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 R 200233Z JUN 75  
 FM SECSTATE WASHDC  
 TO RUEHBAC/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 7819  
 RUDTC/AMEMBASSY LONDON 9901  
 RIJMVG/AMEMBASSY MANILA 6994  
 RUEHMO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW 5358  
 RUFNPS/AMEMBASSY PARIS 7151  
 RUMJPG/USLO PEKING 5659  
 RUEHBCU/AMCONSUL PORT MORESBY 0408  
 RUAKOHA/AMEMBASSY SEOUL 0254  
 RUEHBAZ/AMEMBASSY SUVA 4748  
 RUEHTP/AMEMBASSY TAIPEI 0463  
 RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 2647  
 RUEHBAZ/AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON 1170  
 RUEHDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 3118  
 RUMJDH/AMCONSUL HONG KONG 1539  
 RUHQHQA/CINCPAC HONOLULU HI  
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TAGS: TO, PGOV

SUBJECT: NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS PLEBISCITE ON US COMMON-WEALTH STATUS

REF: A-1321 OF FEB 28, 1975

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

~~HICOMTERPACIS FOR RECOG AND STATUS LNO~~

FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF BACKGROUND FACT SHEET ON UN-OBSERVED PLEBISCITE HELD IN NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS ON JUNE 17,

BEGIN TEXT:

NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS VOTES DECISIVELY IN FAVOR OF US COMMONWEALTH STATUS

WITH BUT A FEW ABSENTEE BALLOTS TO COUNT, THE PEOPLE OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS IN THE WESTERN PACIFIC HAVE VOTED OVERWHELMINGLY IN FAVOR OF POLITICAL UNION WITH THE UNITED

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STATES IN A UNITED NATIONS OBSERVED PLEBISCITE HELD ON JUNE 17, 1975,

ACCORDING TO A REPORT FROM SAIPAN FROM ERWIN D. CANHAM, THE PLEBISCITE COMMISSIONER, MORE THAN 75 OF THOSE CASTING BALLOTS VOTED YESTERDAY TO APPROVE A "COVENANT TO ESTABLISH A COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS" IN POLITICAL UNION WITH AND UNDER THE SOVEREIGNTY OF THE UNITED STATES. THIS COVENANT, NEGOTIATED OVER THE PAST TWO YEARS, WAS SIGNED ON FEBRUARY 15, 1975 BY THE MARIANAS POLITICAL STATUS COMMISSION FOR THE MARIANAS AND BY THE PRESIDENT'S PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVE, AMBASSADOR F. HAYDN WILLIAMS, FOR THE UNITED STATES,

THE COMMONWEALTH COVENANT WILL NOW BE SUBMITTED TO THE CONGRESS BY PRESIDENT FORD FOR THE APPROVAL OF BOTH THE HOUSE AND THE SENATE. IF APPROVED THE NORTHERN MARIANAS, MADE UP OF 14 ISLANDS LYING NORTH OF GUAM, WILL BECOME A SELF-GOVERNING AMERICAN COMMONWEALTH UNDER ITS OWN CONSTITUTION, WITH ITS OWN ELECTED EXECUTIVE AND LEGISLATURE AND ITS OWN LOCAL COURTS. ITS 14,000 INHABITANTS WILL BECOME AMERICAN CITIZENS WHEN THE NORTHERN MARIANAS BECOME A COMMONWEALTH UPON THE TERMINATION OF THE EXISTING TRUSTEESHIP AGREEMENT EXCEPT FOR THOSE WHO PREFER TO BECOME NATIONALS OF THE UNITED STATES,

THE JUNE 17 VOTE IN THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS WAS PRECEDED BY AN IMPARTIAL PLEBISCITE EDUCATION PROGRAM UNDER THE DIRECTION OF A PLEBISCITE COMMISSIONER, WITH THE COVENANT AND OTHER DOCUMENTS TRANSLATED INTO CHAMORRO AND CAROLINIAN FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE NON-ENGLISH SPEAKING POPULATION. THE PROPONENTS AND OPPONENTS OF THE COMMONWEALTH PROPOSAL WERE GIVEN EQUAL TIME ON THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT RADIO AND THE SAIPAN COMMERCIAL TELEVISION STATION. VIGOROUS CAMPAIGNING WAS ALSO CONDUCTED FROM VILLAGES TO VILLAGE ON THE THREE MAJOR ISLANDS OF SAIPAN, TINIAN AND ROTA,

ON ANOTHER JUNE DAY, THIRTY-ONE YEARS AGO, IN THE COURSE OF A WORLD-WIDE WAR, AMERICAN FORCES STORMED ASHORE ON SAIPAN. YESTERDAY, A GENERATION LATER, IN AN OPEN ACT OF SELF-DETERMINATION, THE PEOPLE WENT TO THE POLLS AND APPROVED THE COVENANT LEADING TO AMERICAN CITIZENSHIP AND SOVEREIGNTY. THIS ACT MARKED THE END OF A LONG QUEST FOR UNION WITH THE UNITED STATES. SOME TWENTY-FIVE YEARS HAVE ELAPSED SINCE THE FIRST RESOLUTIONS AND PETITIONS WERE PASSED AND CIRCULATED, REQUESTING THE UNITED STATES TO MAKE THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS A US POSSESSION OR TERRITORY. IN THE INTERVENING YEARS, THROUGH REFERENDUMS AND LEGISLATIVE ACTIONS, THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS CONTINUED TO APPEAL TO THE UNITED NATIONS AND TO THE UNITED STATES TO TERMINATE THE UN TRUSTEESHIP IN FAVOR OF PERMANENT POLITICAL ASSOCIATION WITH THE UNITED STATES. THE COVENANT WHICH WAS FINALLY AGREED TO AND APPROVED YES-

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TERDAY BY THE PEOPLE IS SIMILAR IN MANY IMPORTANT RESPECTS TO THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT RELATIONSHIPS WITH GUAM AND WITH PUERTO RICO. THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS WILL BE SELF-GOVERNING WITH RESPECT TO LOCAL AFFAIRS AS IS THE CASE WITH THE OTHER TERRITORIES. SIMILARLY CERTAIN BASIC PROVISIONS OF THE UNITED STATES CONSTITUTION WILL APPLY. FEDERAL LAWS APPLICABLE TO GUAM AND PUERTO RICO WILL ALSO APPLY IN THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS. FEDERAL TAXES WILL BE COLLECTED IN THE NORTHERN MARIANAS BUT WILL BE REBATED TO THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT AS THEY ARE IN GUAM.

THE FINANCIAL PROVISIONS OF THE COVENANT CALL FOR FEDERAL ASSISTANCE TO THE NEW GOVERNMENT OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS FOR GENERAL BUDGETARY PROGRAMS AND FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT LOANS. FOR THE FIRST SEVEN YEARS THE TOTAL OF GRANT ASSISTANCE WILL BE \$14 MILLION ANNUALLY AND AFTER THAT PERIOD OF TIME ANNUAL SUPPORT WILL CONTINUE AT THE SAME LEVEL UNLESS AND UNTIL CHANGED BY THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS.

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