

June 12, 1975

NRD/LCardwell

Request by Ambassador Williams for a very fast OMB clearance of legislation to approve Marianas Islands Commonwealth

Mr. Mitchell

As outlined in more detail on the attached memoranda, we have been working at staff level with the Ambassador's office to develop the legislative package for the President to transmit to the Congress soon after the June 17 plebiscite which probably will result in the final approval by the Marianas of the covenant as negotiated.

The Ambassador has been keeping House and Senate Committee members informed of the steps toward final approval of the commonwealth. In such a meeting yesterday, House Interior Subcommittee Chairman Phillip Burton (D, Calif.) requested that the legislation to approve the commonwealth be transmitted by the President to the Congress in time for final congressional action on it before the July 4 recess.

To try to meet this timetable, the Ambassador's office is now trying to finalize the legislative proposal and transmittal letter by tomorrow afternoon. This is a very much accelerated schedule and at staff level we have advised the Ambassador that it would not be possible for OMB to give formal clearance for this legislative package by tomorrow. However, final clearance will need to be made quickly and should not be difficult to achieve since the detailed provisions of the covenant itself, which are now proposed to be enacted into law, all have been subject to detailed review and interagency approvals during negotiations during the past two years.

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