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THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Old Executive Office Building
Room 361

Washington, D.C. 20506

June 30, 1975

Honorable Vicente N. Santos
President
Marianas District Legislature
Saipan, Mariana Islands 96950

and

Honorable Edward DLG Pangelinan
Chairman, Marianas Political Status
Commission
Saipan, Mariana Islands 96950

Dear President Santos and Chairman Pangelinan:

This is a follow-up letter to the good telephone conference I had last week with you both along with Dr. Palacios, Danny Muna, and Manny Sablan. I found it very helpful to hear all of your views and in turn I hope you will share this letter with members of the Marianas District Legislature and the Marianas Political Status Commission. I had earlier hoped that it would have been possible for me to meet with you in person and had planned to come to Saipan but it now seems that my time can be better used in your interest by staying at home and continuing the work for the early approval of the Covenant by the U.S. Congress.

Our first effort here after the results of the plebiscite was to consult with the White House staff on the President's submission of the Covenant to the Congress. You are already aware of his personal satisfaction with the outcome of the plebiscite and his strong statement that he intends to recommend strongly the Covenant's early approval by the U.S. Congress. It gives me great pleasure to inform you that the President has today forwarded the Covenant to the Congress with his personal endorsement along with a draft joint resolution for the consideration of the House and Senate.

Steps have already been taken to prepare for the hearings in both the House and Senate, and from all indications the leadership in the House and the Senate are both desirous of giving consideration of the Covenant high scheduling priority. Both houses are now recessed until July 8 but it is my hope

that the hearings can be scheduled soon thereafter. The dates of course, will be set by the Chairmen and membership of the Interior Committees and you will be notified immediately once a final timetable has been determined. I do not know how long the hearings on the Commonwealth Covenant will last, but I think your delegation should plan on being hear at least a week and possibly ten days.

I was pleased to learn of your decision to send a Joint MDL/MPSC Delegation to Washington for the hearings in the House and Senate. The members of our Congress, will, I am sure, attach a great deal of importance to your testimony as a further expression of the will and hope of the people of the Northern Mariana Islands. I am certain too that many Congressmen and Senators will also wish to use the occasion of your presence in Washington to congratulate you and express their own satisfaction with the prospects that lie ahead of political union between the United States and the Northern Mariana Islands.

I look forward to the arrival of the MDL/MPSC Delegation. It will afford us an opportunity to discuss further together the implementation of Phase I planning including the establishment of a Joint Transition Commission, the Office of Transition, Studies and Planning, and other matters which you may wish to raise in order to make sure that our contingency planning will be completed while awaiting the action of the Congress. I, therefore, hope that during the interim, between cw and the arrival of your Delegation in Washington, you will be giving thought to these matters so that we can have the benefit of your thinking as we develop together final plans for Phase I.

The days ahead will be busy ones for the members of the MDL and the MPSC. You have already heard from Secretary Hathaway regarding his desire that you lend your assistance and advice in the further planning that is necessary to assure a smooth and orderly move to full separate administration. Your involvement and participation in the planning of the Marianas Government under separate administration will, I am sure, be welcomed by Peter Coleman and strongly encouraged by Mr. Zeder with whom you will be meeting.

The MDL, too, will have as Secretary Hathaway has mentioned a number of most important matters to consider when it convenes on July 7. One of these matters to which I hope you will give priority is the actual organization of the land entity called for by your legislation of last August. As I understand it, nothing now stands in the way for the beginning of the transfer of title of public lands in the Northern Mariana Islands except

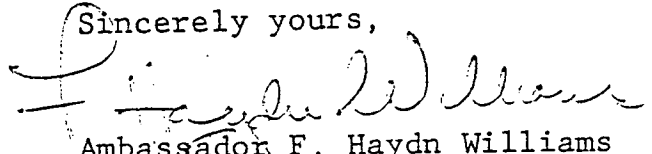
for the organization of the Marianas Public Land Corporation. The Legislature and the MPSC might also wish to jointly consider the naming of an Ad Hoc Group to begin, in cooperation with representatives of the United States, preliminary planning for the American Memorial Park.

Let me say in closing that I am keenly aware of your disappointment in not being able to move immediately to full separate administration. I share your regret and am aware of the confusion and frustration that many of you must feel in view of my previous statement and stated sequence of the steps to be taken leading to full Commonwealth status. I hope, however, that you will accept with patience and forbearance the need now to take into consideration certain existing circumstances and political realities that would make it unwise to act in haste.

I believe that advantages can be gained by using constructively the time that is available for careful planning. I hope you will consider steps 4 and 5 in fact as being concurrent and companion steps--a planning period while time is being given the Congress of the United States to consider and act on the Covenant. Once approval has been granted, you have the written assurances of Secretary Hathaway that a Secretarial Order will be issued forthwith calling for the immediate administrative separation of the Northern Mariana Islands and the beginning of Phase I. Your help in preparing the groundwork for this Secretarial Order and for planning the most effective use of the \$1.5 million Phase I fund will be greatly appreciated by all concerned in Washington.

With best wishes,

Sincerely yours,



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

FHW:kkc