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The following message was received from Ambassador F. Haydn Williams at 3:30 PM, January 23, 1975:

January 22, 1975

Honorable Vicente N. Santos
Vice-Chairman, Marianas Political Status Commission
Saipan, Mariana Islands 96950

Dear Mr. Vice-Chairman:

I am sending you and the other members of the Marianas Political Status Commission a brief report on the progress being made on those items which we agreed to work on during the recess between the first half and the second half of Round V of the Marianas status negotiations.

The draft Technical Agreement covering such items as joint-use arrangements, leasebacks, and other provisions relating to the memorial park, access to military lands, etc., is being worked on jointly here in Washington by your counsel and by representatives of the U.S. Government. It is nearly completed, and a final draft should be ready in ample time for our joint consideration when we resume our meeting.

The negotiating history or notes which set forth certain understandings relative to certain articles and sections of the draft Covenant is also in the final stages of joint preparation with your Washington counsel and this draft document will also be ready for the MPSC's review in advance of our next session.

We have also been engaged in an internal technical review of the draft Covenant and have held a number of recent meetings with congressional staff members on the Covenant including the three specific points on which we reserved. We are also in consultation again with key leaders of the Congress on the full scope of the draft Covenant, and from all preliminary indications it appears likely that we will be able to remove our reservation on Section 105. We may have non-substantive changes to suggest in Sections 202 and 703. Overall we have been greatly encouraged by the reaction to the draft Covenant by both the executive and legislative branches of the U.S. Government.

With these favorable developments and with the progress that is being made to prepare for our next meeting I am optimistic about the prospects for further significant progress toward final understandings and final agreements which can then be presented to the Marianas Legislature during its February session and eventually to all the people of the Marianas for their approval.

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With respect to the second session of Round V I believe it would be useful to plan on some informal preparatory meetings such as the one held early last December in Saipan just prior to the formal openings of Round V. This will give us a chance to review jointly any remaining technical or drafting questions and to prepare the final agenda for the formal plenary sessions and for the working sessions of the two delegations. We believe that after the Covenant and Technical Agreement the most important other items of business for our next meeting will be the question of transition and transition planning, organization, timing and funding.

You and the Commission may wish to suggest other specific items for the agenda and an early indication of what they might be would be most helpful in our preparations in the remaining time we have before we reconvene. In order to save time you may wish to forward any thoughts you have on the second session of Round V to us through Alf Bergesen.

Please give all the members of the MPSC my very warmest regards. I also wish to extend to you and the members of the Marianas District Legislature my very best wishes as you plan for what will be a most important and historic session.

Sincerely yours,

F. Haydn Williams

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