

MAR 7 1975

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

03  
615

FILE COPY  
Surname:

March 7, 1975

*Grant  
JMW*

✓
23
26
27
5/11
7/2
0

er, Senior Staff Member, National Council

dent's Personal Representative for an Status Negotiations *HW*

nt for the Marianas Leadership to see Ford the week of March 10 - 14, 1975

- Smyser meeting of April 6, 1975

at meet Messrs. Edward DLG Pangelinan, Chairman of the Marianas Political Status Commission, and Pedro A. Tenorio, Senator from the Marianas District in the Congress of Micronesia who have just finished signing the proposed Covenant to establish a Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands in political union with the United States. A signed copy of the Covenant could be presented to the President at that time.

Discussion:

Pangelinan has been a leader in the Marianas movement towards Commonwealth with the United States for the past several years and has served as Chairman of the Marianas Status Commission since its establishment in 1972. He is a young (33) American educated lawyer, one of only a few in the Marianas, a leader of the Popular Party and a former Senator from the Marianas District in the Congress of Micronesia.

He was defeated in the last senatorial election by Tenorio, a leader in the Territorial Party, who is also young (30) and American educated with graduate degrees in hydrology. Tenorio has served for the past year or more as a member of the Marianas Status Commission and is one of the signers for the Marianas of the Commonwealth Covenant.

03- 026961

Both Pangelinan and Tenorio are in Washington in connection with the Jackson Committee hearings on the administration of the Trust Territories and are expected to be here through next week. This is the first visit to Washington of any member of the Marianas Commission since the Commonwealth Covenant was signed with the United States in Saipan on February 15, 1975.

It would be most appropriate for the President to see these gentlemen during this visit. The Marianas have been asking for the last 25 years to become part of the United States. The new Covenant, if approved by the people of the Marianas in the U.N. observed plebiscite scheduled for next June and then by both houses of the U.S. Congress, will bring the Northern Marianas into the American political family and under U.S. sovereignty.

This will constitute the first addition to American territory since the Virgin Islands were acquired in 1917. It will also be the first time in history that a trusteeship has asked to merge with its international trustee.

There is already some opposition to the proposed arrangement within the Marianas, the rest of Micronesia, the U.N. and the United States. Despite the popularity of the Commonwealth idea among the rank and file in the Marianas, the results of the plebiscite cannot be taken for granted. Reception by the President of these leaders of both parties would give the proposed arrangement a welcome boost.

The United States should not appear to be taking a too positive role advocating commonwealth status for the Marianas. It is nevertheless both normal and fitting for the President to make this public gesture of acknowledgement and welcome to these representatives of the Marianas who have just completed a long and arduous negotiation. Such a good opportunity for Presidential blessing may not be presented again before the plebiscite.

If a short time (5 - 10 minutes) could be found in the President's schedule, a brief picture taking session could be arranged during which a signed copy of the new Covenant could be ceremonially presented to the President. It might also be fitting if the principal U.S. negotiators, The President's Personal Representative and the U.S. Deputy Representative were also present.

151  
F. Haydn Williams

026962

Head Covered 2:50 p.m. by Edgao