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DRAFT MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

SUBJECT: Future Political Status of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands

I recommend that you take definitive action leading to early political association of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands with the United States. The Department of Defense and the Joint Chiefs of Staff have reaffirmed categorically the need for continued reliance on the availability of the Caroline, Mariana and Marshall island groupings for support of long-range United States commitments in the Far East. Steadily mounting pressures in the United Nations for more rapid advance toward the self-determination we pledged when signing the Trusteeship Agreement 20 years ago are making our present form of administration in the TTPI an increasing political liability. The people of Micronesia have been awakened to the modern world and are beginning to look for an alternative to political stagnation as wards of the United Nations.

Secretary McNamara, Secretary Udall, Ambassador Goldberg and I agree that we must now take steps to permit termination of the Trusteeship Agreement through the exercise of a plebiscite by the people of the Trust Territory. Such a plebiscite, to conform with UN practice of supervision and the obligations which we undertook in the Trusteeship Agreement, should offer the following choices: independence, continuation of trusteeship status, free

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association with the United States with provision for self-governing status, the specific nature of which will be determined by the population itself after a period of _____ years.

It is clear that the people of the Trust Territory desire some form of association with the United States. Their acceptance of free association with the United States would mean that the Trusteeship Agreement would remain in effect until the referendum establishing a system of self-government.

I have serious doubts that the Micronesian people would choose to become part of Hawaii or that such a realignment could be accomplished without serious strains in the area. For instance, there is strong sentiment in the Marianas Islands for integration with the ethnically similar Territory of Guam which lies in their midst, Guam itself would be left in an anomalous position. Moreover, there are bound to be reservations among the inhabitants of the Trust Territory as a whole based on a desire to avoid loss of their own cultural and ethnic identity, fear of possible exploitation as a backwater of Hawaii, and reluctance to exchange reliance on more direct Federal Government support for an unpredictable future with a state government involved with its own more proximate concerns.

I recommend that you authorize initiation of consultations with

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the appropriate Congressional committees on such a program, possibly culminating in adoption of a joint resolution of Congress expressing its readiness to accept association of the territory with the United States if this should be the choice of the population.

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