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

27 FEB 1974

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

Dear Rogers:

In the attached letter to the President, Ambassador Haydn Williams reported, inter alia, progress in the negotiations to make the Northern Marianas a Commonwealth of the United States. As emphasized in the Ambassador's letter, an important device in these negotiations has been the concept of a US memorial park on Federally-held lands on Saipan. It is understood that in his discussions with you in January, Ambassador Williams discussed this matter in some detail, including the prospects for funding and maintaining such a park.

Recognizing the need to preserve scenic ocean front property for use by the people, plus the favorable influence such a project will have on the status negotiations, the Joint Chiefs of Staff and I support such a concept. We are now exploring alternative approaches to such a project, and I plan to designate an executive agent to head up Department of Defense efforts in the park project.

I would appreciate your views on the development of such a park, thoughts on the scope which reasonably could be Federally supported, and proposals for maintenance of a US park in a commonwealth. Further, we would appreciate knowing if you have designated a bureau or office to lead Department of Interior support of this effort, in order for the DOD executive agent to effect appropriate coordination.

Sincerely,
Bill Clements

Attachment
a/s

Copy to: Chairman, JCS

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