



United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20240

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OCT 2 1974

Dear Mr. Johnston:

Thank you for the copy of the memorandum from the Deputy High Commissioner to the Marianas District Administrator relative to homesteading on Tinian. A copy of a September 11, 1974 letter from the Land Negotiations Committee of the Marianas Political Status Commission has been forwarded for your reference.

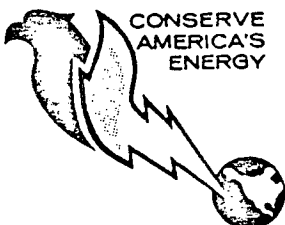
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Pursuant to both I am writing to request an early report from you on the status of the Homestead Program on Tinian and to ask that you reaffirm to all concerned Ambassador Williams' previous assurances that there are no restrictions from the standpoint of current status negotiations that stand in the way of processing village and agricultural homesteads outside of lands covered by the U.S.-MPSC Joint Communique of last May.

So far as the first of these is concerned, we would like to know what progress has been made to implement your policy statement of December 14, 1973, and the follow-up to your subsequent memorandum to the District Administrator of February 2, 1974. Your status report should be comprehensive and detailed in terms of numbers of applications, the number and location of permits granted to date, the issuance of final deeds, pending matters, and finally problems that have been encountered or are foreseen.

The report should also include the present and projected budget for the administration of the homestead program in the Marianas, the status of surveys, and the availability of surveyors. You may recall that at the meeting in Hawaii last spring, DISTAD Ada and his technical people and President Santos and Senator Pangelinan agreed that what was holding up homesteading was not a "moratorium policy" but a lack of funds and personnel for surveys. If this is still the cause of the delay, please tell us what is being done about it.

We would also like to know the status of the Ad Hoc Land Policy Review Commission which DISTAD Ada was going to establish. He and President Santos and Senator Pangelinan had agreed that an early, thorough study of the whole homestead program in the Marianas should be undertaken without any delay to include (1) the amount of public land available



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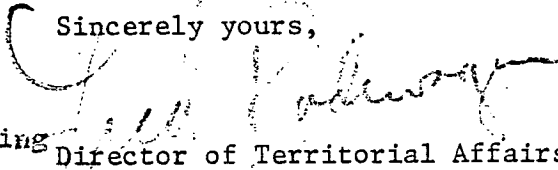
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for homesteading; (2) the size of village and agricultural homesteads; (3) the qualifications for homesteads, and (4) the administration and enforcement of homestead laws. Please advise us if it is the intent of the District Administration to delay further homesteading on Saipan, Tinian, Rota, and Pagan until this review has been completed and new policies established.

With regard to attempts to involve Ambassador Williams and the status negotiations you should make it clear to everyone that homesteading is entirely a local matter to be resolved by the Trust Territory Administration through consultation with local political leaders, and that there is no moratorium on either leasing or homesteading on Tinian outside of the lands covered by the U.S.-MPSC communique last May.

Resolution of this problem will require active, positive personal attention on your part and on the part of the District Administrator. I feel that you should personally coordinate this matter. Your initial report would be appreciated by October 15.

Sincerely yours,


Acting Director of Territorial Affairs

Honorable Edward E. Johnston
High Commissioner
Trust Territory of the
Pacific Islands
Saipan, Mariana Islands 96950

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