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PRESIDENTIAL STATEMENT IN CONNECTION WITH THE TRANSMITTAL TO THE CONGRESS OF PROPOSED LEGISLATION TO AUTHORIZE AN ACCELERATED PROGRAM OF CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS IN THE TRUST TERRITORY OF THE PACIFIC ISLANDS (A bill "To amend the Act of June 30, 1954, as amended, providing for the continuance of civil government for the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands.")

I have today transmitted to the Congress this Administration's legislative proposal to authorize a bold and accelerated program of development in the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands.

This important legislation is designed to further the discharge of this Government's commitment solemnized in a trusteeship agreement with the U. N. to promote the political, economic and social development of the people of the Trust Territory. If we are to honor that commitment and discharge our obligations in a timely and suitable manner, the enactment of this proposal is an immediate necessity.

Ninety thousand Micronesians look to the United States for the help that they require in order to take their rightful place in the modern world. The problems of development which they face are enormous, and are complicated by the physical and geographic aspects of the area denominated as the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands. The population of the Trust Territory is divided among some 97 of 2,000 islands, providing a total land area of only approximately 700 square miles. Those islands are scattered over almost 3,000,000 square miles of the Pacific Ocean, an area similar to the area of the United States.

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We have recognized the needs of the people of the Trust Territory and we have moved over the years since 1947 to meet those needs and overcome the problems which face both the people of the Trust Territory and the United States in its administration of the area. It is obvious that if we are not to fall behind in our efforts, much less fully discharge our obligation, we must act in a decisive, imaginative and forward-looking way. The proposal I have transmitted embodies what I believe to be necessary in this regard.

The proposed legislation will authorize the appropriation of sufficient funds to finance over a period of years, but we hope by 1972, a program of necessary capital improvements which will, when completed, provide for the vast majority of the people of the Trust Territory the minimum acceptable facilities in the fields of health, education, utilities, transportation and public buildings. It will also authorize the appropriation of sufficient funds to operate and maintain the Government of the Trust Territory, and all that that entails, at a similarly acceptable level.

The enactment of this legislation will do far more than merely provide a modern physical plant commensurate with the needs of the people. It will provide an effective training ground for Micronesian labor and be the means of stimulating the total economy of the Trust Territory, thus beneficially multiplying the economic impact of every dollar spent in the local economy.

It is also important to recognize that this legislation and the program which it will authorize will demonstrate more vividly than any declaration of intent or purpose, no matter how eloquent, this Nation's regard for the rights and integrity of the people for whom it has assumed

responsibility, and our intention to honor our commitments to the best of our ability. Working together, we, the Congress, the Executive branch and the people of Micronesia can achieve a success that a few years ago would have been thought impossible. However, the first step lies with the Congress, and in commending this proposal to it, I have asked the Congress for the prompt and favorable consideration which the proposal deserves.