

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Old Executive Office Building
Room 361
Washington, D. C. 20506

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January 8, 1976

Senator Lazarus Salii, Chairman
Congressman Ekpap Silk, Co-Chairman
Joint Committee on Future Status
Congress of Micronesia
Saipan, Mariana Islands 96950

Dear Lazarus and Ekpap:

Thank you for your prompt response to my invitation that we meet in San Francisco in early January to carry on our informal discussions. I am sorry that the dates suggested proved inconvenient for you but I can understand your desire not to be away from the Trust Territory on the eve of the convening of the Congress of Micronesia. At the same time, I appreciate your understanding of my situation and my inability to be away from Washington while the Marianas Commonwealth Covenant is under active consideration by the Senate. I do, however, share with you the hope that a mutually convenient time and place can be set soon for our next informal exchange of views on the Micronesian future political status question. While it is not clear at this time when the Senate will complete its deliberations and action on the Marianas Covenant, I am hoping that the final vote will be taken before the end of February. As soon as the timing of this action becomes clear, I will be in touch with you with some suggested dates for our next exploratory meeting.

In the meantime, we are in the process of reassessing U. S. positions and objectives as set forth in the October 1974 referendum draft Compact of Free Association, taking into account our conversations of last May, the COM position taken at the United Nations Trusteeship Council in June, and those provisions of the Micronesian Constitution which would seem to bear on the future political status question. We are examining whether the basic nature of the future relationship envisaged as a result of our understandings in principle reached at Hana and Koror is still valid and, as part of this review, we are naturally reconsidering the U. S. commitments contained in the draft Compact of Free Association and various alternatives.

Certainly the new Micronesian Constitution, if approved, would have a significant bearing on Micronesia's future political status

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and, as one who had been advocating the calling of the ConCon since 1972, I was greatly and favorably impressed with the manner in which the Convention was conducted and the processes of give and take--of accommodation and compromise--which resulted in the draft which was finally signed. I had occasions to comment publicly on the significant accomplishments of the ConCon during my testimony before the Senate in November and, on the evening of the day the Constitution was signed, I had the opportunity to offer my personal congratulations to the Speaker of the House of the COM, to Senator Mangefel and Kaleb Udui with whom I was having dinner.

I have noted since that the JCFS and representative delegates to the ConCon met in early December to review the Constitution and the Compact and the impact of the former on the latter. As we prepare for our next informal meeting and for subsequent formal talks it would be helpful if you could share with us informally the results of your review and identify those general and specific areas which the JCFS wishes to renegotiate. We would appreciate citations of specific problems and differences so that we can concentrate our attention on the most important issues as you see them. Your response could be either in writing or, if you would prefer, in informal conversations in Saipan with my Status Liaison Officer, Mr. Alf Bergesen. In this manner an informal dialogue could be carried on prior to our next meeting which would be helpful to both of us as we prepare for the issues and questions to be discussed. The agenda might include, in addition to direct status matters, some of the items suggested in my letter to you of last February 26th, such as transition, the capital relocation question, and a termination timetable.

In closing, I wish to reassure you that my Government's purpose remains constant and that it shares with you a desire for further early progress toward the goal which we both have in common--namely, self-determination and self-government for the peoples of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands in accordance with their freely expressed desires. I hope you will convey this thought to all of the members of the JCFS along with my warmest regards and best wishes for a very successful Congressional session.

Sincerely yours,

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

cc: OMSN
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