

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

Old Executive Office Building
Room 361
Washington, D.C. 20506
June 17, 1975

MPSC ✓
Cov in Cong 01
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The President
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

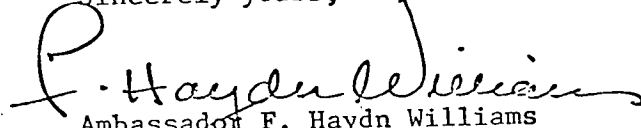
Today, June 17, 1975, the people of the Northern Mariana Islands voted in a plebiscite to approve the Commonwealth status as set forth in the "Covenant to Establish a Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands in Political Union with the United States of America" which you instructed me to negotiate on behalf of our government. I am happy to report that preliminary results of the voting indicate that the Covenant was approved by over 75% of those participating in the plebiscite.

This plebiscite represents the capstone to more than twenty years of local efforts to become a permanent part of the United States and meets our obligations to promote self-determination under the terms of the United Nations Trusteeship Agreement. The plebiscite also clears the way for presentation of the Covenant to the Congress for its approval.

I would now like to respectfully request that the Covenant be submitted to the Congress as speedily as possible in order to accommodate what I understand to be the desires of the Congress to act on the Covenant before its August recess and also in order to minimize the time during which the Marianas will remain administratively a part of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands.

Enclosed with this letter are a proposed public statement for you to issue on the results of the plebiscite, a draft letter from you to the Congress transmitting the Covenant, and a draft Joint Congressional Resolution approving the Covenant. These documents are submitted for your consideration with the thought that upon your approval they could be put into final form and dispatched to the Congress as soon as the results of the plebiscite have been certified by the Plebiscite Commissioner, Mr. Erwin D. Canham. I remain

Sincerely yours,


Ambassador F. Haydn Williams
The President's Personal Representative
for Micronesian Status Negotiations

Enclosures

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Dear Mr. President (and Speaker)

I am transmitting herewith a proposed Joint Resolution which would provide Congressional approval of the "Covenant to Establish A Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands in Political Union with the United States of America".

On June 17, 1975, the people of the Northern Mariana Islands of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands overwhelmingly approved the Covenant in a United Nations observed plebiscite. This historic act of self-determination was the capstone of more than twenty years of continuous effort on the part of the people of the Marianas District to enter into close union with the United States. This action has now cleared the way for the submission of the Covenant to the Congress of the United States for its formal consideration.

The passage by the Congress of the Joint Resolution approving the Northern Mariana Islands Commonwealth Covenant will set into motion a series of progressive steps which will result in: the administrative separation of the Northern Mariana Islands from the Government of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands; the adoption of a locally drafted and popularly approved Constitution for the Northern Mariana Islands; and finally, following the termination of the Trusteeship Agreement for all of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, the conferral of a territory of the United States Commonwealth status on the Northern Mariana Islands as

AS provided for by the Covenant.

The Covenant Agreement I am presenting to the Congress today

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was signed on February 15, 1975, by the Marianas Political Status Commission for the Northern Mariana Islands and by Ambassador F. Haydn Williams for the United States. It is the result of more than two years of negotiations between the United States and a broadly representative delegation from the Northern Mariana Islands. Prior to and during the talks the people of the Northern Mariana Islands actively participated in open discussions of the various aspects of the proposed relationship. Likewise, the Executive Branch consulted frequently with members of the U.S. Congress regarding the progress of the negotiations and actively sought the advice and guidance of the Congress, much of which is reflected in the final provisions of the Covenant.

Following the signing, the Covenant was submitted to the Marianas District Legislature for its review and approval. On February 20, 1975, the elected representatives of the people of the Northern Mariana Islands through the District Legislature unanimously approved the Covenant and requested the United States to arrange for an early Plebiscite. The Plebiscite was carried out in accordance with a Secretarial Order issued by the Secretary of the Interior on April 10, 1975. It was conducted under the supervision of my personal representative, Mr. Erwin D. Canham whom I appointed to serve as Plebiscite Commissioner. On June __, 1975, Commissioner Canham certified that ___% of the people in the Marianas who voted had approved the Covenant.

