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May 12, 1975

MEMORANDUM FOR MARIANAS POLITICAL STATUS COMMISSION FILE

Subject: Conversation with Pangelinan and White

Leonard and I called Pangelinan and White from the Interior Department today. The highlights of the conversation were the following: 4700 persons have been registered to vote so far; very few outsiders are attempting to register now, though they are preparing for the onslaught later; the Plebiscite Commissioner is doing very well; the major issues are the 16 reasons to vote against the Covenant propounded by Rasa, and fears about the military, including H-bombs and nerve gas; a lawsuit by Micronesian Legal Services to stop the plebiscite on behalf of the Carolinian Association seems likely; they are not concerned with establishing a land corporation because preparing for the plebiscite takes a higher priority, and the return of public land does not seem to be an issue; Pangelinan, Tenorio and Palacios will appear before the United Nations later this month on behalf of the Commission, and Borja, Santos and Camacho may join them there; Pangelinan will be here long enough to participate in whatever media events Leonard's contacts at Interior can arrange.

I undertook to do the following:

1. Make hotel reservations for Palacios and Tenorio at the Park Central Hotel beginning on May 27.
2. Hold time open for meeting with the people who are to testify before the UN as well as Jim White on May 27.
3. Prepare draft statements for Pangelinan and Palacios for the UN, following up on last year's statements, reviewing the Covenant, and describing the work of the Commission with respect to political education.

Jim Leonard agreed to prepare several short economic pieces which Pangelinan requested, and to arrange for hotel reservations for the group in New York beginning on the 29th of May.

Following the conversation Leonard and I spoke to Adrian deGraffenried and Chuck Schmitz (Jim Wilson's replacement). I suggested to them that the Plebiscite Commissioner

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should take the leading role as the defendant in any suit brought to enjoin the plebiscite, and that he should be represented by counsel from the United States government, independent of the persons responsible for the negotiations. They agreed to consider this suggestion. I told them that we would be prepared to assist in whatever way we can in framing the arguments supporting the wording of the ballot and opposing arguments based on preemption by the Congress of Micronesia or the upcoming referendum throughout the Trust Territory.


Michael S. Helfer

cc: Howard Willens
Jay Lapin
Eleanor O'Hara
Jim Leonard

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