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LETTER TO MARIANAS VARIETY

Mr. Ramon Villagomez' letter which appeared in the January 18 edition of Marianas Variety raises a number of points about U.S.-Marianas status negotiations probably best answered by the Marianas Political Status Commission. However, the letter also contains several inaccurate statements concerning U.S. Government policies with regard to Micronesia's future.

Mr. Villagomez suggests that the U.S. Government is attempting to gain negotiating advantage in future status talks with the Congress of Micronesia's Joint Committee for Future Status by promoting separatism and be seeking separate negotiations with individual districts. He cites the Marianas Status Talks being held by the U.S. and the Marianas Political Status Commission as evidence that this government is practicing a policy of divide and conquer in Micronesia.

This is simply not the case.

In point of fact, the situation <sup>in</sup> ~~is~~ the Marianas is unique and not paralleled in any other part of Micronesia. The record clearly shows that the people of the Marianas have long sought a close and permanent association with the United States. For more than <sup>20</sup> ~~12~~ years, through referenda, district legislature resolutions, petitions to the United Nations and by the Marianas endorsement of the 1970 Commonwealth proposal, the people of the Marianas have made evident their aspirations for such a relationship.

When the Joint Committee on Future Status acknowledged in April 1972, that the wishes of the Marianas did not fully coincide with the

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desires of the other five districts, the U.S. Government determined that the American policy of seeking a common solution for the entire territory was no longer feasible or acceptable. At this point the U.S. Government agreed to separate negotiations with the Marianas Political Status Commission but it did so hoping that such action would tend to solidify support in the other five districts for the draft compact of Free Association as well as satisfying the aspirations of the people of the Marianas. However, the United States wishes to see no further fragmentation of the Territory's districts nor have there been any requests from the other five districts for separate talks.

As Ambassador F. Haydn Williams, the President's Personal Representative for Micronesian Status Negotiations, stated at Majuro in May, 1973, "We continue to believe that despite considerable cultural diversity and differing local problems and interests, a unified Micronesia would best meet the economic, social and other needs of the people concerned".

I hope that this will clarify the United States position on Micronesian unity and allay any concern that Mr. Villagomez may have on this subject.

Sincerely,