

August 25, 1975

MEMORANDUM FOR THE MARIANAS CONGRESSIONAL RELATIONS FILE

Subject: Conversations with Burt Wides

Burt Wides is on the staff of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence Activities. He was formerly a legislative assistant to Senator Philip Hart, and I know him from my days on the Hill.

Burt called me on Friday, August 22, to ask if I would send him such information as I deemed appropriate concerning the Marianas Political Status Negotiations. He was interested, he said, not in the substance of the political status arrangement, but in the history of the negotiations. Bob Kelley had apparently told Burt that this firm had prepared a paper that had been circulated on Capitol Hill concerning the negotiations; it was this paper that Burt was particularly interested in. I told Burt I would be happy to send him a copy of what we called the "Summary Report" and other materials relating to the history of the negotiations. I asked him why he was interested. He told me that there had been an allegation that the CIA had attempted to influence or had influenced political status matters in Micronesia as a whole, and that the CIA had particularly been involved in the separation of the Marianas from the remainder of the Trust Territory.

*Wides: Burt asked we not to mention his call to OMSN or anyone else in the executive branch. See recd.*

I spoke to Burt again this morning, to tell him that I was sending up certain material, as reflected in the attached letter. I asked Burt whether he could tell me how the investigation would proceed and how I could be kept informed of what was going on. He told me that as a matter of policy, staff members were not permitted to describe the manner of their investigation or the source of allegations. I stressed to Burt again today, as I had on Friday, that the people of the Marianas sincerely wanted close association with the United States, as demonstrated in the recent plebiscite; that Senator Gary Hart opposed the Covenant, apparently because it would give the United States the right to build a military base in the Marianas; and that if word that the Select Committee was investigating an allegation that the CIA had been involved in the Marianas became public, it could have a devastating effect on the Senate's consideration of the Covenant, even if the allegation was wholly unfounded. Burt told me he understood the sensitivity of the issue and would proceed responsibly.

Michael S. Helfer 14904

cc: Howard P. Willens