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INT/DOA:ERICE/MTRENT:OMM
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FEB 11 1975

Instructions to HICOM

PRIORITY

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PGOV, TQ
SUBJECT: PLEBISCITE

I DEAR MR. JOHNSTON:

I HAVE TODAY ISSUED A PROCLAMATION CALLING FOR A PLEBISCITE TO BE HELD IN THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS ON JUNE 17 TO PROVIDE AN OPPORTUNITY FOR THE PEOPLE OF THAT DISTRICT TO DECIDE WHETHER THEY WISH TO BECOME A COMMONWEALTH OF THE UNITED STATES IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE TERMS OF COVENANT SIGNED ON FEBRUARY 15, 1975. THE ATTENDANT SECRETARIAL ORDER OUTLINES A RELATED EDUCATION PROGRAM AND ADMINISTRATIVE AND VOTING PROCEDURES. THIS LETTER FURTHER DELINEATES YOUR RESPONSIBILITY UNDER SECTION 3 OF THE ORDER WHICH STATES:

"(A) THE HIGH COMMISSIONER SHALL PROVIDE THE PLEBISCITE COMMISSIONER ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT AND SHALL ASSURE THE IMPLEMENTATION OF POLICIES AND PROGRAMS RELATED TO THE PLEBISCITE IN THE MANNER PRESCRIBED BY THE PLEBISCITE COMMISSIONER.

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{B} THE TRUST TERRITORY HEADQUARTERS AND THE MARIANAS DISTRICT ADMINISTRATOR STAFF SHALL ASSIST THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR IN THE EXECUTION OF HIS DUTIES."

YOU WILL HAVE NOTED ALSO FROM THE ANNOUNCEMENT THAT THE PRESIDENT HAS DESIGNATED MR. ERWIN D. CANHAM, EDITOR EMERITUS OF THE CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR, TO BE PLEBISCITE COMMISSIONER WITH OVERALL RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE OPERATION OF AN IMPARTIAL AND FACTUAL PLEBISCITE EDUCATION PROGRAM AND FOR THE CONDUCT OF THE PLEBISCITE ITSELF. MR. CANHAM WILL BE ASSISTED BY AN EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR {A POST TO WHICH, IN LINE WITH YOUR EARLIER INFORMAL CONCURRENCE, MR. ENNE NEIMAN CRALEY IS BEING NAMED} AND SUCH OTHER STAFF AS HIS DUTIES MAY REQUIRE.

AS HIGH COMMISSIONER, YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR PROVIDING LOGISTIC SUPPORT FOR THIS IMPORTANT UNDERTAKING, AND IN LINE WITH OUR WASHINGTON DISCUSSIONS WITH YOU, I SHALL APPRECIATE YOUR MAKING AVAILABLE ON ADMINISTRATIVE DETAIL SUCH STAFF, INCLUDING THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, AS MAY BE REQUIRED. DETAIL SHOULD BE EFFECTIVE IMMEDIATELY, OR AS SOON AS REQUIRED, THROUGH THE PLEBISCITE DATE. YOU ARE ALSO ASKED TO SEE THAT SUITABLE OFFICE SPACE, IN THE DISTRICT {RATHER THAN IN THE HEADQUARTERS AREA} IS PROVIDED, AS WELL AS AN APPROPRIATE CAR AND DRIVER FOR MR. CANHAM'S OFFICIAL USE.

SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGETARY SUPPORT BEING WORKED OUT HERE WILL COVER SUCH ITEMS AS TRAVEL AND PER DIEM FOR THE PLEBISCITE COMMISSIONER AND HIS STAFF AND THOSE PERSONS OFFICIALLY ASSOCIATED WITH THE CONDUCT OF THE PLEBISCITE AND PLEBISCITE EDUCATION PROGRAM AS DETAILED IN THE SECRETARIAL ORDER. SUCH SUPPORT WILL ALSO COVER COST OF ANY PRINTING, PUBLICATIONS AND SUPPLIES REQUIRED FOR THIS PROJECT.

