

EXCISE

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P750049-1027

Honorable William V. Scott  
United States Senate  
Washington, D. C. 20510

March 3, 1975

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Dear Senator Scott

The Secretary has asked me to thank you for your letter of February 19 forwarding letter concerning the Mariana Islands.

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I believe that [redacted] is referring to the Northern Mariana Islands and to the negotiations which were concluded on February 15 with the signing of a "Covenant to Establish a Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands in Political Union with the United States of America." These negotiations were conducted by Ambassador F. Marvin Williams, the President's Personal Representative for Micronesian Status Negotiations. Information concerning the negotiations and the Covenant can be obtained from Ambassador Williams and the Office for Micronesian Status Negotiations, Washington, D. C. 20240.

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We see no basis for [redacted] concern that the affiliation of the Northern Mariana Islands with the United States would increase the danger of future war. The immediately adjacent United States Territory of Guam, which together with the Northern Mariana Islands form the geographic entity known as the Mariana Islands, has been under the sovereignty of the United States since 1898. Thus, the United States has a longstanding defense responsibility in this part of the Pacific. Furthermore, as the Administering Authority of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands under a UN Trusteeship Agreement, the United States is now responsible for the security of the Northern Mariana Islands and the other districts of the Trust Territory and has the right under the Trusteeship Agreement to establish naval, military and air bases and to erect fortifications in the Trust Territory. There are no military bases currently in the Northern Mariana Islands. The arrangements for the lease of land in the Northern Mariana Islands for defense purposes

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR

REVIEWED BY Hae DATE MAR. 5 1975

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TF AUTH. \_\_\_\_\_ REASON(S) \_\_\_\_\_

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which are provided for in the Covenant signed on February 15 are consistent with these existing US security responsibilities as well as with the United States policy of maintaining a military presence in the Western Pacific.

Please note that the Covenant is subject to approval by the people of the Northern Mariana Islands in a plebiscite which it is hoped can be held during the last two weeks of June. If approved in a plebiscite, the Covenant would be presented to the United States Congress for its consideration and approval.

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

Sincerely,

GW

Robert J. McCloskey  
Assistant Secretary  
for Congressional Relations

Enclosure.

Correspondence returned.

EA/ANP:JFKnowles:rlw  
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Concurrences:  
EA/ANP - Mr. Moser  
EA - Mr. Lehn  
H - Mr. Schaefer  
OMSN - Capt. Scott  
DOD/OSD/ISA:Capt. Whelan  
L - OTJohnson  
IO/UNP - MWilliamson

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