

Gov in Cong - Senate / Dec. 1975
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Subj: Suggestion for letter from Northern Mariana Islands leadership to Senator Percy

1. A letter from the Northern Mariana Islands leadership to Senator Percy prior to the Christmas recess would be beneficial to the outcome of the Covenant in the Senate. It would cover the following points: a. reasons for early approval vice delay, b. the fact that the Marianas are an entity and that the Northern Mariana Islands have little or no affinity for the other districts, and c. invite the Senator to visit the Northern Marianas during the Christmas recess.

2. Specifically, the letter would:

a. Be courteous and respectful in tone. It would state words to the effect that "we need your help and understanding" and "in light of your long stated commitment to the human factors in national decisions".

b. Stress the fact that the Northern Marianas have never been a part of the islands that constitute the Carolines and the Marshalls but rather a part of the Marianas archipelago. The people of the Northern Marianas have been moved around among all of the islands of the Marianas by the Spanish, the Germans, and the Japanese. There are many families that are currently divided with some members of the extended families in the Northern Marianas and the other members on Guam. These families desire to be united once again under the same flag. The people of the Northern Marianas have never felt an affinity for the Palauans, the Marshallese, the Yapese, the Trukese, or other ethnic and cultural groups which make up the Caroline and Marshall Islands.

c. State that their desire to become a permanent part of the United States is a deeply held desire based on their ethnic, culture, geographic, linguistic, religious and family identification with Guam; their recognition of the political stability and freedoms inherent in American citizenship; and their desire to obtain economic opportunities to enable them to develop a productive and self-sufficient economy. This desire for permanent membership in the American political family was not derived from any moves by the United States' military or the Administration. It originated among the people. This desire and sentiment is therefore based on firm convictions and there is absolutely no chance that they will ever be changed in the direction of joining the other islands of the Trust Territory in a loose and impermanent relationship with the United States. The Northern Marianas would not object to the other islands of

12901

the Trust Territory remaining with them on the condition that their common political status be a close and permanent relationship with the United States. However, it has been clear for many years that the other island groups do not desire such a political status. The recently completed draft Micronesian Constitution would establish a Federated States of Micronesia without close and permanent relations with the United States. The people of the Northern Marianas would never accept living under such a constitution. Delay would serve no useful purpose in changing anyone's political status desires.

d. State that agreement has been reached in principle and in substance between the Northern Marianas and the Congress of Micronesia for separate administration and that both see an early separation as of mutual benefit. A delay in the Senate's approval of the Covenant, even if the terms of the delay permitted separate administration, would leave the question of their future political status in doubt, create uncertainties and make impossible the rational planning for such matters as relocation of the capital and the economic programs for both sides. The final political goals must be known before the economic development plans can be formulated and executed. Delay would also complicate matters for the other island groups in the Trust Territory, especially their course of economic development and the ratification of their draft constitution. The involuntary participation of the Northern Marianas in the political processes of these other islands, mandated by law although both sides have irreversibly started down different roads, would harm the interests of both parties.

e. State that the entire matter of the future political status, including the detrimental effects of a delay of approval of the Commonwealth Covenant, is a complicated one. It is not a simple problem.

f. Request that the Senator "come out and visit us" during the Christmas recess so that he can see the situation first hand and arrive at a firm understanding of the situation which is of such importance to the people.

g. Close by once again appealing to the Senator's interest in the welfare of people. That a visit to their islands would be most beneficial to him in understanding this complicated matter and would surely be beneficial in their strong desire to be reunited with their cousins on Guam within the same political family.

h. Be signed by a broad range of the Northern Marianas leadership including representatives of the MPSC, MDL, Municipal Councils, Mayors, NMI members of the COM, the Carolinian community, the business community, the Rotary Club, and the two political parties.