

THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20301

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Honorable Franklin Haydn Williams
The President's Personal Representative
for Micronesian Status Negotiations
Old Executive Office Building
Room 361
Washington, DC 20506

Dear Ambassador Williams:

~~(S)~~ Your letter of 29 October 1973 highlighted concerns of the Marianas Political Status Commission and certain members of the US Congress over the resolve of the US Government to develop a military base on Tinian as a part of the agreement on future political status of the Northern Marianas.

~~(S)~~ As evidenced by the Secretary of Defense and the Joint Chiefs of Staff endorsement of the Under Secretaries Committee Study and its recommendations concerning the Future Political Status of the Marianas Island District, TTPI, and as indicated in other correspondence and actions over the past year, the Department of Defense fully supports the Administration's decision to acquire the necessary land on Tinian and proceed with the time-phased development of a joint-use base on that property.

~~(S)~~ In addition to our earlier correspondence to you concerning various aspects of this base development, the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Installations and Logistics) last August approved the programming plan for the Tinian base and the US Air Force has allocated \$297,000 to planning and surveys for this facility. As you know, we have been sending various survey teams to the island since July of this year. In short, once the necessary political, financial and land agreements have been reached with the Marianas, the US Government, including the Department of Defense, is committed to proceed with the development of a base on Tinian consistent with the general plan previously revealed.

~~(S)~~ We recognize fully that obtaining Congressional support and approval for the final Marianas Agreement may be difficult; however, rest assured that the Defense Department will provide all possible support including the effort necessary to obtain Congressional approval for the acquisition and development of Tinian base complex. As we indicated informally, our initial briefings on the base concep

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to Congressional Armed Services Committees and their staffs during the past spring and summer were received with understanding and general support.

(c) As a related matter, I also would like to take this opportunity to reaffirm defense requirements elsewhere in the Trust Territory. As stated in Secretary Richardson's letter of 28 March 1973, the basing rights in the Palaus are mandatory, in addition to the Marianas facilities, to buttress our long-range strategic posture in the Pacific. Continuing strategic reviews of the Pacific-Indian Ocean area underscore the long term necessity to satisfy the land requirements stated in Annex B to Title III of the draft Compact of Free Association.

(U) Best wishes for your continued success in these two sets of difficult negotiations.

Sincerely,

s/s J. SCHLESINGER

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