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AdeGraffenried/cg/1/6/76

MEMCON

Participants: Mike Helfer
Adrian de Graffenried

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Date : January 6, 1976

Subject : Northern Mariana Islands Separate Administration

Mike Helfer and T. Fortune (of Warnke's firm) are not yet finished with the "Memorandum of Understanding" on separate administration for the NMI. As soon as a draft is finalized, Helfer will forward a copy.

Helfer noted the memorandum may be O.B.E. because the agreements reached on separate administration between the NMI and COM were based on 2 assumptions:

1. Separate administration for the NMI would be promptly taken by early approval of the Covenant; and
2. The time during which an interim separate administration for the NMI would be instituted would be very limited.

Approval of the Covenant may now be deferred and the interim period for separate administration may be indefinite. Helfer also noted that although separate administration could be implemented in part by a Secretarial Order, full self-government under a local constitution as set out in the Covenant would not be possible. The NMI constitution would not have a federal governmental framework within which to function and would not have sufficient funds for the initial separate administration.

Helfer stated that in the absence of approval of the Covenant, U.S. Congressional action would be needed to obtain funds for separate administration, to extend the basic federal programs and federal regulatory laws we

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envisioned would be instituted under Articles VII and V of the Covenant.

Helfer was notified of Peter Poole's planned visit to the NMI.

He hoped we could turn it to our advantage.

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