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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 Nations 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 defense 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. Hayden Williams, the President's Personal Representative for Micronesian Status Negotiations. Detailed information concerning the negotiations can be obtained from the Office for Micronesian Status Negotiations, 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 Holton
Assistant Secretary
for Congressional Relations

Enclosures:

1. Correspondence returned.
2. Joint Communiqué, dated December 19, 1974.

EA/ANP:JFKnowles:rlw
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Concurrences:

- EE IO/UNP:MWilliamson (subs.)
- OMSN:Capt. Scott (subs.)
- EA - P. Del Vecchio
- H - Mr. Schnee

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