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January 23, 1967

MEMORANDUM

To: S/P - Mr. Owen

From: S/P - W. W. Behrens Jr.

Subject: Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands

The Johnson Administration has dramatized and for the first time in a number of years brought to the fore this country's extensive commitments and interest in the Pacific. This has been done principally by the President's trip throughout the Pacific region, undertaken in pursuit of our objectives in Viet-Nam, but also has been inherent in the new attention Administration policy makers have given to the Philippines, Australia, Japan, and other areas on the Pacific perimeter, including the Pacific islands.

President Johnson, largely through the necessities enforced by Viet-Nam, has a greater awareness of Pacific pressures than any other recent President. It probably is no exaggeration to realize at this point that the President now sees himself as going down in history as much for his Pacific accomplishments as for the Great Society endeavors. The formation of the Asian Development Bank is just one example of this vision.

In this context, the U.S. Trust Territories of Pacific Islands afford a real opportunity. It seems reasonable that positive action leading to a constructive settlement of the future of the TTP1, especially in light of world interest focused through the UN, would be a profitable accomplishment for the Administration. The Administration will be interested especially in useful efforts which may cast a good light on our strategic interests in this area.

The attached proposal for a Commission on the Status of the TTP1 may well prove to be a case in point. While I am not yet convinced that such a Commission is the only course or would prove to be the best way to attack our TTP1 problems, it

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR

REVIEWED BY B. H. BAAS DATE 7/21/87

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deserves consideration. There is a necessity for providing a careful background for Congressional responsibilities. Before a plebiscite or like steps for settling the TTPI can be undertaken, it is essential that Congress be committed in terms of ratifying whatever the people of the TTPI decide they prefer. Although any such Commission (even if cut in size from that in the attached proposal -- and I am personally convinced that it would have to be so reduced) would take time, because of important political considerations there may be no satisfactory short-cut.

I will continue to keep you informed on this subject.

Attachment:

As mentioned above.

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