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Keep this study together. January 16, 1976

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Dear Jack:

I am sorry I have not been successful in reaching you by telephone this morning before my departure for a conference in Honolulu, on a matter we consider important. As second best, I am writing to urge that at its January 20 mark-up session the Senate Foreign Relations Committee approve H.J.R. 549, a Joint Resolution to approve the "Covenant to Establish a Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands in Political Union with the United States of America", as reported by the Senate Interior and Insular Affairs Committee.

As I testified before the Committee on November 5, 1975, the Department of State fully supports the approval of this Covenant as a major step which is consistent with the national interests and foreign policy of the United States, and as a step in the fulfillment of the international obligations of the United States.

Among these obligations, we attach particular importance to the fulfillment of our pledge to give the peoples of the Northern Mariana Islands and of the rest of the Trust Territory the right to choose freely their own political future. In line with this principle, the United States held a UN-observed plebiscite on June 17, 1975, in which the people of the Northern Mariana Islands freely and clearly expressed their long-held desire for self-government in political union with the United States. Having determined what the people of the Northern Mariana Islands wish, we are in a position to begin to put their wishes into effect, thus moving to a substantially greater degree of self-government. The

The Honorable
Jacob K. Javits,
United States Senate.

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR	
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representatives of the other districts of the Trust Territory who are seeking a different and less intimate relationship with the United States are also closely watching to see how the U.S. Congress handles this problem, and I am convinced that early Congressional approval will be taken by them as a sign of good faith by the United States Government. After these negotiations have been concluded and the peoples of the other districts of the Trust Territory have freely expressed their wishes in a plebiscite which the United Nations will be invited to observe, the United States intends to seek Security Council agreement to terminate the trusteeship for all areas of the Trust Territory including the Northern Mariana Islands.

The United States has longstanding national interests and responsibilities in that part of the Pacific Ocean area in which the Northern Mariana Islands are located. Guam, which has been a part of the United States since 1898, and the Northern Mariana Islands are part of the same geographic grouping of islands and the great majority of the population of the Northern Mariana Islands share the same culture and language with the American citizens of Guam. We believe that the granting of Commonwealth status to the Northern Mariana Islands would also be an element of stability in an area of direct interest to the United States.

In our view, rejection or delay of the Marianas resolution would create problems for the United States in Micronesia by raising fundamental doubts about American intentions in the Northern Marianas and would risk undermining the pro-American leadership of the islands. We are apprehensive that a potential source of instability might be created in an area so close to Guam.

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I therefore hope that the Foreign Relations
Committee will recommend approval of the proposed
legislation.

Very best regards.

Sincerely,



Robert S. Ingersoll

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