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DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR  
March 29, 1962

REVIEWED BY B.H. BAAS DATE 3/25/87

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*Handwritten notes:*  
 Comments to 7261A

TO: H - Mr. George C. Mohr

THROUGH: S/S

FROM: FE - Edward L. Rice

SUBJECT: Guidelines Paper: Pacific Islands

Attached is the second draft of a guidelines paper on the Pacific Islands, prepared in the Office of Southwest Pacific Affairs. The paper is not derived from existing NSC or other policy papers. In far as we can determine, no previous policy statements covering the Pacific Islands region as a whole have been produced, the SFA Paper being the first effort in this field.

The paper foresees the extension to the Pacific Islands during the next few years of the pressures that have brought about the dismantling of the colonial systems in Asia and Africa. It suggests that we meet this situation by determining the form of post-colonial system in the Pacific that would best serve our interests and by taking steps to guide developments in the region toward its realization. In view of our heavy commitments elsewhere, it proposes that we coordinate our activities closely with Australia and New Zealand and rely on them -- especially New Zealand -- to take the lead in implementing our policies.

The paper suggests that, while no system of independent Pacific Island states would be entirely satisfactory, our interests would best be served by the emergence of (1) a series of six or seven sub-regional federations, each built around several adjacent island groups, the federations to be independent in their internal affairs, and (2) a strong regional organization consisting of the sub-regional federations, Australia, New Zealand and the U.S., which would have primary responsibility for the region's foreign affairs and defense. The paper proposes that U.S. possessions in the Pacific ultimately become a part of this system, either through amalgamation with one of the sub-regional federations (in the case of American Samoa) or, perhaps, by becoming a "trust territory" of the regional organization (in the case of Guam and the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands).

As the proposed system is put forth more as a basis for study than as a firm recommendation, the paper limits its suggested lines of action to those necessary to proceed with the first steps in the formation of a more concrete Pacific Islands policy: (1) consultation initially with Australia and New Zealand, and later with the other metropolitan powers, on the future of the region, (2) active support for New Zealand's initiative in proposing a revision of the structure and operations of the South Pacific Commission, and (3) the creation of adequate machinery within the Department to deal with Pacific Island affairs.

The first draft of this paper was disseminated within the Department and to the Departments of Defense and Interior for working-level comment. Within the

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Department, RMR and E proposed only minor changes, which have been incorporated in the attached draft. ODA, however, has indicated serious disagreement with the paper, particularly the sections dealing with United States-administered territories.

ODA's position is that the inhabitants of U.S. possessions must be permitted self-determination and that, if given this right, they will almost certainly choose a closer, permanent affiliation with the U.S. rather than independence in any form. As to the Trust Territory, ODA states that general U.S. policy envisages a closer relationship of the Territory to the U.S., including the grant of U.S. citizenship to the inhabitants, rather than a loosening of ties. ODA also points out that a major interdepartmental review of the future of our Pacific territories is now under way, and that it would be well to wait for the results of that review before proceeding to frame policy for the Pacific. ODA does agree, however, as to the need for adequate Departmental machinery to deal with Pacific Island affairs.

The Department of Defense has indicated its strong disagreement with many of the points made in the paper. Rather than listing its specific objections, Defense has convened a group (including Navy and Air Force representatives) to do a complete redraft of the paper. We have been informed that the redraft may be completed early in April.

The Department of the Interior has also stated its disagreement with the paper, its views paralleling those expressed by ODA.

It seems apparent from the foregoing that there is little consensus within interested agencies of the Government on which to base a set of policy guidelines for the Pacific Islands region as a whole. The question of the future disposition of our own Pacific territories is a key element in determining over-all policy for the region. As this involves the immediate interests of Defense and Interior as well as State, it seems best to await the results of the current interagency review of the subject before proceeding further with the preparation of a guidelines paper. Thus the positions set forth herein are tentative.

It is recommended, accordingly, that completion of a Pacific Islands guidelines paper be deferred until the question of the disposition of our own Pacific territories is settled and until the views of the Department of Defense toward SPA's initial draft are known. In the meantime, we believe it would be useful to examine the distribution of responsibility for Pacific Island affairs within the Department, to determine whether the region warrants more attention than can be given it under present organizational arrangements. The growing need for more adequate internal machinery to deal with the Pacific Islands is emphasized in SPA's draft.

