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October 29, 1974

MEMORANDUM FOR THE MARIANAS POLITICAL STATUS COMMISSION FILE

Subject: Discussions with Interior Department

I spoke to Adrian de Graffenreid and Emmett Rice today and learned the following:

1. Adrian did not know the present status of the Phase I Funding request. He thought Congress had not passed anything yet, and would consider the matter when it reassembles in November.

2. Adrian professed to be only vaguely aware of the relationship between Micronesian Legal Services and the Tinian Municipal Council. I told him that we had heard that Micronesian Legal Services is representing the Council in its opposition to the military plans on Tinian. He thought the corporation's powers prevented them from doing this. He said that the United States position would be that it is negotiating with the Commission and that the people of the Marianas will have a chance to vote on the Agreement.

3. Adrian said he thought that the Ambassador and Senator Pangelinan had completed their discussions in Hawaii. The formal round of negotiations now set to begin on December 2.

4. According to Adrian, the Ambassador is to meet with Senator Salli starting today. The Palauan legislature has passed a Resolution stating its opposition to the High Commissioner's veto of the public land legislation, and insisting that the United States permit the Congress of Micronesia bill to become law. The Palauan legislature has recommended that the Joint Committee break off its talks until the United States agrees. Adrian pointedly noted that the Congress of Micronesia legislation would give the Congress control over land arrangement in the Marianas. He raised the fear that Senator Salli would use the Palauan resolution in an attempt to undermine the Marianas talks.

5. Adrian at first would not admit that the District Administrator had vetoed the Marianas Legislature's land bill, but after I told him that Emmett Rice had already told me that the District Administrator was supposed to veto it, Adrian confirmed it. Emmett is to send me a copy of the veto message when he gets it. Adrian said the veto was based on the conflict of interest the District Administrator would have faced.

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6. Adrian said that a Secretarial Order authorizing the High Commissioner to transfer public land to a district would be needed before the land could be transferred; and would be prepared. But he was very vague about who would prepare it and when.

7. Adrian did not know whether a memo explaining the U.S. position on military retention lands was being prepared. [Of course, Tom Johnson knows, or says, that one is being prepared!].

8. According to Adrian, the Defense Department is concerned that the Marianas' power to impose taxes on imports will be used to tax personal belongings of servicemen who are assigned to the Tinian base. He said Guam does not tax such belongings. I said that if they can prove that, we will consider appropriate language in the legislative history but not in the status agreement.

9. Emmett has heard nothing from the Marianas about the Joint Land Committee. I told him I have heard nothing either.


Michael S. Helfer

cc: H. P. Willens
E. O'Hara