mr. Wilson that I thought it would be useful if we could meet informally to discuss this particular problem in advance of the next round of negotiations. I suggested, for example, that representatives of the Commission and the U.S. Delegation might wish to explore jointly the possible use of a public corporation as the recipient of the public lands to be returned. Mr. Wilson said that his office hoped to have a general policy on this matter within the next three or four weeks and that then he would prepare to meet on this subject. Unless we do some preliminary work on this subject before the next session, I do not see very much possibility of making progress on this subject when we meet again in Saipan. I must confess that I am also very skeptical of the expressed willingness of the United States to return these lands to the people of the Marianas and fear that they will be looking for excuses of one kind or another to justify inaction on this front until the Status Agreement is signed and delivered.
- (3) I also mentioned to Mr. Wilson that it might be desirable to have some discussion regarding the U.S. military proposals in advance of the next negotiations. I reminded him that the Commission had raised several questions in its position paper on this subject which deserved an answer from the United States. Not surprisingly, Mr. Wilson was particularly vague in responding to this request and indicated that such discussions

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would not be very profitable until the surveys currently underway on Tinian were completed and the results reviewed in Washington. He went on to say, however, that this might not be done until some time in November. I went on to say, however, that such a schedule and position by his office would make it very difficult to have any meaningful dialogue on this subject during the next negotiations. I reminded him that it would be highly desirable for me to be in a position to inform the Commission as to the current United States position on this subject in advance of the negotiations so that the Commission would have a response available to present to the U.S. Delegation during the negotiations.

I am planning to write a letter to Mr. Wilson confirming on the record the substance of our discussion last week and politely restating my request for the opportunity to discuss the above subjects with representatives of the U.S. Delegation before the next session of negotiations.

With respect to the date of the next session, I have seen the public reports speaking in terms of a mid-November date. I have been informed by Messrs. Wilson and de Graffenreid that the precise date in mind is November 26, 1973. Assuming that we still have some flexibility on this subject, I would very much like to request a starting date of either November 12 or November 19. I have made plans to defer some of my other responsibilities until approximately December 10. I am concerned that a starting date of November 26, assuming three weeks of negotiations, will produce conflicts which I would very much like to avoid. In addition, I have Christmas vacation plans with my family and would like very much to be back in Washington about two weeks before I leave on that vacation. I understand that Jim Leonard has some of the same problems that I have. Anything you can do to help your loyal and hardworking consultants with regard to scheduling would be much appreciated.

Best personal regards,

Sincerely,



Howard P. Willens

cc: Mr. White  
Mr. Leonard  
bc: Mr. Lapin and Mr. Carter  
Enclosure

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