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April 29, 1974

MEMORANDUM FOR THE FILE

Subject: Meetings with Congresswoman Mink (March 12, 1974)
and Congresswoman Burke (March 28, 1974)

This memorandum briefly summarizes two short meetings I had with members of the House Subcommittee on Territories and Insular Affairs.

1. Meeting with Congresswoman Mink

I met with Congresswoman Mink for approximately 15 minutes on March 12, 1974. Although she was very busy, Congresswoman Mink was cordial and is, of course, very well informed regarding the general situation in the TTPI. She expressed regret that she was unable to join the Chairman of the Subcommittee in visiting Saipan earlier this year.

I reviewed generally with Congresswoman Mink the present status of the negotiations and highlighted some of the issues remaining for decision. The one issue she expressed particular interest in was the problem of land alienation. Although she seemed generally sympathetic on restraints on land alienation as a whole, she seemed to have serious problems with its legality. We discussed it briefly and I told her that we had an opinion from the Department of Justice, based in part on Hawaii precedents, to the effect that some such restrictions would be constitutional.

I mentioned to Congresswoman Mink the concern expressed by some members of Congress regarding the establishment of a "preferred status" for the Marianas, in contrast with Guam and the Virgin Islands. I explained generally our position on this subject, emphasizing our desire to propose status arrangements for the Marianas which were appropriate and completely defensible on their merits. She was not very responsive to this point and I do not really know how Congresswoman Mink will respond if opposition to our status develops from Guam or other of the territories.

I promised to give Congresswoman Mink an updated report regarding our negotiations after the next session.

2. Meeting with Congresswoman Burke

I met with Congresswoman Burke for approximately 15 minutes on March 28, 1974. Mrs. Burke is a very new member of Congress and has the distinction of being the first member of Congress to give birth to a child during her term of office.

Congresswoman Burke does not have any background in the area of status negotiations. She was unable to make the trip to Guam and Saipan early in 1974, although she had planned to do so. She does basically have a bias in favor of minorities within the American political family.

I reviewed briefly the status of the negotiations and the important issues. On the subject of a special status for the Marianas, Congresswoman Burke indicated that she was willing to consider the matter on the merits. Although Congresswoman Burke is very bright and able, I think that her position on any matter affecting our status negotiations will largely be influenced by Congressman Burton.

I promised to keep Congresswoman Burke informed of our negotiations.

H. P. Willens

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