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October 24, 1975

Honorable Clifford P. Case
United States Senate
Washington, D. C. 20510

Dear Senator Case:

Thank you for your communication of October 10, requesting on behalf of information concerning the responsibility of the United States to ensure the self-determination and independence of the Mariana Islands and to bring about a nuclear-free Pacific and information concerning the Trident missile system.

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The Mariana Islands consist of the United States Territory of Guam and the Northern Marianas. The latter are one of the six districts of the United States-administered Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands. The entire Trust Territory is administered under the terms of a trusteeship agreement concluded with the United Nations in 1947. Article 6 of the agreement obliges the United States to "promote the development of the inhabitants of the trust territory toward self-government or independence, as may be appropriate to the particular circumstances of the trust territory and its peoples and the freely expressed wishes of the peoples concerned." The United States is a member of the United Nations Trusteeship Council, and annually reports to that body on progress and developments in the Trust Territory.

Resolution 1541 (XV), passed by the United Nations General Assembly in 1960, defines self-government to include the possibility of integration with an independent state, and adds that such integration "should be the result of the freely expressed wishes of the territory's peoples acting with full knowledge of the change in their status, their wishes having been expressed through informed and democratic processes, impartially conducted and based on universal adult suffrage."

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR	
REVIEWED BY <u>Hall</u>	DATE <u>MAR. 5 1987</u>
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On February 15, 1975, following more than two years of negotiations, a Covenant to Establish a Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands in Political Union with the United States of America was signed by Ambassador F. Haydn Williams, the President's Personal Representative for Micronesian Status Negotiations, and the Marianas Political Status Commission, which had been established by the elected representatives of the people of the Northern Marianas in 1972. The Covenant was subsequently approved by the local legislature and by the people of the Northern Marianas in a United Nations-observed plebiscite. Ninety-five percent of the registered voters of the Northern Marianas participated in the plebiscite on June 17, 1975, and the Covenant was endorsed with a 78.8% majority. The United Nations Trusteeship Council sent a special visiting mission to the Marianas to observe the plebiscite.

The Covenant is presently undergoing review by the United States Congress. On July 21, the House of Representatives gave its approval to the Covenant, in H.J. Res. 549, by voice vote without objection. The Covenant is now before the Senate for its consideration and approval.

The terms of the Covenant are consistent with the traditional United States commitment to the right of self-determination; and this U.N.-observed act of self-determination, if approved by the United States Congress, will be a major step in the fulfillment of our obligations as Administering Authority.

The U.S. considers that the establishment of effective nuclear weapon free zones in appropriate regions of the world could be a useful complement to the Non-Proliferation Treaty and other measures in preventing the spread of nuclear weapons. In assessing any specific regional arrangement we would take into account the extent to which that arrangement meets the following criteria:

- The nuclear free zone should be sponsored by states in the area concerned;
- It should include all states whose participation is deemed important;

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- It should not disturb necessary security arrangements;
- It should provide adequately for verification of compliance.

In addition to these criteria, the U.S. believes that a nuclear weapon free zone should not permit its parties to develop an indigenous nuclear explosive capability for any purpose, peaceful or military, since in our view the development of such a capability would not be compatible with the objective of preventing the spread of nuclear weapons. As for the inclusion of the waters of the Pacific within such a zone; the U. S. could not accept the imposition of a special legal regime over any portion of the high seas or restrictions on transit and overflight.

As for your constituent's questions concerning the Trident submarine and missile system, this subject falls under the purview of the Department of Defense. I have therefore forwarded your communication to Mr. John M. Maury, Assistant Secretary of Defense for Legislative Affairs, Department of Defense, Washington, D. C. 20301, for further reply.

I hope you will call on me if you believe we can be of assistance.

Sincerely,

GW

Robert J. McCloskey
Assistant Secretary
for Congressional Relations

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