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October 5, 1973

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Mr. Edward DLG Pangelinan
 Chairman
 Marianas Political Status Commission
 P.O. Box 825
 Saipan, Mariana Islands 96950

Dear Ed:

I returned to my office today after a short visit to London and found your cable awaiting me on the subject of the scheduling of the next session of negotiations. I have discussed the matter briefly with my colleagues here and with Jim Leonard and learned also that you apparently sent a cable on the subject to the Ambassador.

I called Jim Wilson to make certain that he was informed of the Commission's views on this subject. He, apparently, had just discussed the matter with the Ambassador and they are taking their usual extreme view of this proposal by the Commission. According to Mr. Wilson, the Commission's desire to postpone the next round of negotiations until March "raises the most serious questions about the desires of the Marianas' people to be part of the United States." I told Mr. Wilson that I was sorry that he expressed this view and that no such meaning should be read into the Commission's proposal for postponement. I said that the Commission undoubtedly reached its conclusion because of the volume of work being done by the consultants and the joint working groups and because of their desire not to be pressed into another session of negotiations prematurely. I also suggested that the Commission

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probably felt that the scheduling of the Joint Committees' meetings should not be the sole determining factor in arranging for meetings with the Marianas Commission. Mr. Wilson was not particularly placated by my comments and indicated that the Ambassador was trying vigorously to communicate with you.

I can fully understand the position of the Commission on this subject and am prepared to defend and live with the postponement of negotiations until next March. If the Ambassador presses you very hard, I think that you should consider a fall back position consisting of agreement to meeting with the United States Delegation in a brief session, perhaps limited to one week, in November or early December, at which time the parties would discuss two or three specific agenda items to be agreed upon in advance. This arrangement might enable the United States to save face and also help achieve my goals, outlined in one of my recent letters, of directing the attention of both parties to some very specific areas. I do not know, of course, whether this kind of fall back position would be acceptable either to you or the other members of the Commission.

If our next round of negotiations is postponed until March, it is the view of both Jim Leonard and myself that he and I should come out to meet with the Commission sometime during November to review the work in progress. In perhaps a period of one or two weeks with the Commission we could review the papers we have prepared, secure some guidance from the Commission and be prepared to take certain positions on behalf of the Commission in the course of further sessions or joint working groups. I think this would be helpful.

Please let me know the outcome of your discussions with the Ambassador.

Sincerely,

bc: Mr. Leonard
Mr. Lapin
Mr. Helfer
Mr. Carter

Howard P. Willens

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