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March 24, 1975

Mr. Earl F. Sato
2117 Bella Casa Street
Davis, California 95616

Dear Mr. Sato:

I have your letter of March 21, and in response thereto I hope the following is helpful.

The Mariana Islands District Legislature unanimously approved the Covenant on February 20, 1975, and subsequently by resolution formally requested the United States as administering authority to set a date for and call a plebiscite in the Marianas. The date of the plebiscite will be set by proclamation of the Secretary of the Interior. While it is anticipated that the plebiscite will be held during the summer of this year and that United Nations observers will be invited, the precise date of the plebiscite is not now known.

With respect to your second question and that portion of your "timetable" which extends beyond the plebiscite, one can only speculate. It cannot now be determined how long Congress will consider the Covenant before voting on it, and it cannot now be determined whether the constitutional convention will be called before or after Congress votes on the Covenant. Finally, with respect to the termination of the Trusteeship, the Report of the Joint Drafting Committee on the Negotiating History notes "that the United States has stated that it is now planning on a provisional basis to terminate the Trusteeship for all the Districts [of Micronesia] by 1981."

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I am interested to learn that your article will now focus entirely on Article III of the Covenant dealing with citizenship and nationality for persons in the Marianas. I would appreciate receiving a copy of your article when it is published.

Sincerely,

Michael S. Helfer

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