

File Plebiscite

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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

Old Executive Office Building
Room 361
Washington, D.C. 20506

April 29, 1975

Honorable Pedro A. Tenorio
Member, Marianas Political
Status Commission
Saipan, Mariana Islands 96950

Dear Senator Tenorio:

I am authorized by the President and by the Secretary of the Interior to respond to your message of 23 April, 1975 as follows:

The Commonwealth Covenant which was signed by the Marianas Political Status Commission and by the United States on February 15, 1975 will be submitted to the people of the Northern Marianas without modification. The next step is to give the people the free choice on June 17, 1975 to accept or reject the Commonwealth Covenant and political union with the United States which their duly elected and appointed representatives negotiated pursuant to their mandate.

The United States regards the signed Covenant as not open to revision, amendment or renegotiation. If it is approved by 55% of the valid votes cast the Covenant will then be submitted to the Congress of the United States in exactly the same form as it is being presented to the people of the Northern Marianas to be either approved or disapproved.

To repeat, the signed Covenant is to be presented to the people of the Northern Mariana Islands and the Congress of the United States for a yes or no vote in its entirety as it now stands. As you know it is the result of more than 2 years of careful study and review and patient negotiation. The positions taken by the United States as reflected in the Covenant were arrived at only after careful consultation within and between the Executive and Legislative Branches of the United States Government and only after full consideration of the views of the Marianas Political Status Commission and the interests of the people of the Northern Mariana Islands. The Commonwealth Covenant represents the maximum accommodation the United States can make in its effort to satisfy the

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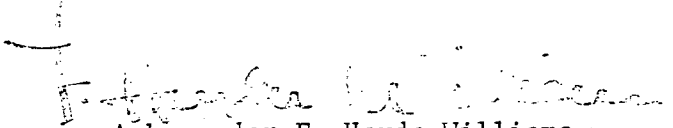
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expressed desires of the people of the Northern Mariana Islands for self-government in a close and enduring political relationship with the United States. There is no reason to believe that further negotiations would result in an offer of Commonwealth status more favorable to the Northern Marianas than that contained in the signed Covenant.

If the Commonwealth Covenant is rejected by the people in the June 17 plebiscite the United States expects that the Northern Marianas will remain a part of Micronesia and that they will seek an alternative future political status in political union with the other districts of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands. If the Marianas people prefer a common future with the other districts the United States will respect these wishes and will proceed accordingly as it moves toward the termination of the Trusteeship Agreement.

The questions for which you have requested answers were thoroughly covered during the course of the negotiations. Detailed answers are, however, in preparation and will be forwarded soonest. I hope that the explanation will provide an authoritative basis for an understanding of the issues raised by your message.

Sincerely yours,


Ambassador F. Haydn Williams
The President's Personal Representative
for Micronesian Status Negotiations

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