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December 14, 1976

Mr. Jack Rosenthal  
Associate Editor  
The New York Times Company  
229 West 43d Street  
New York, New York 10036

Dear Jack:

I returned home recently after two months in Saipan assisting the Northern Mariana Islands in drafting their first Constitution under the new status relationship which we negotiated on their behalf during the past few years. I do not believe I was bugged during my most recent venture but I really can't be too sure.

I am writing to inquire whether you would be interested in an article for the magazine regarding this Constitutional Convention, which completed its work on December 6. The Constitution which emerged from the Convention is a most unusual document and the experience itself -- writing a constitution within a period of fifty consecutive days mandated by statute -- was virtually unprecedented. The article I have in mind would give a little background regarding the Convention, describe the people and their problems, focus on the three or four critical controversies that occupied the attention of the delegates, and highlight some of the unique resolutions found in the Constitution.

So that you can get some idea of the subject, I am enclosing copies of the Constitution and some newspaper

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articles from the Guam paper. The Constitution will go before the people in a referendum sometime in March or April and then must be approved by the United States, probably after Congressional hearings. Despite the coverage in Guam, there has been absolutely nothing in the domestic press about the Convention.

The two months was much too long to be away from home and I do not expect to repeat the experience. I am watching the appointments in the new administration with benign detachment, although Louis Oberdorfer keeps advancing my name for the most preposterous range of federal positions.

Let me hear from you.

Sincerely,



Howard P. Willens

Enclosures