YOU AND YOUR STAFF, BOTH AT HEADQUARTERS AND IN THE MARIANAS DISTRICT, SHOULD AS A MATTER OF FIRST PRIORITY, PROVIDE ALL ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT REQUIRED BY THE PLEBISCITE COMMISSIONER FOR THIS IMPORTANT UNDERTAKING. HE SHOULD HAVE FULL AND PROMPT ACCESS TO SUCH PERSONNEL AND FACILITIES AS HE MAY NEED, SPECIFICALLY INCLUDING THOSE ASSOCIATED WITH THE ESG PROGRAM. IN THIS CONNECTION IT IS IMPORTANT TO STRESS THAT THE PLEBISCITE COMMISSIONER WILL, IN THE WORDS OF THE SECRETARIAL ORDER, "ENSURE

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THAT AN IMPARTIAL PLEBISCITE EDUCATION PROGRAM IS CONDUCTED THROUGHOUT THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS." THIS OF COURSE MEANS THAT AS DESCRIBED IN SECTION 5 OF THE ORDER, THE PROGRAM WILL BE OPERATED IMPARTIALLY AND OBJECTIVELY, MAKING AVAILABLE TO ALL VOTERS THE RELEVANT FACTS SURROUNDING ALTERNATIVE CHOICES, AND WILL PROVIDE EQUITABLE ACCESS TO SUCH INFORMATION THROUGH DISTRIBUTION OF MATERIALS, MEDIA USAGE AND OTHER FACILITIES FOR PUBLIC INFORMATION. THE PROGRAM WILL TAKE NO POSITION OF EITHER ADVOCACY OR OPPOSITION BUT IS SOLELY CONCERNED WITH THE DISSEMINATION OF ACCURATE INFORMATION ON THE COVENANT ~~AND ITS IMPLEMENTATION~~ AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR A PROSPECTIVE COMMONWEALTH RELATIONSHIP. TO THAT END, SERVICES OF ALL OFFICIAL MEDIA INCLUDING RADIO, T.V., PRESS AND DISTRIBUTION CHANNELS, PRINT SHOP, AND TRANSLATORS ARE TO BE MADE AVAILABLE WITHOUT CHARGE ON REQUEST FROM THE PLEBISCITE COMMISSIONER. IN CONNECTION WITH THE PERFORMANCE OF ANY SUCH DUTIES PERSONNEL ARE TO BE GRANTED ADMINISTRATIVE LEAVE AS MAY BE REQUIRED.

MR. CANHAM, ACCOMPANIED BY HIS WIFE, IS SCHEDULED TO ARRIVE ON SAIPAN ON CONTINENTAL AIR MICRONESIA FLIGHT 641 AT 5:00PM ON FRIDAY, APRIL 18. RESERVATIONS HAVE BEEN MADE FOR MR. AND MRS. CANHAM AT THE SAIPAN CONTINENTAL HOTEL.

A SPECIAL MISSION FROM THE TRUSTEESHIP COUNCIL OF THE UNITED NATIONS IS ALSO EXPECTED TO BE PRESENT IN THE NORTHERN MARIANAS FOR A FEW DAYS TO OBSERVE THE PLEBISCITE AND AS MUCH OF THE PRELIMINARY RELATED ACTIVITY AS TIME PERMITS. YOU WILL BE ADVISED AS SOON AS POSSIBLE OF THE MISSION'S COMPOSITION AND ITINERARY. THE MISSION IS EXPECTED TO TAKE CARE OF ITS OWN EXPENSES, BUT YOU WILL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR ANY NECESSARY LOGISTICAL SUPPORT.

IN KEEPING WITH THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT FOR THE CONDUCT OF THIS IMPORTANT EXERCISE IN SELF-DETERMINATION, I KNOW I CAN COUNT ON YOUR FULL SUPPORT. WE SHALL KEEP YOU APPRISED OF FURTHER DETAILS AS AVAILABLE AND WILL APPRECIATE YOUR STAYING CLOSELY IN TOUCH WITH US ON THIS SUBJECT.

SINCERELY YOURS,
SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR

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