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January 30, 1976

MEMORANDUM FOR THE MARIANAS FILE

Subject: Senate Consideration of the Covenant

I spoke today to Dan Leach, one of Mansfield's assistants on the Senate Democratic Policy Committee. He told me that the Marianas Covenant would definitely not be considered before the February recess, and that he simply could not make any prediction beyond that. (Congress will reconvene on the 17th). He also added, with considerable understatement, that "the Leader is not anxious to bring this matter up." Based on my conversation with Dan, I would not be surprised to see a vote on the Covenant delayed into March or even into April, depending on whether other available business gives Mansfield an excuse not to bring it up.

I also spoke to Dave Sheely, who was receiving similar reports from the Hill about timing. Jackson's Hill staff thinks that Jackson has to wait until at least mid-March before he could claim that Mansfield is misusing his power as Majority Leader to delay legislation he opposes.

Sheely also told me two facts of interest. First, Jackson's campaign staff is opposed to his devoting any time to the Marianas matter; evidenced by the fact that Jackson was not present at the Armed Services Committee vote, though he left a proxy. Johnson carried the ball at Armed Services, even though he is not a member of that Committee. Second, we lost Stennis even though the President phoned him personally on the morning of the vote.

Michael S. Helfer

cc: H. P. Willens  
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