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ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE
WASHINGTON

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JUN 2 1964

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Honorable
John A. Carver, Assistant Secretary,
Department of the Interior

SUBJECT: NSAM 268 - Recommendations of the Department of State
Regarding the Fixing of a Date for a Plebiscite in
the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands.

The Department of State recommends that a United Nations-supervised plebiscite on the future political status of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands be held in the Territory in 1967. The plebiscite options would include (1) independence and (2) association with the United States within our political framework. This recommendation is subject to the following provisos:

1. The date for the plebiscite is subject to periodic review.
2. The United States Government undertakes to give the islanders a sufficient measure of self-government to meet the objective of "self-government" as stated in the two international agreements to which the United States is a party, the United Nations Charter and the Trusteeship Agreement, and to accord with the requirements of "a full measure of self-government" as defined in UN Resolution 1541 (XV) of December 15, 1960.

Regarding the public announcement of the plebiscite we believe that consultations must first take place with the Congress and then, as appropriate, with our allies in the Pacific. In the latter case we must give sufficient advance notice of our plans to afford our allies the opportunity to adjust, if need be, to the changed circumstances resulting from our plans. As soon as possible after these steps have been taken we believe that a statement should be made by the President to the effect that the US anticipates that the inhabitants of the Trust Territory will make their decision regarding the future political status of the Territory within the next five years and that in the meantime the US is further accelerating the economic, political and social development of the Territory. We do not believe there is any pressing need for specific mention of the plebiscite and we recognize the advantages in withholding announcement of the event until a few months in advance. The announcement as outlined above will not completely satisfy our critics in the United Nations but will probably make our future

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-2-

position much more defensible and will reduce substantially the possibility of any embarrassment which might be caused by an information leak regarding our plans.

Discussion

National Security Action Memorandum 145 set forth as United States policy that the Trust Territory be given a real option at the appropriate time to move into a new and lasting relationship to the United States within our political framework. Taking into account the precedents involved in the eight trusteeships which have already been terminated, the Department of State believes that the contemplated change in the status of the Trust Territory must take place on the basis of a United Nations-supervised plebiscite. The large majority of United Nations member states will insist that one of the plebiscite options be Micronesian sovereign independence.

On the question of timing the Department of State believes the growing strength of decolonization pressures throughout the world and recent indications that anti-colonialist attention in the United Nations is focusing more on the Pacific area are making the earliest possible implementation of the political changes involved in NSAM 145 highly desirable from the standpoint of our international relations. The Department of State notes, however, the Survey Mission's recommendation that the plebiscite be held in 1967 or 1968 in order to allow sufficient time for the development of Micronesian self-government and to allow a recommended capital investment program for the Territory to have its full impact. On the basis of the Mission's report and our appraisal of the international political scene we would view a target date of 1967 as a reasonable balance of the conflicting considerations as we now perceive them. However, sufficient flexibility must be retained to adjust the date to meet over-riding contingencies. The Department of Defense has suggested that the plebiscite be held no later than 1966.

The Department of State's second proviso concerns the degree of self-government which is to be given to the Micronesians. Although this problem is not of immediate urgency, we do wish agreement in principle now that the Micronesians will be accorded sufficient self-government to meet existing international criteria. Indeed, we believe that in order to achieve this goal an immediate start should be made to establish the future governmental structure for the area. The degree of self-government necessary to satisfy international requirements would by definition have to appear at least to exceed that of the US non-self-

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-3-

governing territories. Otherwise we must anticipate an unfavorable international reaction. _____

_____ The Department of State hopes that the plebiscite and subsequent action in the United Nations can remove the Trust Territory entirely from the United Nations colonial context. In doing this we will have to satisfy the objective of "self-government" stated in the Trusteeship Agreement and the test of "full measure of self-government" as given in General Assembly Resolution 1541 (XV) which sets out the criteria to be used in determining when a metropole's responsibilities under Article 73 of the United Nations Charter are ended. The Department of State agrees that reserve powers must be maintained to safeguard United States interests in the Territory. For the reasons cited above, we consider that the visible reserved powers should be held to the minimum required to exercise adequate control. If the United States retains extensive explicit powers of vetoing Micronesian legislation, of dismissing the Chief Executive, and of dissolving the legislature, it will be open to dangerous criticism in the United Nations.

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It is obvious that the implementation of our recommendations will require intensive, continuing Congressional consultation. We believe such consultations should be in closed sessions. We acknowledge the Department of Interior's primary responsibilities in this regard and stand ready to assist Interior upon its request.

/s/
IO - Harlan Cleveland

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