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Honorable Floyd Haskell United States Senate Washington, D. C. 20510

Dear Secator Haskell:

Thank you for your communication of January 10 regarding:

Letter concerning the future political status of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands.

The Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands is administered by the United States under a Trustreship Agreement between the Security Council of the United Nations and the United States which entered into force on July 18, 1947. Article 6 of the Trustreship Agreement provides that the administering authority "shall promote the development of the inhabitants of the Trust Territory toward self-government or independence, as may be appropriate to the particular circumstances of the Trust Territory and its peoples and the freely expressed wishes of the peoples concerned."

The United States is presently engaged in two sets of negotiations with the representatives of the people of the Trust Territory concerning their future political status.

In response to requests from the Mariana Islands District Legislature, the United States has been engaged since December 1972 in negotiations with the Marianas Political Status Commission to establish upon termination of the UN Trusteeship a self-governing Commonwealth of the Worthern Mariana Islands in political union with the United Cottas. In the most recent round of negotiations held in Saipan from December 5 through December 19, provisional agreement was reached on the text of a draft Commonwealth Covenant. Unclosed is a copy of the joint communique which was issued upon adjournment of the negotiations on December 19. Megotiations are tentatively acheculed to resume on Saipan in early Ich mary, which may result

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in final agreement and signing of the Covenant. The Commonwealth Covenant would then be submitted for approval to the Marianas District Legislature and then to the people of the Northern Marianas Islands in a plebiscite at which we expect a United Mations presence. If the Covenant is approved by the plebiscite, it would then be presented to the United States Congress for its consideration and approval.

The United States is also engaged in negotiations with the Joint Committee on Future Status of the Congress of Micronesia looking toward a future relationship of free association between the United States and the other districts of the Trust Territory, comprised of the Caroline and the Marshall Islands. Under this relationship the rest of the Trust Territory would have full internal self-government and the United States would be responsible for their Jefense and foreign affairs. At such time as an agreement is concluded, it will be submitted for approval to the Congress of Micronesia, to the people in a plebiscite, and to the United States Congress.

Both these negotiations are being conducted by Ambassador F. Haydn Williams, the President's Personal Representative for Micronesian Status Regotiations. Datailed information concerning the negotiations can be obtained from the Office for Micronesian Status Regotiations, Washington, D. C. 20240.

I hope you will call on me if you believe we can be of further assistance.

Cordially,

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Linwood Nol on Assistant Secretary for Congressional Relations

Enclosures:

1. Correspondence returned.

 Joint Communique, dated December 19, 1974.

EA/ANP:JFKnowles:rlw x20870 1/27/75 Concurrences:

DR 10/UNP:MWilliamson (subs.)

OMSN:Capt. Scott (subs.)

EA - P. Del Veochio

E - Mr. Schner



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