

PHILLIP BURTON
9TH DISTRICT, CALIFORNIA

RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, D.C.

COMMITTEES
EDUCATION AND LABOR
INTERIOR AND INSULAR AFFAIRS

DISTRICT OFFICE:
450 GOLDEN GATE AVENUE
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA
PHONE: 356-4862

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

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May 16, 1975

Honorable Pedro A. Tenorio
Congress of Micronesia
Capitol Hill
Saipan, Mariana Islands 96950

Amb MVTrent
Schmitz Archer
Capt de Graffenried
Col Smith

Dear Senator Tenorio:

Although I have repeatedly expressed my strong determination that the plebiscite on the Covenant be a free and open expression of the will of the Marianas people, uninterfered with and uninfluenced by outside forces, I feel I must clarify some of the erroneous statements being made about the Covenant.

- 1) I shall support and respect, as will the members of our Interior Committee, the will of the Marianas people as expressed by the plebiscite. This pledge includes, of course, support of the Covenant if it is approved by the people of the Marianas.
- 2) I support the Covenant provision with respect to restricting American ability to purchase land in the Northern Marianas. This provision will not be changed by the Congress.
- 3) Under the United States Constitution it is our Executive Branch and not the Congress that has the authority to negotiate agreements such as the Covenant. Any suggestion that I or any member of the Congress would negotiate for the American side in the event the Covenant is not approved, is contrary to fact.
- 4) Congressional action, as with the plebiscite itself, will be a total acceptance or rejection of the Covenant as drawn up by the United States-Marianas negotiations which have been completed. The Congress will not alter the Covenant.

Sincerely,

Phillip Burton

PHILLIP BURTON, M.C.
Chairman, Subcommittee on
Territorial and Insular Affairs

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