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COVENANT ESTABLISHING A POLITICAL UNION BETWEEN
THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS AND THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

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Whereas, the United States of America fully supports the desire of the people of the Northern Mariana Islands to exercise their inalienable right of self-determination; and

1

Whereas, under the Charter of the United Nations and the Trusteeship Agreement between the United Nations and the United States the inhabitants of the Northern Mariana Islands are free to express their wishes for self-government or independence; and

3

Whereas, the peoples of the Northern Mariana Islands and the United States share the ~~common~~ goals and values found in the American system of government based upon the principles of individual freedom, democracy, and local self-government; and

2

Whereas, the people of the Northern Mariana Islands for over twenty years, through public petition and referendum, have clearly expressed their desire to attain the benefits inherent in political union with the United States and to become a ~~permanent~~ member of the American political family:

Now, therefore, the Marianas Political Status Commission, being the duly appointed representatives of the people of the Northern Mariana Islands, and the Personal Representative of the President of the United States have agreed to this Covenant and attached Articles governing the establishment of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, hereinafter collectively referred to as ~~the~~ "Covenant", which ~~upon approval by the people of the Northern Mariana Islands and approval by the United States~~ will govern the future relationship of the Northern Mariana Islands and the United States.

*use date
no later than*

Title I

~~Upon~~ the termination of the present Trusteeship Agreement the Mariana

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Islands District of the West Territory and the Pacific Islands will become a self-governing commonwealth under the sovereignty of the United States to be known as "The Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands".

Title II

The Commonwealth will govern itself pursuant to a Constitution of its own adoption as set forth in the attached articles and in accordance with this Covenant, applicable provisions of the United States Constitution, and ^{applicable} federal law.

Title III

DELETED

Title IV

The people of the Northern Mariana Islands will be given the opportunity to become either citizens or nationals of the United States; as they may choose, with all the rights, privileges, immunities and responsibilities pertaining thereto, as set forth in the attached Articles.

Title V

The United States will have full responsibility for and authority in the fields of defense and foreign affairs. In the exercise of its responsibilities in foreign affairs, the United States will consider the advice of the Commonwealth Government on international matters directly affecting the Northern Mariana Islands, will support the membership of the Commonwealth in appropriate regional or other international organizations dealing with social, economic, and cultural matters of concern to the Commonwealth to the extent such organizations permit such representation, and will facilitate the establishment of Commonwealth offices abroad to promote the economic and cultural interests of the Commonwealth.

Title VI

The United States may enact legislation effective within the Commonwealth

except as otherwise specified in this Covenant. The legislative powers of the United States will be exercised with strict regard for the preservation of internal self-government for the Commonwealth.

Title VII

Small other aspects
The Commonwealth may regulate the alienation of all public and private lands so as to prevent their transfer to persons not of ~~Northern Mariana Islands~~ *make blank* descent, as set forth in the attached Articles:

Title VIII

The United States will extend financial support to the Northern Mariana Islands as agreed in the Articles. Such assistance will include funds to support an orderly transition to the new political status, funds to build toward a new social and economic status, and extension of the provisions of federal programs and services and other assistance in meeting future development needs.

~~Title IX~~

The Government of the Northern Mariana Islands will make land available to the United States government for the exercise of its responsibilities in the Northern Mariana Islands as specified in the attached Articles. All property and interests in property in the Northern Mariana Islands to be held by the United States shall be acquired pursuant to the procedures set forth in the attached Articles.

Title X

Modification of the fundamental structure of the political relationship between the Commonwealth and the United States may be made only by mutual consent of the Commonwealth and the United States as specified in Section 102 of the attached Articles. Amendments to the Constitution of the Commonwealth will not require approval by the United States, but federal courts will be competent to pass on their consistency with this Covenant, the United States

Constitution and United States federal law.

The Covenant and attached Articles shall be approved by the United States in accordance with its constitutional processes. They will also be submitted for approval to the District Legislature of the Mariana Islands and subsequently to the people of the Mariana Islands District for approval in a referendum to be called by the Mariana Islands District Legislature. Approval must be by a majority of those voting in the referendum. All residents of the Northern Mariana Islands who would be eligible to vote in elections in the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands if such elections were held on the day the referendum is conducted shall be eligible to vote in the referendum.

The results of the referendum shall be certified by the High Commissioner of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands. This Covenant will become effective in accordance with Section 701 of the attached Articles.

The attached Articles on the establishment of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands are an integral part of this Covenant.

Signed at _____ on the _____ day of _____ 1974.

FOR THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS:

FOR THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA:
