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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 17, 1975

AMBASSADOR F. HAYDN WILLIAMS, THE
PRESIDENT'S PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVE FOR
MICRONESIAN STATUS NEGOTIATIONS COMMENTS ON THE
DECISIVE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS
VOTE IN FAVOR OF U.S. COMMONWEALTH STATUS

I am naturally pleased that the people of the Northern Mariana Islands have in a free exercise of their right of self-determination voted overwhelmingly in favor of the Commonwealth Covenant and political union with the United States. This popular expression of support for and endorsement of the work of the Marianas Political Status Commission and the Marianas District Legislature must be most gratifying to those in the Marianas who have labored long and hard for a new political status for the Northern Mariana Islands. I send to them my congratulations for a job well done.

Those of us on the American side who had the privilege of participating in the negotiations leading to the signing of the Covenant also take pleasure in knowing that our efforts combined with those of the Marianas Political Status Commission have stood the test of public examination and debate and the free ballot box. With regard to the latter, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Plebiscite Commissioner, Mr. Erwin Canham, and his staff for the essential role they played in the basic planning and administering of the Plebiscite and for the wisdom, understanding and integrity they brought to bear on this process.

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Most of all, I would like to take this special opportunity to thank all of the people of the Northern Marianas for all the courtesies and kindnesses they have shown me and the members of my delegation during every phase of the status talks and on many public occasions. I wish all of the people of the Northern Marianas success as they now join in common tasks for the common good, tasks designed to further the well being of all of the citizens of the Northern Mariana Islands as they plan for the years ahead.