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UNITED STATES RESPONSE TO MARIANAS

POLITICAL STATUS COMMISSION PHASE I PROPOSAL

16- 40911

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UNITED STATES RESPONSE TO MARIANAS POLITICAL STATUS COMMISSION
PHASE I PROPOSAL

I. Introduction

The United States recognizes that to ensure the Northern Marianas' orderly progression from their present political status to that of a self-governing Commonwealth careful planning and the implementation of a number of major transitional steps spanning a broad political, economic and social infrastructure spectrum will be required.

The United States suggests that this "Transition Phase" (Phase I) begin immediately upon the signing of an agreement between the two parties. It suggests further that the "Transition Phase" end upon the assumption of responsibility for self-government, under the Trusteeship, by a new government of the Northern Mariana Islands established pursuant to a locally adopted constitution.

Activities under Phase I would include short-term and long-term economic, fiscal and social infrastructure planning, political education and holding of a status plebiscite, constitutional convention and referendum, planning for a new government structure, and an accelerated land survey and adjudication program. These activities and other extraordinary activities related thereto will be funded by the United States.

II. Transition Planning: Unilateral and Joint Undertakings

The United States in the exercise of its responsibilities under the Trusteeship Agreement desires to work in close cooperation with the Marianas in planning for an orderly transition and for the first years under a new Marianas Government. Some components of Phase I, particularly those relating to internal political matters, such as the drafting of a Constitution, a Constitutional

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Convention, and referendum and other activities related to planning for the future government of the Northern Mariana Islands fall exclusively within the domain of the Marianas inasmuch as these are primarily internal questions.

For other activities, the U.S. proposes a joint approach. Given the probability of continued United States financial obligations, the United States will be particularly interested in the economic, financial and social infrastructure planning contemplated under Phase I. Other efforts on special studies and a joint program of political education on the new status agreement will also be necessary.

III. Major Elements of the Phase I Program

The major components of Phase I are as follows:

1. Unilateral Marianas activities

- Holding a constitutional convention and constitutional referendum
- Government reorganization and legislative planning.

2. Joint United States-Marianas Activities

- An economic and social infrastructure development planning program.

- Special studies, programs and events relative to:

- Political Education

- Status Plebiscite

- Impact of relocation of Micronesia's capital.

3. Other Activities

- Public Land Cadaster and Adjudication Program.

A. Unilateral Marianas Activities

Constitutional Convention; Government Reorganization

Under Phase I funds will be provided for studies relating to the formation of the new government and the drafting of its constitution. In

this category will be the convening of a constitutional convention, a program of political education relating thereto and a subsequent popular referendum to pass on the constitution adopted by the convention. Funds for necessary legal services would be included. Additionally, studies of government reorganization attendant on establishment of the new Government will be necessary.

B. Joint United States-Marianas Activities

Economic Planning. Extensive economic and social infrastructure planning will be required to enable the Northern Mariana Islands to undertake at an early date its first purposeful steps toward the ultimate goal of economic self-sufficiency. The planning can be undertaken by any appropriate combination of experts from the United States Government, the Trust Territory Administration, the Marianas District Administration and private consultants in various specialties as deemed necessary, including experts in agriculture, fisheries, marketing, transport and tourism, government finance, etc. Any necessary physical planning should tap the full range of studies and expertise now available in the Trust Territory Government.

Special Studies, Programs and Events. Special studies will also be required to cover a new political education program designed to explain jointly to the people of the Northern Mariana Islands the principal features of the new status agreement that will have been agreed upon. This will be funded by the U.S.; funds will be provided as well for the status plebiscite itself. Additional studies will be necessary on the impact of the relocation of the Micronesian capital from Saipan, and measures and programs necessary to place or retrain and readjust personnel affected by this relocation.

C. Other Activities

Accelerated Public Land Cadastral Survey and Adjudication Program

Pursuant to the recently announced United States policy on transferring control over public lands to the districts of Micronesia, there will be an accelerated public land cadastral survey and adjudication effort throughout the Trust Territory. The bulk of this work in the Marianas will coincide with the Phase I period. The estimated cost of this work in the Marianas is thus included in the overall funding figure for Phase I programs. The land cadaster program in the Marianas will be administered by the Trust Territory Government and the Marianas District Administration.

IV. Organizational Arrangements for the Management of Phase I Joint Programs

The United States proposes the establishment of a Marianas-United States Joint Commission for Transition to be responsible for the planning and implementation of Phase I joint activities. The United States also proposes the creation of a small full-time Joint Secretariat for Transition as the operating arm of the Joint Commission for Transition.

