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Dear John:

I am sorry that I have not written sooner to report on our progress here at the firm's Pacific outpost. As you probably know, we have been in touch with Jay and Max regarding some ETS matters that seem to be typically active but in good hands.

We have made good progress in the first three weeks of the Convention, despite some very controversial issues and a larger dose of politics than I might have wished. We have draft constitutional provisions "adopted in principle" by the Convention sitting as a Committee of the Whole on all subjects except the three most difficult issues: the executive branch of government, local government and land alienation. Once these three problems come before the Convention, it is likely that we will hold public hearings and hear the people's views on what will be in essence a draft constitution. The enclosed clippings will give you some idea of the problems we are confronting. Xenophobia is a major problem here -- the people from Rota and Tinian look upon people from Saipan with the same enthusiasm that Louis Oberdorfer reserves for Marx Leva!

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The briefing papers were successful beyond my expectations and justify (I guess!) the months of work and the tensions of the last few weeks before my departure. The delegates appreciate the discussion of the alternatives contained in the papers and have generally resisted the temptation to put unnecessary material in the constitution. The drafting of the constitution, the writing of committee reports, and the preparation of a section-by-section analysis are fully occupying our time. The three committees of the Convention are being advised by Deanne and me, assisted by an attorney from the Institute of Public Administration who has a contract with the Northern Marianas transitional office to help reorganize the government and prepare an initial legislative program. Without his help, we would have been seriously handicapped, since none of the associates is able at this stage of his development to advise the delegates without careful supervision. They are doing their very best, however, in drafting materials for our review and are making a substantial contribution to our work. It is possible that we may be able to release one (and perhaps two) of the associates near the end of this month.

I have read the Anaconda materials but have nothing very specific to offer from 9,000 miles away. I share your views regarding the incoming brief -- much too long, repetitive and overly complicated. I like the simplicity of the statement in your first draft and hope you maintain this thrust as the numerous contributors start making their suggestions. I hope you are getting the help you need and regret that I cannot collaborate with you again.

I expect I will be hearing shortly from Phil Radoff regarding the Ford EPA matter. From the papers that I have seen, it looks as though reasonable progress is being made. I appreciate your help on this and hope that it has not been too burdensome, even with Don McGuigan as the client. From the silence, I am assuming that no crisis has developed on the other Ford matter for which I am very thankful. In case you have any doubt on the matter, I do not plan to leave the firm for any such extended period again -- at least until I can resume my sabbatical at some uncertain point in the future.

Best regards to you and Lloyd.

Sincerely,

Howard P. Willens

Enclosures