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OMB

June 17, 1975

NR/LDCardwell

Formal OMB clearance of draft bill for congressional approval of Mariana Islands Commonwealth

Messrs. Hyde, Casbill, Sitrin, Sanders, McOmber

1. The plebescite was held yesterday and resulted in a strong vote of approval for Commonwealth status as negotiated. Of the total registered voters, 85% participated and voted as follows:

<u>Island</u>	<u>In favor of Commonwealth</u>	<u>Opposed to Commonwealth</u>
Saipan	3,072	912
Tinian	180	62
Rota	366	12
Northern Islands	30	16
	3,648 (78%)*	1,002 (22%)*

*Excludes 200 absentee ballots not yet counted.

2. With the plebescite completed, Ambassador Williams is pressing for transmittal of the legislation to Congress by no later than next Monday, June 23. He already is in direct contact with NSC staff (W. R. Smyser, Jack Froebe, and Jay Taylor) pushing for clearance of the bill by the White House without requesting clearance by OMB under A-19 procedures.

I have talked to both Jay Taylor (NSC) and Adrian de Graffenried (Legal Advisor, Office of Micronesian Status Negotiations (OMSN) with the past day and reiterated to them the need for the Ambassador to request and obtain formal OMB clearance for the legislative package (eg., draft bill, presidential transmittal letter, and section by section analysis of the Commonwealth Covenant). Both of them said they would be sure the Ambassador understood the A-19 requirements.

3. Adrian de Fraffenried indicated this morning that --

- Interior Committee staff reaction was favorable on the revised option B which I circulated on June 12.
- In light of Justice and other comments, revised option B has been modified (copy with changes attached).
- The section by section analysis of the Covenant is under review by the Washington based law firm (Wilmer, Cutler and Pickering) who are serving as legal advisors to the Marianas Political Status Commission. Mr. de Graffenried indicates that the firm

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is arguing for different interpretations than written by OMSN on some sections of the Covenant.

- A White House press release on the outcome of the plebescite is likely to be issued tomorrow.
- 4. I will continue to work at staff level to try to be sure the draft legislation does come to OMB for formal clearance. If it does, views on it should be requested from the following agencies:

Defense, esp. Article VIII of Covenant
State , esp. Article IX of Covenant
Interior, whole bill
Justice, whole bill
Treasury, esp. Article VI of Covenant
Labor, esp. Section 502 of Covenant
HEW exp. Section 502, Section 606(b), 606(c) of the
Covenant
FRB, exp. Section 502(a)(1) of the Covenant
Transportation (Coast Guard) Section 502(b) of the
Covenant

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cc:
Mr. Sasaki

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