

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

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Old Executive Office Building  
Room 361  
Washington, D.C. 20506

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October 29, 1973

The Honorable James R. Schlesinger  
The Secretary of Defense  
The Pentagon  
Washington, D.C. 20310

Dear Mr. Secretary:

Pursuant to my instructions from the President I set forth during the May-June 1973 negotiations with the Marianas Political Status Commission the U.S. military land requirements on Tinian, Saipan and Farralon de Medinilla. These talks are now scheduled to begin again in December, and one of the principal items on the agenda will be the U.S. proposal for the acquisition of Tinian.

During the last negotiating session, I was questioned by several members of the Marianas Delegation on how firm the Department of Defense plans were for Tinian and to what extent the Congress of the United States was committed to the proposal for a seven phase development of a joint service military complex there. Publicly and privately individual members wanted assurances that if the requested land were to be made available necessary funds would be forthcoming for the purchase or lease of the land and for the subsequent build-up of the base complex as outlined by the Air Force briefers.

I responded that the U.S. proposals were firm and that key leaders in both the U.S. House of Representatives and the Senate on the Interior and Armed Services Committees had been consulted. I stated further that the U.S. requirements were being set forth with their knowledge and initial approval. We have subsequently learned that the legal counsel and economic adviser to the Marianas Delegation have raised again with their clients the question of whether the Congress of the United States will in fact approve the acquisition of new land and the building of new installations on Tinian in the face of the closing of bases in the continental United States, tight budget ceilings and a possible future cut in military construction funds.

More recently certain staff members of the House subcommittee on Interior and Insular Affairs have been questioning the U.S. military land requirements in the Northern Marianas. Members of the committee itself have also shown an interest in this matter. They have asked what the military justification is for a new base complex so close to Guam and why new military facilities are needed when similar ones on Guam are not now being fully utilized. They have also expressed some doubts about funding and whether in the end the Tinian requirements will have a high enough priority within the Department of Defense budget to compete successfully for future defense appropriations.

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I am certain that questions on the firmness of Department of Defense intentions to carry out the seven year timetable for the development of Tinian and the priority enjoyed by the Tinian project will be raised again on the Hill and in the upcoming talks with the Marianas Political Status Commission. The latter are especially interested in these questions because of the relationship of the Tinian build-up to their economic and financial planning.

It would be most helpful to me in preparing for further consultations on the Hill and for the forthcoming talks with the Marianas Political Status Commission if I could have your views on the questions that have been raised and your suggestions as to how they can best be answered. It is especially important that I be able to assure the Marianas Political Status Commission that the Department of Defense intends to adhere to the development and funding schedule already outlined to them by representatives of the U.S. Air Force.

It is recognized, of course, that the Department of Defense cannot as a practical matter go very far in the direction of requesting any major funds for land acquisition or construction purposes until it has been possible to get a firm agreement from the Marianas regarding the new arrangements, including specifically agreement on the land needed for U.S. military facilities. The questions raised above thus all presuppose that the necessary political, financial and land settlements have been reached on terms satisfactory to the United States.

Sincerely yours,

*Haydn Williams*  
Franklin Haydn Williams

The President's Personal Representative  
for Micronesian Status Negotiations

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