Attachments:

Guidelines Paper: Pacific Islands (Copies 1 thru 5).

Clearances: SPA-Mr. Bell . . . FE-Colonel Shannon . . .  
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SECOND DRAFT

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDS/HR

REVIEWED BY B.H. BAAS DATE 3/25/67

GUIDELINES OF U.S. POLICY AND OPERATIONS  
TOWARD THE PACIFIC ISLANDS

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MARCH 28, 1962

The extremely disparate nature of the Pacific Islands region, the vast differences in levels of political and social development among the various island groups, and the complex framework of sovereignties make it infeasible to establish a set of concrete objectives for the entire region except in the most general terms. This paper is limited in scope to those relatively few broad objectives and lines of action applicable to the Pacific Islands region as a whole; specific U.S. objectives toward the more important of the various island groups within the region will be dealt with in separate papers as policy guidelines are developed.

For the purposes of this paper, the term "Pacific Islands" is defined to include the following areas: the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands; Guam; Papua; the Trust Territory of New Guinea; the British Solomon Islands; and all other islands within the rectangle formed by the parallels 160° east longitude, 120° west longitude, 10° north latitude and 28° south latitude.

I. BASIC APPROACH

Our national interest will not necessarily be served by a significant change in the present political and socio-economic status of the Pacific Islands. With the sole exception of Western Samoa, the entire region is now under the administration of outside powers allied to the U.S. or of the U.S. itself. In the postwar era the administering powers have been able to maintain a reasonably stable milieu, aside from isolated incidents, and

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undesirable to insulate the region fairly effectively from communist or other penetration. In view of our pressing responsibilities elsewhere in the world, our interests might well be best served by an indefinite continuation of the status quo.

It is, however, increasingly evident that the status quo/cannot long be maintained in the region. The dynamic changes which have transformed Asia and Africa have already begun to affect the Pacific. The familiar drive toward self-government, independence and social readjustment can be expected to spread through the region at an ever-increasing pace within the next decade despite any and all efforts to halt it. Under these circumstances, our basic approach to the region should be that of (1) recognizing these dynamic changes as they occur and, to the extent possible, anticipating them; (2) determining the general outlines of an over-all political structure into which the Pacific Island territories might be fitted as they emerge from colonial status, a structure which would be compatible with our interests, would meet the basic needs and aspirations of the Islanders, and would appear to be attainable; (3) taking properly timed measures to guide developments in the region into those channels which would promote the creation and growth of the structure we envisage; and (4) pursuing this course with the minimum necessary diversion of talents and resources from other problem areas, utilizing<sup>to</sup> the extent possible the cooperation and the resources of other Pacific states whose interests in the region parallel ours.

In this approach we must insure that the image we create is one of moving with, rather than reacting to, the evolving aspirations of the Island peoples. Recurrent conflicts of interest between Island territories and the metropolitan

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and the metropolitan powers are probably inevitable. In determining our positions toward such conflicts, we should recognize that (1) the European metropolitan powers, while their prestige and national feelings may be substantially involved, do not have vital national interests anywhere in the region; (2) in the present world climate, the Islanders are likely ultimately to win; and (3) we will, sooner or later, be dealing directly with the Islanders, whose orientation will in large measure be shaped by our actions in the period of transition.

## II. BACKGROUND

The Pacific Islands today represent virtually the last relatively undisturbed stronghold of "classic" colonial rule. Prior to January 1, 1962, the entire region was administered by the Western powers and their Australasian

allies: Australia, France, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and the United States. The area under Australian control, consisting of Papua and the Trust Territory of New Guinea with a total population of approximately 2.0 million, is by far the largest of the national holdings. Under British administration are the colonies of Fiji (population about 410,000), the Solomon Islands (about 120,000), the Gilbert and Ellice Islands (about 48,000) and Tonga (about 62,000). France controls two main island groups, New Caledonia and its dependencies (population about 95,000) and French Polynesia (about 83,000). The New Hebrides (62,000) is administered by a British-French condominium. New Zealand administers the Cook and Tokelau islands and Niue with a population of approximately 27,000. U.S. possessions include

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include Guam (50,000), American Samoa, (22,000) and the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands (78,000). The sole exception to the pattern of colonial control is the state of Western Samoa, with a population of some 120,000, which gained its full independence on January 1, 1962.

