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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Washington, D.C. 20520

Status Liaison Office  
Saipan, M.I. 96560  
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UNCLASSIFIED

OFFICIAL-INFORMAL

Miss Mary Vance Trent  
Director  
Office of Micronesian Status Negotiations  
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Mary:

This is to alert you to a technical legislative matter which could conceivably have implications for the Northern Marianas status question, and will no doubt require scrutiny by Herman Marcuse or some other specialist on the Covenant.

I have just been visited by Mr. Rod J. Badgewick of HEW Region 9 in San Francisco. His particular specialty is the administration of Section 1536 of the Health Planning and Resources Development Act, P.L. 93-641, which provides for local and state health planning as a basis for federal assistance programs. Under section 1536, Guam, the T.T., American Samoa, etc., are defined as special areas within which the local and state levels of planning are rolled together into one process. The Northern Marianas are not separately mentioned, and accordingly health planning for the Northern Marianas, and federal grants for the process, still have to be channeled through the TT. Mr. Badgewick's office, with the concurrence of the HiCom and ResCom and their respective Health Services departments, naturally wishes to establish a separate planning process for the Northern Marianas.

In his view, the best way to proceed is by a brief amendment to Section 1536, simply adding the Northern Marianas as a separate jurisdiction. Non-controversial legislation, extending the Health Planning Act for a year, is already scheduled for the coming session of Congress, and such an amendment could easily be added. I pointed out that Section 502 of the Covenant, when it comes into force, will probably accomplish the same purpose. However, the process of approval and promulgation of the Northern Marianas Constitution means that Section 502 probably will not come into force before late 1977 or early 1978. An amendment to the Health Planning Act, on the other hand, could probably be passed this spring, and time is apparently of the essence. It would be advantageous to the Marians, for example, to be able to start an independent planning process of its own by May 15, 1977.

I see no particular problem involved if a specific piece of legislation becomes applicable to the Northern Marianas separately from the TT, by its own terms, before section 502 of the Covenant goes into

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effect. However, OMSN will wish to review the question and hold any necessary consultations with DOTA and other interested parties.

The proposed legislation will be forwarded to HEW Washington by Dr. Sheridan L. Weinstein, Regional Health Administrator, U.S. Public Health Service, 50 UN Plaza, San Francisco 94102. Mr. Badgewick undertook that Dr. Weinstein's office will either be in touch with you directly (I gave him your name and Herman Marcuse's), or will caution HEW that the proposed legislation should be cleared with OMSN before it goes to OMB. I also suggested that Eddie Pangelinan be kept informed of the proposed amendment. Accordingly, you should be hearing from HEW some time after the first of the year.

With all best wishes,



Paul J. Bennett  
Status Liaison Officer

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