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MARIANAS POLITICAL STATUS COMMISSION  
P.O. BOX 977  
SAIPAN, MARIANAS ISLANDS 96950

May 29, 1975

The Honorable James Murray  
President  
U.N. Trusteeship Council  
United Nations  
New York, New York

Dear Mr. President:

I am taking the liberty on behalf of the members of the Marianas Political Status Commission to extend to you and the members of the Trusteeship Council our appreciation for the honor and the opportunity to appear as petitioners before the Trusteeship Council. We appreciate also the many courtesies and assistance extended to our delegation, in particular, by Mr. Girma Abebe, Secretary for the Trusteeship Council.

The members of the Commission would like to take this opportunity to correct the record on certain remarks made by the Honorable Wilfred Kendall, Special Representative for the Congress of Micronesia which was presented to the Trusteeship Council on Tuesday, May 27, 1975.

In his remarks Mr. Kendall stated:

"It was apparent that the U.S. had made a commitment to the Marianas Islands District to provide for the return of public lands in that District as a precondition to the signing of an agreement providing for a separate political status for the Marianas ..."

This statement is incorrect. As a matter of record the Marianas Political Status Commission, on February 15, 1975, signed the Covenant to establish a Commonwealth in close association with the United States of America. At the time of this signing, as is true to the present, there has been no return of public lands to the Marianas District. There has been no precondition or prior promise made by the United States to return public lands to the Marianas District. Two years ago the Marianas District Legislature joined with the other District Legislatures in Micronesia in expressing the desire that land held in trust for the people of Micronesia be returned to our people. When the United States issued its policy to return public lands to the people of Micronesia, the Marianas District Legislature adopted a resolution endorsing the use of a Secretarial Order

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to establish the guideline for the return of such public lands. This position by the Legislature was made only after the Congress of Micronesia had failed during two Congressional sessions to enact enabling legislation to establish the guidelines for the various Districts to receive the public land. For the information of the Council the public lands held in trust by the Administering Authority is perhaps the most serious issue faced by the people of the Marianas. The largest land area of any District in Micronesia is the Marianas Island District of which 90% is held in trust by the Administering Authority. As a result of our serious interest for the return of public lands the District Legislature as well as the Marianas Political Status Commission reaffirm its desire on behalf of the people of the Marianas for the immediate return of all public lands. The attempts made by the Congress of Micronesia to establish a return of public lands were contrary to the policy statement issued in reference to public lands by the United States and consequently could not be approved by the United States. The position of the Marianas District is that we are in agreement with the intent and spirit of the policy statement of the United States Government in reference to public lands and is the most expeditious manner in which public lands can be returned to the Marianas. At the present time pursuant to the Secretarial Order ordering the return of public lands the people of the Marianas have now enacted appropriate legislation creating a legal entity to receive these lands. The legal entity, a corporation, is now in the process of being developed and when it is in a position to receive these lands we expect the land to be returned forthwith.

With respect to the allegation of Mr. Kendall that:

"... Ambassador Franklin Haydn Williams ... promised the people of the Marianas a \$1.5 million bonus ... as soon as the Covenant is approved ..."

This statement is totally erroneous. If Mr. Kendall had read the Covenant he would be aware that the \$1.5 million was not a bonus but was in fact a negotiated aspect of the Covenant itself. These are funds that are to be made available to the new Government of the Northern Marianas during the transition period when and if the Covenant is approved by the people of the Marianas and the United States Government. This amount was negotiated over a year ago as additional funds necessary to properly develop background material necessary for the establishment of an orderly transition of government for the Marianas and for the purpose of establishing the necessary planning and development programs for the new Commonwealth government. I wish to put on the record that at no time did Ambassador Williams or any official of the United States Government make any promises to the people of the Marianas either for the return of public lands or the \$1.5 million as a precondition for the signing of the Marianas Status Agreement.

We are happy to note that Mr. Kendall and the Congress of Micronesia have finally publicly acknowledged what we have known to be a fact since 1973, that the Congress of Micronesia's negotiations with the United States in reference to a free association have, according to Mr. Kendall

"arrived at a dead end; the negotiations have failed, and, as Ceasar said the dye is cast."

We are further glad to note that for the first time since the start of negotiations by the Congress of Micronesia that they are apparently desirous of possibly looking to the alternative of a closer association with the United States. This has always of course been the position of the Marianas but until Mr. Kendall's statement close association has never been a viable alternative in the minds of the Congress of Micronesia. We, the Marianas Political Status Commission, can only hope that in some small way we have served to assist the Congress of Micronesia in developing a thought process for the other five Districts of the Trust Territories which could also include a relationship similar to the one we have negotiated.

Sincerely yours,

Edward DLG Pangelinan  
Chairman

cc: Ambassador F. Haydn Williams