Despite indications of growing political awareness and social ferment among various of the island groups, there are as yet only tentative signs that profound changes are likely in the near future. An extraordinarily scattered population of barely 3 million, half of whom have hardly been touched by modern civilization and the remainder of whom have to date demonstrated only sporadic interest in political advancement, is most unlikely to erupt in a sudden wave of violent nationalism such as has occurred in Africa.

On the other hand, it would be unrealistic to presume that, despite surface indications of serenity, the present status of the Pacific Islands can be considered stable for more than a few years at best. <sup>with</sup> classic colonialism fast disappearing throughout the world, the attention of the militant anti-colonialist nations is bound to focus, sooner or later, on its last remaining stronghold. The pressure on the administering powers to "liberate" their Pacific colonies is likely to increase substantially, probably accompanied by efforts to induce the Islanders themselves to press more strongly for "freedom". Moreover, the Soviet Union has in recent months demonstrated a growing interest in the Pacific Islands, an interest highlighted by its former virtually complete neglect of the region. It appears increasingly likely that the Soviets are in the process of recognizing and planning to take advantage of the opportunity to stir up embarrassing

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embarrassing trouble for their opponents by promoting agitation in the latter's island possessions. In view of the strategic location of many of the islands and their role in space and missile development, this upsurge of Soviet attention may also be indicative of a growing Soviet strategic interest in the region.

Of even greater import for the future, the islanders themselves are beginning to lose their cloak of isolation and to absorb present-day political concepts at an accelerating pace. The recent opening of jet service from Honolulu to Tahiti, for example, will increasingly flood the island with new ideas as well as tourists. Probably most significant of all will be the spreading impact of the attainment of independence by Western Samoa; the event has already attracted widespread attention throughout the Pacific and seems certain to raise the question everywhere in Polynesia: "If they, why not we?"

Unlike the postwar transformation of Asia and Africa, the anticipated transformation of the Pacific Islands region from a colonial to a post-colonial status would have little material impact on the major powers or the balance among them. Aside from the nickel and chrome deposits of New Caledonia and a few phosphate workings, mineral resources and other physical assets are negligible. Industry is almost totally lacking and even a base for industry scarcely exists. Human resources are tiny by Asian or African standards. Despite this, it is clear that a major shift in the region's present status would have serious implications for the U.S. The strategic importance of the islands astride the main channels of communications between the United States, and Australia, New Zealand and Southeast Asia is obvious. Their value in the

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field of weapons development and in missile and space research is of increasing significance. In both of these areas, the need to keep the islands available in friendly hands for our own use is at least matched by the necessity of keeping them from unfriendly hands.

In addition, United States interests are already committed in the Pacific Islands in a manner not found elsewhere in the world except in the Caribbean. Our own possessions in the Pacific and our international obligations as administrator of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands have made us one of the region's major colonial powers. For reasons both of policy and of existing commitment, it would be difficult if not impossible for us to avoid the closest involvement in Pacific Island affairs despite our pressing responsibilities elsewhere. (Our recognition of this involvement does not, of course, imply that we need take a defensive attitude toward our status as a colonial power, nor that we should be stampeded into hasty action to rid ourselves of the "stigma". Our record as a Pacific colonial power is not one of which we need be defensive or apologetic.)

If we recognize the likelihood of a dynamic political change in the Pacific during the next few years and the inevitability of our involvement therein, it would appear wiser to take positive steps at the outset to control it and to guide it into constructive channels rather than to hope that it will be forestalled until a convenient time in the future. At least the groundwork for a series of well-timed and coordinated measures to bring  
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our influence to bear on the evolving situation should be laid without delay. Our goal should be the phased, orderly extension of independence to the Pacific Islands to bring about a stable framework of states strongly oriented to the West.

