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Memorandum

To : Mr. Fred M. Zeder, Director, Office of Territorial Affairs
From : Ambassador F. Haydn Williams
Subject : Phase I, Mariana Islands

The purpose of this memorandum is to discuss the background for separate administration of the Mariana Islands and the administrative arrangements for Phase I, and also to propose ^{that we} ~~an early~~ meeting to discuss in depth some of the outstanding issues of ~~some~~ sensitivity to the U.S. Government, the Marianas Political Status Commission and the Congress of Micronesia.

The Marianas District Legislature and the MPSC have had substantial interests in separate administration even before the separate status talks were initiated. This matter became the subject of discussions a number of times during the course of our status negotiations. At those meetings the MPSC urged early separate administration for the Mariana Islands, prior to the plebiscite in recognition of the ongoing separate status negotiations. On the urging of the Department of State and USUN, it was decided that separate administration should not occur until after the status plebiscite and the MPSC was so informed. Because of concern by some members of the U.S. Congress that this action might be interpreted as prejudging the approval process, it was felt that the United States should not initiate separate administration until after approval of the Covenant. The new delay caused considerable disappointment to the Marianas people. To maintain momentum

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towards self-government for the NMI, my office proposed that Interior appoint an interim Ad Hoc Commission. We were pleased that Interior responded favorably and that the terms of reference for the Commission took into account the lengthy discussions held on separate administration between the U.S. Government and the MPSC during December, 1974 and February, 1975. ^P Our view, given the Presidential instructions and the ongoing negotiations with the rest of Micronesia, is that it is in the interests of the United States to establish separate administration as soon as possible after approval of the Covenant. We also hope that the effort will bring credit to the Marianas decision to become a U.S. territory as the interim administration will be looked at closely by other districts. It may therefore favorably influence the status decisions that will be made by those districts. How separate administration is implemented by our government will also no doubt affect how the U.S. will obtain its overall U.S. objectives regarding Micronesia as set forth by the President.

The Marianas leadership ^{HAS} ~~have~~ expressed interest in the choice of a U.S. Resident Commissioner for the separate administration of the NMI. It is the position of the MPSC that some weight be given to their views. As expressed to me, it was their feeling that a firm foundation for our future status relationship should be established and that a person who enjoyed their trust would be an element of creating that foundation. I believe they have several candidates in mind that will also meet our administrative requirements.

During this transition period, the Marianas District Legislature will be called upon to exercise a greater burden of the responsibilities of

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self-government for the Mariana Islands. In my view, this requires that the United States assure itself that the Legislature is properly staffed and sufficiently prepared to assume these new duties. One aspect, of course, focuses upon the formation of the public land entity which will enable the United States to transfer public land in the NMI to local control. Another aspect to be examined is the Legislature's examination of local laws that need enactment and the full range of TTPI laws to be locally enforced until amended or revoked by the new Commonwealth Government.

As regards transition of the NMI into a U.S. Commonwealth territory, Phase I will begin at the time separate administration is instituted for the NMI. It will continue until the new Commonwealth Government is installed some 18 to 24 months later. This initial period of transition was the major subject of discussions during the early political status rounds. At the insistence of the MPSC, the early status talks focused on the need for planning the new Commonwealth Government. The U.S. shared the view that substantial preparation was required. The U.S. recognized that there was a need for careful planning for the new governmental structure, for development of economic development plans and goals, for review of physical infrastructure plans, and for studies on personnel requirements and dislocation adjustments brought about by transition. To coordinate these activities and assure an orderly transition process, the United States proposed creation of a Joint Transition Commission with membership from the NMI and the U.S. who would oversee the creation and operation of an Office for Transition Studies and Plans. The United States took the view during the negotiations that both the NMI and the United States should examine the

implications of this proposal. An Ad Hoc Preparatory Committee on Transition in the Marianas was established which produced a Report on Transition to the two delegations during Round 4. The recommendations of the Ad Hoc Committee were adopted by the United States and the MPSC. The approved plan called for creation of a Joint Transition Commission that would assure that the terms of the Covenant are fully implemented by both the NMI and the United States, that a proper liaison channel be established between the United States and the NMI on transitional matters, ^{and} that there would be joint effort to formulate guidelines for the studies and plans to be undertaken during Phase I and to provide policy guidance to the Office for Transition Studies and Plans.

I propose that you and I get together to discuss formal establishment of the Joint Transition Commission and its initial agenda, the creation of the Office of Transition Studies and Plans and the recruitment and budget of that Office's personnel.

In closing, let me say that the Mariana Islands, the United States Congress, and the United Nations will closely watch how the United States meets its formal commitments to these people. How separate administration for the Mariana Islands is implemented by the United States will also affect the future status decisions by the remainder of Micronesia. I personally place high importance on this task. A major effort should be undertaken to meet these commitments. It is in the national interest to extend the very best efforts in this matter. I remain

Very personally yours,

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