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WHITE HOUSE STATIONERY

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JMWilson:11-20-74:kkc

DRAFT LETTER TO CLEMENTS



Dear Mr. Secretary:

Your letter of November 19, 1974 regarding the Marianas reached me just prior to our scheduled departure for the next round of negotiations. It proposes a major substantive change in my previous instructions as approved by the Under Secretaries Committee and the President eighteen months ago, and I would not feel justified in accepting such a change without their explicit concurrence in view of the potentially far reaching consequences of such action.

On the basis of our experience in these negotiations to date I could not now in good conscience recommend such concurrence to the Under Secretaries Committee or the President. We have, I believe, despite some recent unfavorable political developments in the Marianas, a fighting chance of completing these negotiations in the very near future. In my judgment long delays in wrapping up an agreement will seriously jeopardize our chances of achieving the desired result of bringing the Marianas permanently under the U.S. flag. Insisting on this change could do just that.

Until this point in the negotiations I have maintained the position that the United States wished to buy rather than lease the lands needed for military purposes in the Marianas, despite the clear authorization in my instructions that we may "purchase or lease". This was done in our latest negotiating session,

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E.O. 12958, Sec. 3.5

NSC Memo, 11/24/93, State Dept. Guidelines
By HR, NARA, Date 9/22/99

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however, largely for tactical reasons in order to gain other important concessions.

The Marianas Commission since the start of these negotiations in December 1972, on the other hand, has consistently and unanimously maintained the position that they are unwilling to sell their land under any circumstances. There has been no indication whatsoever that they will back off this position at any time in the near future, if ever. It is a highly sensitive and emotional local political issue. This was a major consideration in the development of the NSC Interagency Group study which formed the basis for my present flexible instructions on this point.

The Marianas have most recently offered a fifty year lease automatically renewable at U.S. option for an additional fifty years. I believe, though I am not certain, that we can persuade them to take a single lump sum payment for this entire period. This century of U.S. control combined with a future unfettered federal right of eminent domain in the Marianas, as I indicated to you some months ago, should more than adequately protect U.S. interests.

This view is shared by many members of the U.S. Congress with whom I have maintained contact on this point, including the chairmen of the Interior Committees in the Senate and House seized with this problem. I recognize others, including some in the Armed Services and Appropriations Committees, may now have a different view; but I believe it should be possible to persuade them that



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exception to normal rules is justified in the interests of making the Marianas part of the United States now and that larger U.S. concerns are more than adequately protected thereby. If we wait longer the opportunity is more than likely to disappear.

I will of course continue to hold to the present tactical position on purchase during the early part of our forthcoming negotiating sessions, but I must be advised immediately whether the Department of Defense is willing to have that position held to the extent of breaking off negotiations on the issue--with all that entails. I accordingly request that the position contained in your letter be reconsidered and that, if the decision remains unchanged, the Department of Defense formally raise the matter with the Under Secretaries Committee and the President. I will need his decision in Saipan prior to December 8, 1974 at the very latest.

Sincerely yours,

FHW

CC:
The Special Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs
The Chairman, Under Secretaries Committee
The Chairman, JCS
The Secretary of the Interior

