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Guam
December 20, 1973

Dear Felipe,

Your letter of December 19 reached me only last night on the eve of our departure from Saipan. I am sorry that we were unable to get in touch yesterday, as I had tried unsuccessfully to reach you after learning you were apparently still unhappy about our conversation of the night before.

My recollection of that conversation and yours, evidently diverge on a number of particulars, and I am distressed that you seem to have taken certain remarks personally. They were not so intended.

On the subject of homesteads on Tinian, I believe I made the point that there were by our information 83 agricultural and 15 village homestead applications outstanding as of the end of April. Of the 83 we were advised by Trust Territory officials in Saipan that only a very few of the applications specified the land areas desired by the applicants, thus making it impossible to process them. There was, to my knowledge, no intimation that there were 83 applicants who were denied public lands because they had failed to improve their homestead lots.

With regard to the latter part of the conversation I believe I observed in response to your remarks that the U.S. delegation was in Saipan at the request of the Marianas, who had asked that we discuss the means by which they could become members of the American political family. You made clear that you did not wish to become such a member.

I acknowledged that there were certainly some like you who did not wish to do so, but pointed out that it would be difficult if not impossible to carry on discussions on future status unless both sides agreed that membership in the family was the common goal. If anyone felt otherwise he had no business there and should get out - not of the islands, of course, but of the talks.

If you understood these remarks otherwise, please accept my apologies. They were not meant personally. Clearly no one would ever want to suggest that you should leave your own islands. It was at that point that I was summoned away and so we had no opportunity to clarify matters.

Perhaps our difficulty is one of communication and a need to be more sensitive to each other's sensibilities. Certainly we should be

Hon. Felipe Q. Atalig
Marianas Congressional Delegation
Saipan, Mariana Islands 96950

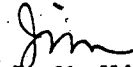
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able to continue discussions such as these under calmer circumstances and I look forward to doing so at the earliest opportunity.

With all best wishes for the Christmas season,

Sincerely,



J. M. Wilson, Jr.

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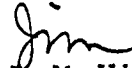
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