The next step in the approval process is action by the U.S. Congress. The enclosed Joint Resolution, when approved, will provide the authority to begin the gradual and progressive implementation of the terms of the Covenant. This process hopefully will have been completed by 1981 when we expect the Trusteeship over all of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands will have been terminated following a similar act of self-determination by the other districts of the TTPI.

*insert
attached* →

I urge the Senate and the House to take early, positive action to approve the Northern Mariana Islands Commonwealth Covenant which will thereupon become law in accordance with its provisions. Favorable consideration by the Congress will represent one more important step ^{in the} ~~toward~~ fulfillment of the obligations which the United States undertook when the Congress approved by joint resolution the Trusteeship Agreement on July 18, 1947. Congressional approval of the freely expressed wish of the people of the Northern Mariana Islands also will enable them to move toward their long sought goal of self-government in political union with the United States. The final realization of this desired goal will be ^{an} ~~a~~ historic event for the people of the Northern Mariana Islands and for the United States--an event to which I look forward with great pleasure.

The President

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LC:mlong

FAW/AS^{OK}/1111

6/20/75: As taken over phone from Larry Cardwell 9:30 a.m.

OMB proposal for insert to page 3 preceding last paragraph
of the draft letter of the President to the U.S. Congress.

*LC
OK
delete* [and reflect reasonable compromises by both sides] I want to call your attention particularly to the financial assistance provisions in light of the new procedures established by the Congressional Budget Act. Article VII of the Resolution specifically constitutes a commitment and pledge of the full faith and credit of the United States for the payment, as well as an authorization for the appropriation, of guaranteed levels of direct grant assistance totaling fourteen million dollars per year, in 1975 constant dollars, to the Government of the Northern Mariana Islands for each of the first seven full fiscal years after approval by the Federal Government of the locally adopted Constitution. The same amount would be paid in future years unless changed by the Congress. A pro rata share of the fourteen million dollars is authorized to be appropriated for the first partial fiscal year after the Constitution has been approved.

Article VIII of the Resolution authorizes the appropriation of nineteen million five hundred twenty thousand six hundred dollars to be paid to the Government of the Northern Mariana Islands for the 50 year lease, with the option of renewing the

the lease for another 50 years at no cost, of approximately eighteen thousand one hundred eighty two acres of lands and waters immediately adjacent thereto.

In addition to these specific authorization for appropriations, Article VII authorizes the Government of the Northern Mariana Islands to receive the full range of federal programs and services available to the territories of the United States, as well as the proceeds of numerous federal taxes, duties, and fees. — the same treatment afforded to the territory of Guam.

Joint Resolution Approving the
"Covenant to Establish a Commonwealth of the
Northern Mariana Islands in Political
Union with the United States of America"

WHEREAS, the United States is the Administering Authority of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands under the terms of for the Trusteeship Agreement for the former Japanese mandated islands entered ~~into~~ ^{between} by the United States ~~with~~ ^{and} the Security Council of the United Nations on April 2, 1947, ^{which was} ~~and~~ approved by the United States on July 18, 1947; and

WHEREAS, the United States, in accordance with the Trusteeship Agreement and the Charter of the United Nations, has assumed the obligation to promote the development of the peoples of the Trust Territory towards self-government or independence as may be appropriate to the particular circumstances of the Trust Territory and its peoples and the freely expressed^d wishes of the peoples concerned; and

WHEREAS the United States, in response to the desires of the people of the Northern Mariana Islands clearly expressed over the past twenty years through public petition and referendum, and in response to its own obligations under the Trusteeship Agreement to promote self-determination, entered into political status negotiations with representatives of the people of the Northern Mariana Islands; and

WHEREAS, on February 15, 1975, a "Covenant to Establish A Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands in Political Union with the United States of America" was signed by the

Marianas Political Status Commission for the people of the Northern Mariana Islands and by the President's Personal Representative, Ambassador F. Haydn Williams, for the United States of America, following which the Covenant was approved by the Mariana Islands District Legislature on February 20, 1975 and by the people of the Northern Mariana Islands in a plebiscite held on June 17, 1975: Now be it

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That the Covenant to Establish A Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands in Political Union with the United States of America is approved as follows:

/Full Commonwealth Covenant would be copied in the body of the Joint Resolution/