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E.O. 11652:NA  
TAGS: PFQR, TO  
SUBJECT: MARIANAS PLEBISCITE  
DOTA NUMBER 170-TT  
PASS TO PLEBISCITE COMMISSIONER CANHAM FROM ACTING DOTA  
FOR ACTING SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR  
COMTWELVE PASS AMBASSADOR WILLIAMS

DEAR MR. CANHAM:

I HAVE RECEIVED YOUR MESSAGE OF MAY 9 AND HASTEN TO SEND YOU THIS WORD OF OUR DEEP APPRECIATION FOR THE WORK YOU ARE DOING IN FULFILLMENT OF YOUR SIGNIFICANT MISSION. I HAVE BEEN ESPECIALLY PLEASED TO LEARN OF THE APPOINTMENT OF THE VOTER REGISTRATION BOARD AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF YOUR PLEBISCITE ADVISORY COMMITTEE.

THE PROGRESS YOU HAVE REPORTED IN THE ACTUAL REGISTRATION OF VOTERS FOR THE PLEBISCITE IS PARTICULARLY NOTEWORTHY GIVEN THE TIME FRAME IN WHICH YOU HAVE BEEN WORKING. IT WOULD APPEAR THAT THIS IMPORTANT PHASE OF THE PLEBISCITE PROCESS WILL BE COMPLETED WELL BEFORE THE DEADLINE DATE AND THIS SHOULD FACILITATE THE BROAD AND FREE EXPRESSION OF VIEWS WHICH WE ALL ARE SEEKING IN THE PLEBISCITE ON JUNE 17.

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WE WERE ALSO PLEASED TO LEARN THAT THE COMMONWEALTH COVENANT HAS NOW BEEN TRANSLATED INTO THE THREE LANGUAGES WITH COPIES TO BE DISTRIBUTED TO EACH FAMILY IN THE NORTHERN MARIANAS. THIS BASIC DOCUMENT ALONG WITH THE TRANSLATION OF THE TECHNICAL AGREEMENT WILL GO FAR TOWARD ASSURING AN INFORMED ELECTORATE BY MAKING AVAILABLE TO ONE AND ALL THE EXACT LANGUAGE OF THE AGREEMENTS THAT HAVE BEEN REACHED.

AT THE SAME TIME WE WERE VERY PLEASED TO LEARN OF YOUR INTENTIONS TO PREPARE AND DISTRIBUTE IN THE THREE LANGUAGES A "COVENANT PRIMER" AND A SET OF "QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS" AS PART OF YOUR ONGOING PLEBISCITE EDUCATION PROGRAM. WE BELIEVE THAT THIS OBJECTIVE PLEBISCITE EDUCATION PROGRAM BEARING THE MARK AND AUTHORITY OF YOUR OFFICE IS OF VITAL IMPORTANCE TO THE VOTER IN VIEW OF THE EXCESSIVE PARTISAN, INACCURATE AND DISTORTED INFORMATION AND INTERPRETATIONS WHICH ARE BEING OFFERED TO PEOPLE IN ORDER TO SWING THEIR VOTES ONE WAY OR ANOTHER.

AS YOU KNOW THE COVENANT IS A HIGHLY COMPLEX DOCUMENT WHICH WAS CAREFULLY DRAWN UP OVER A PERIOD OF TWO YEARS. YOUR PLANNED PUBLICATIONS AND RADIO/TV PROGRAMS SHOULD BE HIGHLY EFFECTIVE IN EXPLAINING THE PROVISIONS OF THE COVENANT IN LANGUAGE MORE EASILY UNDERSTOOD BY THE AVERAGE CITIZEN. CERTAINLY THE VOTER IN THE PLEBISCITE DESERVES A CLEAR, FAIR AND SIMPLE EXPLANATION OF THE MEANING OF THE COVENANT AND ALSO ANSWERS TO THEIR QUESTIONS. I AM SURE THAT THE PLEBISCITE EDUCATION PROGRAM AND THE EFFORTS OF YOUR STAFF WILL MORE THAN MEET THESE REQUIREMENTS.

IN THIS REGARD WE ARE AWARE THAT QUESTIONS HAVE BEEN ASKED ABOUT THE MEANING OF THE "NO" VOTE ON THE BALLOT. THE WORDING OF THE "NO" ALTERNATIVE WAS VERY CAREFULLY WORKED OUT AFTER CONSIDERATION OF THE VIEWS AND WISHES OF THE MPSC AND THE UNITED NATIONS TRUSTEESHIP COUNCIL THAT IT SHOULD BE MADE CLEAR TO THE VOTERS THAT THEY HAD ALTERNATIVES AND THAT A "NO" VOTE WOULD MEAN THAT VARIOUS OPTION WOULD BE OPEN TO THEM IF THEY REJECTED THE

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COMMONWEALTH COVENANT.

YOU MAY FIND THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS BY THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT AS TO WHAT A "NO" VOTE MEANS HELPFUL IN YOUR PLEBISCITE EDUCATION PROGRAM.

- A "NO" VOTE MEANS THAT THE VOTER DISAPPROVES POLITICAL UNION BETWEEN THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS AND THE U.S. AS PROVIDED FOR BY THE COMMONWEALTH COVENANT.

- A "NO" VOTE BY MORE THAN 45 PER CENT OF THE VOTES CAST MEANS THAT THE COMMONWEALTH COVENANT WHICH PROVIDES FOR POLITICAL UNION BETWEEN THE NORTHERN MARIANAS AND THE U.S. WILL BE REJECTED.

- A "NO" VOTE BY MORE THAN 45 PER CENT OF THE VOTES CAST MEANS THAT THE STATUS OF THE MARIANAS DISTRICT WILL REMAIN UNCHANGED AND THE MARIANAS WILL HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO PARTICIPATE WITH THE OTHER DISTRICTS IN DETERMINING TOGETHER THE FUTURE POLITICAL STATUS OF MICRONESIA.

- IF MORE THAN 45 PER CENT OF THE VOTES CAST ON THE COMMONWEALTH COVENANT IN THE PLEBISCITE ARE "NO", THE PEOPLE OF THE NORTHERN MARIANAS WILL BE ABLE TO EXPRESS THEIR PREFERENCE FOR OTHER FORMS OF FUTURE POLITICAL STATUS FOR MICRONESIA IN THE FORTHCOMING GENERAL REFERENDUM TO BE HELD THROUGHOUT THE TRUST TERRITORY.

PLEASE FEEL FREE TO CALL ON US AS YOU DEEM PROPER FOR ANY ASSISTANCE WE CAN PROVIDE AS YOU MOVE INTO THE FINAL MONTH OF YOUR WORK. WE ARE DELIGHTED THAT YOU FIND IT PERSONALLY REWARDING AND ARE ENJOYING THE EXPERIENCE OF BEING ON THOSE LOVELY ISLANDS.

WITH MUCH APPRECIATION AND ALL GOOD WISHES.

SINCERELY YOURS,  
KENT FRIZZELL

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ACTING SECRETARY

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