JOINT UNITED STATES-MARIANAS COMMISSION FOR TRANSITION

A. Functions

- Provides insitutionalized channel for continuous consultation and liaison between the Northern Mariana Islands and the United States Government on matters of joint concern during the period of transition.

- Oversees all joint transition implementation actions flowing from the new status agreement.

- Establishes general policies and guidelines for necessary research and planning to be carried out during Phase I on matters of joint concern.

- Reviews studies and reports submitted by the Joint Secretariat, forwarding them to end-users with or without recommendations as appropriate.

B. Organization

- Membership should be composed of three representatives from the Northern Mariana Islands and two from the United States.

- The Commission should have two co-chairmen, one from the Northern Mariana Islands and one from the United States.

- The Joint Commission will meet on call of the Co-Chairmen.

- Members will serve without additional compensation except for expenses.

- Co-Chairmen will remain in close contact through the Joint Secretariat for Transition.

JOINT SECRETARIAT FOR TRANSITION

A. Functions

- Will be responsible to the Joint Commission for planning, implementation and coordination of all approved Phase I programs and activities falling under the Commission's responsibility.

- Will second as necessary the expert advice and services of advisors from the United States Government, the Trust Territory Government and the District Administration.

- Will employ private consultants as may be required for special assignments and contract out to private firms major Phase I joint activities and research and planning assignments.

- Will administer Phase I funds allocated for joint activities.

- Will submit quarterly progress reports to the Joint Commission on all Phase I joint activities including disbursement of funds.

B. Organization of Joint Secretariat

- Will be headquartered in the Northern Mariana Islands.
- Will have four authorized professional positions: a director; a deputy director; a budget officer; and a liaison officer.

- The Director and liaison officer should be recruited from the Northern Mariana Islands. The Deputy Director and the Budget Officer would be Americans.

V. Funding of Phase I

The United States will fund Phase I at a level of \$2,455,000. To obtain these funds the Executive Branch of the United States Government will request from the United States Congress a special Northern Mariana Islands Phase I grant. Funds for unilateral Northern Mariana Islands activities will go from the Department of the Interior to the Marianas Political Status Commission or the Marianas District Legislature. Funds for joint United States-Northern Mariana Islands activities will be channeled to the Joint Secretariat for Transition through the Interior Department, which will remain accountable for the funds to be administered by the Joint Secretariat for Transition. Funds for public land cadaster and adjudication program will be included in the regular Trust Territory budget.

The United States proposes that Phase I funding be broken down as described in the following table:

TRANSITION FUNDING

PHASE I

Joint Commission

Administrative Expenses	\$ 30,000
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*Final Census
funding as
regularly open
source of m
Phase II*

*Willis
to consider
how funding for
research into
formulate
of personal
fed. cases -*

Joint Secretariat

Administrative Expenses		\$ 50,000
Personnel		\$ 125,000
Program (Research)		
Economic and Social Infrastructure Planning	<i>and Physical Infrastructure</i>	\$ 300,000
Fiscal and Revenue Planning		\$ 50,000
Impact of Relocation of Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands' Capital		\$ 50,000
Other Activities		
Political Status Education		\$ 50,000
Status Plebiscite		\$ 25,000
<u>Planning for New Commonwealth Government</u>		
Constitutional Convention and Legal Services		\$ 100,000 <i>± 130,000</i>
Constitutional Referendum		\$ 25,000
Government Reorganization and Legislative Planning		\$ 50,000 <i>± 200,000</i>
<u>Public Land Cadaster and Adjudication Program (Marianas)</u>		\$1,600,000
	TOTAL	\$2,455,000

ON Marianas

VI. Interim Measures

- Fed laws - out

Funding for almost all major Phase I activities will not be forthcoming from the U.S. Congress until after agreement has been reached on the new political status and the Congress has been fully informed regarding the nature of the new relationship. But in the interim before Phase I begins, the U.S. proposes that a small joint transition committee be named. This ad hoc group would be given the immediate task of drafting a detailed plan of action for Phase I and a possible timetable of events during the period between the signing of a status agreement and the coming into force of a new Northern Marianas Government. This detailed Phase I plan would be submitted to the Marianas

Political Status Commission and the Office for Micronesian Status Negotiations prior to the next negotiating session.

Upon approval, the plan would serve as the basis of action for the Joint Secretariat for Transition and the work of the Joint Commission for Transition. The ad hoc joint committee would also serve as a forerunner of the Joint Secretariat and one of its functions would be to organize the Joint Secretariat including the recruitment of staff.

The United States would be willing to fund these interim preparatory measures.