



# United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SOLICITOR  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20240

IN REPLY REFER TO:

65282.4299

November 9, 1973

Attorney Howard P. Willens  
1666 K Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20006

Dear Howard:

Since our last meeting, we have been reviewing the various proposals you submitted to our group. Generally speaking, we believe they provide us with a good start on resolving some of the issues we have been asked to resolve.

We quite agree with your feeling that there should be some better method to solve the laws problem than to laboriously review, during this short time frame, each U.S. statute and court ruling. We find considerable merit in Jay Lappin's suggested solution made after you had left the meeting. His general approach, which is not unlike that taken with Puerto Rico, might relieve us of our present difficulty by providing an interim solution which would protect both parties.

Accordingly, we have prepared a draft which is inclosed, which we believe provides for an acceptable interim application of Federal laws for the Marianas. Basically, it provides that those U.S. statutes applicable to Guam, other than those relating to the internal affairs of the territory such as the organic act and the establishment of the economic development corporation and similar measures, would also apply to the Marianas during the interim period. This will permit both the Marianas and the U.S. the essential safeguards they desire during this short period of time and permit the Commission that is to review the whole body of U.S. law the opportunity to make its study and recommendations.

We believe that we should discuss with you this proposed approach to the problem at the earliest possible date.

With best regards,

B. Chapman

Enclosure

01-00238

Section \_\_\_\_\_. Applicable Laws

(a). Until the enactment of the legislation envisaged by Article \_\_\_, Section \_\_\_ [Statutory Commission] the following laws of the United States shall be applicable to the Commonwealth of the Marianas:

- (1) The laws of the United States expressly made applicable to the Commonwealth of the Marianas;
- (2) The laws of the United States applicable to the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands;
- (3) The laws of the United States applicable to the territory of Guam in the same manner and to the same extent as though those laws are applicable in the several states;
- (4) The term "laws of the United States" includes statutes, joint resolutions, treaties and Executive agreements, proclamations, Executive orders, judicial decisions, and regulations issued by the several departments, agencies, and regulatory commissions.

(b). The laws of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, the Marianas District Legislature, of local municipalities and all other executive and district orders of a local nature now applicable to the Mariana Islands District shall remain in force and effect until and unless repealed or amended by the Commonwealth of the Marianas.