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COMMUNICATION FROM MR. MIKE MALONE, STAFF ASSISTANT, OFFICE OF  
THE LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL, CONGRESS OF MICRONESIA, CONCERNING  
THE TRUST TERRITORY OF THE PACIFIC ISLANDS

(Circulated in accordance with rule 24 of the rules of procedure  
of the Trusteeship Council)

CONGRESS OF MICRONESIA  
Office of the Legislative Counsel  
Saipan, Mariana Islands 96950

15 April 1975

Dear Sirs:

Enclosed is a copy of a letter to members of the United States Congress concerning certain actions now being contemplated by the Ford Administration to separate the Mariana Islands from the remaining five districts of the United States Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands - before the Congress will have had the opportunity to ratify the proposed status agreement.

A plebiscite is scheduled to be held on 17 June with only 55 per cent approval required. A political education programme began here last month, and it is being conducted by the Marianas Status Commission, which signed the proposed commonwealth covenant agreement. 1/

1/ For the text of the Covenant to Establish a Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands in Political Union with the United States of America, see document T/1759, annex.

If your office requires additional information, do not hesitate to contact representatives Jose P. Mafnas, Oscar C. Rasa, or this office.

Sincerely,

(Signed) Mike MALONE  
Staff Assistant

Enclosure

Congress of Micronesia  
Capitol Hill, Saipan, Mariana Islands 96950

14 April 1975

Dear members of the Senate and House of Representatives:

The purpose of this letter is to inform you of certain actions now being contemplated by the executive branch of your Government, the Department of the Interior and the Office of Micronesian Status Negotiations in particular, to partition the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands prior to termination of the United Nations Trusteeship Agreement. We also wish to share with you the sentiments of the people we represent in our national legislature, the Congress of Micronesia, concerning the Marianas District status question.

Following an announcement in 1972 that then President Nixon's representative to the Micronesian Status Negotiations would initiate separate future political status negotiations with the Mariana Islands District, a report by the 1973 United Nations Visiting Mission to Micronesia stated:

"We wish to emphasize here, however, that although the Micronesians themselves must work out for themselves what kind of future links they wish to have with one another, the United States Administration is still at this stage obligated to promote national unity in every way possible." 2/  
/emphasis added/.

Yet, contrary to this recommendation, plans are now being formulated to issue an executive order to divide our islands from our brothers and sisters in the other districts of Micronesia before your Congress will have the opportunity to review the proposed covenant for a Marianas commonwealth.

Part of Senate Bill No. 326 now before the House of Representatives includes the authorization of \$1.5 million to finance transition costs of converting the Marianas into a commonwealth, similar to Puerto Rico, separate from the

rest of Micronesia, and separate from nearby Guam, an "unincorporated" United States Territory. The result: three separate and distinct political entities in the Micronesian islands, each financed by American taxpayers.

A plebiscite is scheduled to be held here in June with only 55 per cent approval required to permanently link the Marianas to your country. If accepted by the Marianas voters, the majority of whom lack formal education, an executive order will be issued immediately to cancel Marianas participation in our national Congress of Micronesia, and in the Micronesian Constitutional Convention which will convene on Saipan 12 July 1975. It should be mentioned at this point that every vigorous pro-separatist representative in our national Congress was tossed out of office during our November 1974 congressional election, including the chairman of the Marianas Status Commission. Unfortunately, our "state" legislature, the Marianas District Legislature, which created and determined the membership of our Status Commission, holds elections only every four years and, therefore, has not yet been affected by the rapidly changing sentiments of local voters, which, in my opinion, have drastically changed since the provisions of the proposed status agreement have become public knowledge. Yet, before victorious representatives-elect, who advocated a "go slow" approach in our negotiations, were sworn into office and new members appointed to our Status Commission, the status negotiations were suddenly concluded.

As the newly elected representatives of the Marianas people, we strongly believe that the executive branch of your Government would be committing a very grave injustice by separating our islands before your Congress has reviewed the covenant agreement. If you decide to reject part of that agreement after we are separated, such as that part guaranteeing exclusive ownership of land only to United States citizens of "Marianas descent", for example, what alternative will our people have then? In short, we condemn any and all actions, such as an executive order by the Secretary of Interior, which will result in division of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands and cancel Marianas participation in our national Congress and the Micronesian Constitutional Convention before the United States Congress has ratified the commonwealth covenant agreement.

We firmly agree with the words contained in the Charter of the United Nations /Article 73, entitled/ Declaration Regarding Non-Self Governing Territories, which state:

"Members of the United Nations which have or assume responsibilities for the administration of territories ... recognize the principle that the interests of the inhabitants of these territories are paramount, and accept as a sacred trust the obligation to promote to the utmost ... the well-being of the inhabitants of these territories ..."

Because of these obligations, we believe that your responsibilities to the people of Micronesia, and the Marianas, are greater than your obligations to your own citizens at home in America because we do not enjoy full political and economic freedom. Likewise, we strongly believe that the present agreement

between the Marianas Status Commission and your executive branch will be unacceptable not only to your Congress, but to the Marianas people as well. We welcome any agreement whereby the interests of both sides are protected, including your strategic interests in the Western Pacific, but we feel that the present agreement should and must be renegotiated.

Sincerely,

(Signed) Congressman Jose P. MAFNAS  
First Representative District  
Mariana Islands

(Signed) Congressman Oscar C. RASA  
Third Representative District  
Member, Marianas Status Commission

cc: United Nations Security Council  
United Nations General Assembly  
United Nations Trusteeship Council  
United Nations Special Committee on Decolonization  
President of the United States  
United States Secretary of State  
United States Secretary of the Interior

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