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8 ~~TO WILLIAMS~~
DAN FINE

June 20, 1975 1975

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~~IS~~ RELEASED BY SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR

On June 17, 1975, the people of the Mariana Islands District freely exercised their power of self-determination in a United Nations observed political status plebiscite and chose by a decisive margin to approve the "Covenant to Establish a Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands in Political Union with the United States of America". The Department of the Interior wishes again to send its warmest greetings to the people of the Marianas and I am pleased to inform them that President Ford will very shortly be submitting the Covenant to the United States Congress. We hope that Congressional action will be completed in the very near future.

In response to the official certification of the results of the plebiscite in the Northern Marianas and pending approval of the Covenant by the United States Congress, I am today issuing a new Secretarial Order, numbered _____, which will expand the power and authority of the Marianas District Legislature. Under the new Order, that Legislature will have exclusive legislative authority over all matters concerning the future political status of the Mariana Islands District. During the time the Covenant is under consideration by the United States Congress, the Marianas Delegation to the Congress of Micronesia will continue to participate in that legislative body. Administration of the Mariana Islands

✓ District will continue as ^{as} present under the High Commissioner and the Marianas District Administrator until a full administrative separation is instituted after Congressional approval of the Covenant.

During consideration of the Covenant by the Congress of the United States, there is a pressing need for further contingency planning for the full separate administration of the Marianas and for transition to a new Commonwealth political status. I am therefore today establishing a Secretarial Planning Commission for the Marianas. I am naming the following to serve on this special commission: Mr. Peter Coleman, Chairman; Mr. Juan Sablan; ^{Mrs.} Miss Effie Sparling; Mr. Daniel Akimoto; Mr. Addison ^{Marrow;} ~~Monroe;~~ and the Marianas

✓ District Personnel Officer. I am requesting that the Marianas District Legislature and the Marianas Political Status Commission each appoint two of their members to the Commission. The Commission will include ex-officio representatives from the Department's Office of Territorial Affairs. The President's Personal Representative for Micronesian Status Negotiations, Ambassador F. Haydn Williams will also appoint one member of his staff to the Special Commission on an ex-officio basis.

The Commission will take as a basis for its work the preliminary report of the Ad Hoc Committee which was filed last May 15, and will have as its principal responsibility planning for the organization of a separately administered government of the Marianas District to come into being upon approval of

the Covenant by the United States Congress. Toward this end it will review the report of the Ad Hoc Committee and the comments thereon provided by the Office of Territorial Affairs. This review will cover:

- the Govern~~ance~~^{ment} of the Marianas District under separate administration and during Phase I which will mark the time between the beginning of separate administration and the coming into being of the Marianas' own elected government under its own Constitution;

- relations between the Marianas and the remainder of the Trust Territory during separate administration and pending termination of the Trusteeship;

- applicability to the Marianas of the Trust Territory Code, including identification of those functions and services now applicable to the Marianas which will be continued;

In addition to these matters, the Commission will consider but will not be limited to such other subject as:

- relations of the Marianas with the Congress of Micronesia;
- the impact on the Marianas of subsequent relocation of the TTPI Headquarters;

- implementation of Phase I planning as approved by the Joint U.S.-Marianas Ad Hoc Committee on Transition;

- provisions for continuing employment of those Marianas citizens presently employed by the Trust Territory Government; ~~in line with~~ early implementation of a special fund provided

for in the Covenant for education and training of Marianas citizens to enable them to meet the expanded employment opportunities which will become available under separate administration and under the new Government of the Northern Marianas.

In considering the full range of subjects and in drawing up plans for full separate administration, the Commission shall consult with all concerned parties, including those from the Trust Territory Government Headquarters and the Congress of Micronesia on matters of particular interest to them.

At such time as the Covenant is approved by the United States Congress, the administration of the Mariana Islands District will be fully separated from the remainder of the Trust Territory and a United States Resident Commissioner will be appointed for the Marianas. The Headquarters of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands Government will remain in Saipan and it is not expected that there will be any action to remove the headquarters or reduce the headquarters staff in the near future. While the Headquarters of the TTPI for the time being will remain on Saipan, the High Commissioner and the Congress of Micronesia will be relieved of their responsibilities and authority in the Marianas and the members of the Marianas Delegation to the Congress of Micronesia will leave that body and join the Marianas District Legislature as members at-large. Also at this time, the agreed Phase I Transition

Program for the Marianas will begin, the Office of Transitional Planning and Studies will be established and the \$1.5 million already authorized by the United States Congress will be made available for transition studies and purposes.

The next few weeks will be important ones for the Marianas District Legislature. Several vital issues will need the Legislature's thoughtful consideration and action. Among these are the methods by which the Legislature will, when full separate administration begins, reorganize its membership and committee structure to accommodate new members-at-large. It will have to consider its expanded responsibility in the areas of budget and finance, and future legislative appropriation of considerably greater amounts of revenue for the public purposes of the Marianas. Preliminary planning for legislation for the Marianas Constitutional Convention and Referendum might be undertaken on a contingency basis along with procedures for the Legislature's coordination with the Office of Transitional Planning and Studies.

The action taken by me today in issuing Secretarial Order No. _____ is intended to set in motion final ~~and important~~ contingency planning in preparation for the full separate administration of the Marianas and the beginning of Phase I Transition Program. Upon approval of the Covenant by the United States Congress, a new Secretarial Order will be issued immediately and will take into consideration the recommendations of the final report of the Secretarial Planning Commission

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for the Marianas. I would once again like to express my pleasure and honor that the people of the Marianas have so overwhelmingly indicated in a free vote their desire to become a part of the American family.

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