A question that arises at the outset is "independence for what?" The attainment of separate independent status by a score -- or a hundred -- tiny island principalities, is highly impractical; however, should nationalism begin to spread unguided through the islands (or guided only by irresponsible Afro-Asians and the Soviet Union), this is the form it may well take. On the other hand, <sup>a</sup>single Pacific Islands sovereignty, encompassing in one nation both Tahitian shopkeepers and Papuan headhunters 3,500 miles distant, is obviously out of the question.

No one form of national independence seems fully suited to satisfy the geographical and ethnic conditions of the Pacific Islands region. Whatever the form eventually assumed by sovereign island states in the Pacific, they will in certain respects be unviable. The most reasonable of alternatives, none of which are fully satisfactory, would seem to be the creation of (1) a small number of independent federal states, not over eight at the most, each composed of several groups of islands linked by ethnic, linguistic, cultural and political ties (see Footnote 1, Page 11), and (2) a strong regional organization along the lines of a beefed-up OAS, with a membership comprising not only the new states but Australia, New Zealand and the United States. Such an organization:

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an organization, particularly with the support of its extra-regional members, could assume primary responsibility for a number of functions that would be entirely beyond the individual capabilities of the new states, especially in the fields of foreign affairs and defense. The task of bringing about the creation of a regional system of this sort would be complex and the end product in many ways a continuing minor headache, a further multiplication of small, weak and at times shrilly assertive new countries with whom to deal. As there are no satisfactory alternatives which could give equivalent expression to nationalism, however, it appears in our interests to take at least initial steps to realize the concept.

in view of our deep and more pressing commitments elsewhere in the world, it would be essential to limit our direct involvement in the reshaping of the Pacific Islands region to the minimum necessary to accomplish the job. To the extent possible, leadership in this long and complex task should devolve upon other countries which share our views and are willing to expend their energies in achieving our mutual objectives.

The logical countries to exert such leadership are Australia and New Zealand, especially the latter. New Zealand has a number of unique qualifications for this role: the largest and most advanced Polynesian community in the Pacific (the Maori); military and physical resources which, while too slender to be of significance in the world scene, are sufficient to exert substantial influence in the islands; a body of administrators and technicians already experienced in island affairs; an excellent reputation in the Pacific, stemming from

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stemming from its exemplary handling of the Western Samoa trust. In addition, psychological factors are particularly propitious at present for turning New Zealand's interests toward the Pacific Islands. The prospective entry of the UK into the EEC has shaken New Zealand's long-held image of its world position and has given rise to a good deal of soul-searching as to New Zealand's future world role. The idea that New Zealand should focus its energies on the Pacific has already been broached by certain of its leaders. Encouraged to do so by the U.S., assured of U.S. interest and support, and asked to take a foremost part in Pacific planning, New Zealand might well find in the proposed role at least a partial answer to its present dilemma.

It should be recognized that, at one stage or another, the achievement of a Pacific Community along the foregoing lines would require our relinquishment not only of a territory held under a UN trusteeship but, in all likelihood, of territories which for more than a half-century have been American possessions: Guam and American Samoa. In considering such an eventuality, it should be borne in mind that (1) the initial purposes for which they were acquired, to provide sites for a coaling station and a cable station, have been rendered largely meaningless by modern technology, (2) neither is tied to the U.S. by ethnic or cultural links, (3) neither currently contribute an iota to our national wealth, (4) their permanent retention is inconsistent with our general anti-colonial stance and offers a standing target for criticism by the Afro-Asians, and (5) sooner or later we may be forced to relinquish them in any event. The fact that Guam currently is of major importance as a key link in our defenses in the western Pacific would, of course, make its eventual relinquishment subject to considerations of

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security. The pace of change in military technology and strategy, however, suggests that its importance as a base cannot be considered a constant, particularly when a period of years or decades is concerned. In any event, should relinquishment of administrative control appear politically necessary at a time when its importance as a defense base is undiminished, an arrangement permitting us to retain control of base installations (virtually the territory's sole source of income) would not be incompatible with independence.

