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THE DEPUTY SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20301

JUL 31 1974

Honorable Rogers C. B. Morton
Secretary of the Interior
Washington, DC
20240

Dear Secretary Morton:

Secretary Schlesinger has asked me to respond to your letter of June 27, 1974 concerning the proposed park on Saipan, because of my previous involvement in this matter.

We support your desire for positive action on the park project and look forward to receipt of your detailed phased development plan. As I indicated during our meeting on the first of May, once we receive a copy of your plan we will be able to identify specific projects in which the Department of Defense can assist, within our authority and resources.

The charter and experience, coupled with its full range of technical and advisory expertise, makes the Department of Interior eminently qualified to assume the lead role on this park project, and I strongly endorse such an assignment. Furthermore, the concept of a park has evolved in detail along with the negotiations to the point where it is now a significant undertaking and, in effect, an integral part of the negotiations. Taking note of this development, it is also our belief that the park project should be authorized and funded by Congress as an integral part of the legislation establishing the Marianas Commonwealth, with the proviso that the park will be maintained by the local government.

The Department of the Navy has been designated as the Executive Agent for managing our contribution to this worthwhile project, and I understand that the Head, Facilities and Installations Plans Section (OP-405G), Office of the Chief of Naval Operations (OX 5-5065/OX5-5124) stands ready to pick up a copy of your plan as soon as it is ready. We will identify promptly then, projects with which we are able to assist.

H. P. Clement

Doc 138

10-431716