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Memorandum of Conversation
Saipan, Mariana Islands

DATE: January 15, 1975

SUBJECT: Governor Bordallo's Views on the Political Future
of the Northern Marianas

PARTICIPANTS: Governor Ricky Bordallo of Guam
Dr. (Ph.D.) Joe Dizon, Public Affairs Adviser
to the Governor
Commander W. R. Westlake, USN, ComNavMar Staff
Alf E. Bergesen, Status Liaison Officer, Saipan

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About half an hour later than our appointment, we were ushered into the Governor's office. I congratulated the Governor on his election and inauguration and said he must have felt that the whole of 1974 had been spent in campaigning; I said that I represented Ambassador F. Haydn Williams who had asked me to bring him up-to-date copies of the new draft covenant (for the Marianas) and compact (for the other five districts). I started to explain the future scenario; when I got into the schedule, the Governor took over the conversation and briefed us on his views.

The Governor asked about contacts by Ambassador Williams and OMSN with members of Congress. I said that OMSN had been in regular contact with key staff people, that the Ambassador and Jim Wilson had briefed the responsible members, and that these contacts were being stepped up. The Governor said he had talked, over the years and recently, with a large number of influential senators and congressmen; he cited Jackson, Johnston, and Rep. (Charles) Wilson (Calif.). It was his opinion that these members would not favor a scheme for a separate "Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas," on the grounds that separate administration would be too expensive and inefficient for such a small governmental unit. Furthermore, separate administration now, with the Northern Marianas having its own Governor, legislature, etc., would make unifying Guam and the Northern Marianas later more difficult. We noted that it was expected that the Northern Marianas would eventually combine with Guam; the Governor made it clear that he was talking about union

Status LNO:AE Bergesen:lav 1/16/75
(Drafting Office and Officer)

FORM DS-1254
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ON JUL 10 1985 UNDER PRO-
VISIONS OF E.O. 12356 BY
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OMSN/25C
03-411884:1

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now. In the course of his remarks the Governor made it clear that it was his view, and had been for years (since at least 1956 when he was a member of the Legislative Assembly) that the Northern Marianas, at least, and possibly all of Micronesia should combine with Guam; it could then become an (incorporated) territory, and eventually a state.

I pointed out that the Popular Party had fared badly in the November election in the Marianas; that its opponent, the Territorial Party, seemed identified with the Carolinians; that the Carolinians claimed they were concerned about preserving their cultural identity and could be expected to oppose integration with Guam. There were also, I said, indications that people in Saipan were concerned about being overwhelmed by Guam if they combined with it. Aside from absorbing a higher figure on the number of Carolinians in Saipan (I said perhaps 40 percent), the Governor, though courteous, did not seem impressed with these considerations.

The Governor said that the so-called referendum on Guam in 1968 (which is widely believed to have shown that the Guamanians did not want the Northern Marianas in with them) was a political gambit which, for reasons connected with the election campaign then underway in Guam, was never taken up; the leading candidates ignored it, the man who introduced it lost interest, and no leadership was brought to bear on the issue. Hence the vote was small, uninformed, and non-representative.

The Governor had, of course, other appointments; this was the end of our call. Bordallo was articulate, confident, and at his ease.

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