### III. OBJECTIVES

1. The peaceful and orderly transformation of the Pacific Islands region from a "last outpost" of colonial rule to a regional grouping of democratic, autonomous states, linked together in a strong regional organization consisting of ~~the regional~~ <sup>tion,</sup> ~~the regional~~ states, the United States, Australia and New Zealand. Intermediate objectives to further the ultimate achievement of this long-range goal should, at least at the outset, take the following progression:

a. The phased, orderly extension of internal autonomy and self-government to each of the island groups with a population large enough to sustain formal governmental institutions, the extension keyed to the attainment of adequate capacities on the part of the inhabitants but effected as promptly as possible within this context; the progressive withdrawal by the present administering powers of their control over the internal affairs of the island groups as their inhabitants attain the capacity for self-government;

b. The delineation

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b. The delineation of six or seven specific sub-regions within the region and the <sup>development</sup> among the inhabitants thereof of feelings of identity with and membership in the sub-region, this <sup>phase</sup> to take place concurrently with the extension of internal self-government to the various islands within the sub-region (Footnote 1).

FOOTNOTE 1: - The geographical make-up of the sub-regions would depend on a number of factors, including ethnic similarities, shared familiarity with specific forms of administration (i.e., British colonial, French colonial, etc.), use of the same lingua franca or administrative language (English, French, Pidgin, etc.), the presence of a city or population center to serve as a logical nucleus, and existing attitudes among the islanders themselves. Admittedly some of the sub-regions would have to be artificial creations, their emergence depending to a considerable degree on the success of discreet but persistent outside prompting. The various combinations that might be formed in creating sub-regions is virtually limitless; for illustrative purposes, the following pattern might prove a practical one: (1) Melanesian sub-region, including Papua, the Trust Territory of New Guinea and the Solomon Islands, with a population of slightly over 2.1 million; (2) New Caledonia and New Hebrides sub-region, with a population of 157,000; (3) Fiji sub-region, with a population of 410,000; (4) Tonga, Niue and Cook Islands sub-region, with about 87,000 people; (5) Western Samoa, American Samoa, Tokelaus and Ellice Islands sub-region, with a population of 150,000; and (6) French Polynesian sub-region, with roughly 83,000 people. Although the extreme dispersion of the small population raises a formidable barrier, Micronesia might become an additional sub-region, encompassing the Trust Territory of the Pacific, Guam and the Gilbert Islands, with a total population of around 170,000. Alternately, the area might become a "trust territory" of the proposed regional organization (see Sub-paragraph e).

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c. The attainment

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- c. The attainment of full independence by the most advanced island or island group within each of the six or seven sub-regions upon the voluntary, phased withdrawal of the present administering power;
- d. The progressive affiliation of the other island entities within each sub-region to that entity which first achieves independence, to form an independent federation with a single central authority over regional affairs, finance and other essentially national prerogatives (with the exception of foreign affairs and defense) together with such degree of local autonomy among the federal components in other matters as the inhabitants desire;
- e. The establishment of a strong Pacific Islands regional organization to include, on a basis of formal equality, the six or seven federated national states of the Pacific Islands plus the U.S., Australia and New Zealand; this organization would have primary responsibility for the region's foreign relations and regional defense and security, together with authority to serve as a central clearing house for dissemination of external aid to the region, to carry out region-wide projects in the fields of health, social welfare, education, etc., to mediate disagreements among the members, and, if necessary, to administer directly any islands in dispute between two or more regional members; the organization might also serve, temporarily or permanently, as direct administering authority for those isolated islands or scattered groups which lack the prerequisites for nationhood or affiliation with one of the sub-regional federal entities.

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2. The insulation

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2. The insulation of the Pacific Islands region from contact with and influence by the Soviet bloc and the less responsible nations among the Afro-Asian group, particularly during the period in which the political structure of the region is in the stages of evolution toward self-government and independence.

3. The abandonment by those present metropolitan powers which do not border on the Pacific of all special rights \_\_\_\_\_ 17  
their Pacific Island possessions as those possessions attain independence, either directly or through affiliation with a sub-regional federation.

