

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Old Executive Office Building
Room 373
Washington, D.C. 20506

January 15, 1976

The Honorable Donald H. Rumsfeld
Secretary of Defense
Washington, D.C. 20301

Dear Secretary Rumsfeld:

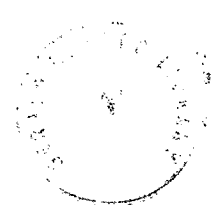
As you know, we are approaching final Senate Committee votes on the Marianas Covenant. The Armed Services Committee and the Foreign Relations Committee have until January 27, 1976 to mark-up and submit their reports on the Marianas Covenant, HJR 549, as amended. The Foreign Relations Committee has scheduled its mark-up for next Tuesday, January 20 and the Armed Services Committee is likely to act next week as well.

The outcome of the vote in these mark-up sessions remains uncertain but it is sure to be close in both committees. Senators Byrd (Va) and Hart (Colo) are the most vocal opponents of the legislation in the Armed Services Committee. Hart has indicated he will push for an amendment postponing consideration of the Covenant until the Senate is able to look at a single package for the entire Trust Territory. The most important opposition in the Foreign Relations Committee comes from Senator Percy, who continues to champion deferring approval until an agreement or agreements have been reached with the entire Trust Territory.

The present line-up in the Armed Services Committee is as follows:

<u>YES</u>	<u>NO</u>	<u>UNCERTAIN</u>
JACKSON	BYRD (VA)	STENNIS
CANNON	CULVER	SYMINGTON
THURMOND	HART (COLO)	MC INTYRE
TOWER	LEAHY	NUNN
GOLDWATER	SCOTT (VA)	TAFT
		BARTLETT

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We have reports that Symington may vote yes and we are hopeful that Stennis, McIntyre and Taft can be persuaded to do the same. Bartlett and Nunn were previously said to be in favor of the Covenant but both have altered their positions. Bartlett has indicated that he doubts the strength of the Department of Defense support for the legislation and we do not know the basis for Nunn's seemingly change-of-heart.

There have been several developments affecting the Covenant during the current Congressional recess: Senator Bennett Johnston of the Interior Committee visited Saipan January 1, and was followed on January 5 by a delegation of four Senators; at our suggestion the Marianas leadership has corresponded with Senator Percy inviting him to Saipan and urging his support for early Covenant approval; and Peter Poole, of Senator Percy's staff is now in Saipan.

In the event Senator Jackson is unable to, Senator Johnston is likely to be the floor leader for the Covenant legislation when it reaches the full Senate. He is an outspoken Champion of the Covenant and his visit to the Northern Marianas was helpful in bolstering the morale of the leadership on Saipan and preparing them for the visit of Senators Hollings, Griffin, Culver and Baker. The latter visit appears to have improved prospects for passage of the Covenant by eliminating reservations held by Senators Hollings and Baker and strengthening Griffin's resolve to the early approval of HJR 549. Senator Culver reportedly mellowed in his opposition during the visit and now recognizes complexities of which he was not previously aware. While on Saipan, the Senators met Senator Lazarus Salii and Representative Luke Tman of the Congress of Micronesia, who indicated that the Congress of Micronesia was not opposed to the Covenant and had accepted the decision of the Marianas people to join in political union with the United States and to separate from the other districts as soon as possible.

All members of the Armed Services Committee or their staffs have been briefed on the substance of the Covenant and made aware of the Administration position, but it is important to take immediate follow-up steps to show our continuing concern and to renew their interest. I have personally briefed Chairman Stennis and Senators Jackson, Byrd, Hart, Thurmond and Tower. The Department of Defense, including Mr. Clements, Mr. Ellsworth, Admiral Crowe in ISA and Don Sanders have been very helpful in briefing key Senators and staff personnel.

With only a few days left and faced with a close vote or tie, I believe we should make one last push before the Committees vote next week. We will be contacting as many Committee members as possible or their Administrative Assistants, urging them to be present at the mark-up or leave their favorably proxy with the Chairman. I have requested the President to write the Chairmen of Armed Services and Foreign Relations Committees and have requested Secretary Kleppe and Deputy Secretary Ingersoll to lend additional assistance with other key Senators.

I would like to support the request that you contact Senator Percy as soon as possible to urge his support for early approval of the Covenant. His proposal to delay passage until an agreement or agreements have been concluded covering the entire Trust Territory would create problems for the Administration in Micronesia by raising fundamental doubts about American intentions in the Northern Marianas and undermine the pro-American leadership of the islands, thereby creating a potential source of instability in the area of strategic importance to the United States.

With respect to the Armed Services Committee, I hope the Department of Defense will make a final effort with its friends on the Committee. We have been told time and again that the strength of DOD support will be the crucial factor in deciding the votes of several Committee members, as well as the Senate-at-large. Additional contacts with the Chairman and Senators Nunn, Taft, Bartlett and McIntyre appear particularly important.

I appreciate the cooperation and support I have received from the Department, both during the negotiations with the Northern Mariana Islands and in the presentation of the Covenant to the Congress. One last effort before the Committee mark-ups could make the difference in obtaining Congressional approval. I will appreciate any effort you can make to this end and will welcome any suggestions as to what more I might usefully do.

With warmest best wishes,

Sincerely yours,

Haydn

Ambassador F. Haydn Williams
The President's Personal Representative
for Micronesian Status Negotiations

FHW:kkc

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