4. The assumption by New Zealand of the primary role as guide and mentor to the emerging states of the Pacific Islands and as the de facto leader of the regional organization postulated in Objective 1 (e); the use of New Zealand influence and, if necessary, New Zealand forces to maintain order and otherwise promote optimum conditions for the evolutionary process outlined in Objective 1.

5. Acceptance by the United States of the probable need for ultimate withdrawal from Pacific Island territories now under U.S. administration, including Guam and American Samoa, to enable these territories to become elements of independent federations; avoidance by the U.S. of any future moves which would tend to draw these territories into an irreversible political relationship to the U.S., such as statehood or incorporation into an existing state, as long as the region as a whole is in a transitional stage of political development; promotion by the U.S. of a progressively increasing degree of local autonomy and self-government among these territories, and the gradual indoctrination of their indigenous leaders to look toward independence and sub-regional federation as their ultimate goal.

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6. The retention

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6. The retention by the U.S. of present military bases and facilities in the Pacific Islands as long as the international situation and the status of military technology makes their retention necessary or clearly desirable to U.S. security; access to such additional sites as may be necessary for the establishment of U.S. facilities in the fields of defense, military and civilian communications, basic and applied scientific research, and the development of advanced weapons systems.

7. A progressive growth and broadening of the region's economic base, agricultural production and trade, <sup>and educational facilities</sup> to provide a steady increase in the standard of living of the region's inhabitants and promote optimum conditions for the achievement of orderly political progress; effective contributions by each of the present metropolitan powers to achieve this goal.

8. Fulfillment of the terms of the Australian and U.S. trusteeship agreements covering the New Guinea, Nauru and Pacific Island Trust Territories at the earliest date consistent with orderly development of the territories, in order to remove them from the purview of the UN Trusteeship Council.

#### IV. LINES OF ACTION

Courses of action to achieve the objectives set forth in the foregoing will depend to a major extent on the cooperation of the other powers administering island territories and on their acceptance of our estimates of the need for such action. The drawing up of specific lines of action should be done in consultation with those powers, particularly with New Zealand and Australia as the countries most deeply concerned. The following lines of action will serve to prepare the ground for establishing specific plans; at this juncture, more specific planning on our part would be premature.

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1. Initiate a series of informal consultations with New Zealand and Australia on the future of the Pacific Islands. Officials of both governments have already indicated their concern for the future of the Pacific Islands and their interest in coordinated planning with the U.S. to meet the problems they envisage. In the course of these discussions, our views in the future of the Pacific Islands as a whole should be put forth and those of the other participants solicited.

2. Request New Zealand and Australia to take the initiative of approaching the UK and France to propose further multilateral conversations on that topic. Assuming positive results from our initial conversations with New Zealand and Australia, the other two administering powers should be appraised of our agreed views and their own views solicited. For tactical reasons, the approach to those powers should be made by Australia and New Zealand rather than directly by the U.S.

3. Support New Zealand initiative in convening a conference of member nations to revise the structure and operations of the South Pacific Commission. New Zealand has proposed a conference of South Pacific Commission member nations to consider a revision of its structure and operations. We and several other member governments have already indicated our agreement in principle; by common consent, however, it has been decided not to press the project until the danger of/becoming involved with the West New Guinea dispute has passed. We should strive to convene such a conference as soon as conditions permit and should utilize it to work for a thorough revision of the Commission, to make it an instrument susceptible of progressive transformation from an organization of metropolitan powers to one representative of the aspirations of the Pacific Islanders themselves. A transformed Commission might well serve as the parent of the regional organization postulated in Objective 1(e) and could also be used as a primary forum for propagating the concept of independence through sub-regional federation.

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4. Establish adequate machinery within the U.S. Government for concerted action on policy toward the Pacific Islands and problems of the region. At present there is no entity within the Department of State with primary responsibility for Pacific Island affairs. The establishment of adequate internal machinery to deal with those affairs is a necessary prerequisite for successful policy development and implementation, for productive consultation with Australia and New Zealand, and for continuing close liaison with other agencies of the Government concerned with the Pacific Islands region. Our present representation in the Pacific Islands region (a two-officer consulate at Suva) is also proving too limited to provide sufficient coverage of developments within this huge region. It should be progressively expanded as conditions permit.

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