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May 9, 1967

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MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM: The Secretaries of State, Interior and Defense

Subject: Future Status of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands

Recommendation:

That you authorize immediate consultations to obtain Congressional concurrence in the establishment of a Presidential Commission to make specific recommendations within eight months for a program of self-government in the Trust Territory, and the holding of a plebiscite not later than June 30, 1972.

Discussion:

To ensure our defense interests we believe the United States must make an early decision on the political future of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, which unlike our other Pacific territories of Guam and American Samoa is administered under a Trusteeship Agreement of 1947 with the United Nations Security Council. The Joint Chiefs of Staff consider it essential for strategic reasons that the Trust Territory continue to be associated with the United States. Any future political arrangements must also be consistent with our international obligation

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
REVIEWED BY <u>B.H. BAAS</u> DATE <u>3/25/67</u>
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to promote the political development of the Territory "towards self-government or independence as may be appropriate to the particular circumstances of the Trust Territory and its peoples and the freely expressed wishes of the peoples concerned." As long as we move promptly, we are confident we can harmonize these requirements and take advantage of the generally favorable political climate which exists in the Trust Territory today.

We have concluded that the best way of accomplishing our strategic objective is through a program of accelerated self-government and economic development of the Territory so that the Micronesian people can exercise their right of self-determination in circumstances highlighting the advantages of continued association with the United States. Specifically, we favor the establishment of a Presidential Commission to formulate such a program, and the holding of a plebiscite under UN observation not later than June 30, 1972 in which the Micronesians would choose between independence and association with the United States. Provided we move promptly, we believe it virtually certain that they would choose continued association with the United

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States, thus ensuring our defense interests under conditions free of UN supervision.

In order to terminate the Trusteeship Agreement with the UN, we will have to offer Micronesia a self-governing status similar to the Commonwealth arrangements for Puerto Rico. Commonwealth status ^{should be} sufficiently elastic

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so that we could accommodate the relative lack of political experience in the Trust Territory and the special concern of Congress on matters such as adequate budgetary control.

A major effort on our part would be required to win Congressional support for this proposed course of action. The Congress has demonstrated its desire to advance the Territory's economic development, and we believe Congress will cooperate with a program of political development if we explain adequately the national security considerations underlying our proposal and fully engage the Congress in the act of specific recommendations. It is for this reason we have suggested a Commission with half its members drawn from the Congress. It would be essential nevertheless that you designate a Chairman and establish broad guidelines for the Commission in advance so that it would make recommendations consistent with the terms of the Trusteeship Agreement.

If you approve this course of action, we would propose high-level consultation with key Congressional leaders seeking Congressional sponsorship of a proposed joint resolution along the lines of that enclosed. Once Congressional support is assured, we would suggest you proceed with a Presidential announcement.

We have in mind that the Chairman of the Commission might be someone such as Justice Tom Clark, and if you approve, we will provide you with a separate list of suggested candidates drawn from public life and the Executive Branch.

Enclosures:

1. Proposed Joint Resolution.
2. Proposed Presidential Statement.

Concurrences:

L - Mr. Meeker
H - Mr. Macomber
EA - Mr. Berger
IO - Mr. Sisco

IO:UNP:WGleysteen:gs

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JOINT RESOLUTION

Regarding the Status of the
Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands

Whereas the United States is the Administering Authority of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, pursuant to the Trusteeship Agreement between the United States of America and the Security Council of the United Nations; and

Whereas the United States, in the Trusteeship Agreement, undertook a solemn obligation to "foster the development of such political institutions as are suited to the trust territory" and to "promote the development of the inhabitants of the trust territory toward self-government or independence as may be appropriate to the particular circumstances of the trust territory and its peoples and the freely expressed wishes of the people concerned;" and

Whereas the United States, in the Trusteeship Agreement, further undertook a solemn obligation to promote the economic, social, and educational advancement of the inhabitants of the Trust Territory; and

Whereas the United States is dedicated to the principle of government by consent of the governed; and

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Whereas the Congress of Micronesia has petitioned the President to establish a commission to consult the people of Micronesia to ascertain their wishes and views, and to study and critically assess the political alternatives open to Micronesia; and

Whereas the President has proposed to establish a commission in response to such petition and has invited Congressional participation; and

Whereas the Congress by enacting Public Law 90-____ has evidenced its support for an intensive program to promote the political, economic, social and educational advancement of the Trust Territory: Therefore be it

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,
That it is the sense of Congress that whatever steps may be necessary shall be taken to provide for such a degree of self-government as will permit the people of the Trust Territory freely to express their wishes as soon as possible, and not later than June 30, 1972, on the future status of the Trust Territory.

SEC. 2. In addition to eight members of the Commission to be appointed by the President, the appointment of eight members of Congress to serve on the President's Commission on the Status of the Trust Territory is hereby authorized. Four of such members shall be appointed by

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the President of the Senate, two to be from among the members of the Senate Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, and one each from among the members of the Committees on Foreign Relations and Armed Services; and four shall be appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives, two to be from among the members of the House Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, and ~~one each from among the members of the Committees on~~

Foreign Affairs, and Armed Services. *President shall designate an additional member as Chairman of* The ~~Chairman of~~ the Commission, ~~shall be designated by the President.~~

SEC. 3. The Commission shall study and assess all factors bearing upon the future of the Trust Territory and shall consult as appropriate with representatives of the people of Micronesia. The Commission shall, no later than eight months after funds for the Commission are appropriated and made available to the Commission, submit recommendations to the President and to the Congress of the United States concerning the best means to obtain ~~the objective~~ set forth in section 1.

~~SEC. 4.~~ Employees of the Executive branch may be detailed to assist in the work of the Commission, with or without reimbursement. Any member of the Commission

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who may be appointed by the President from among the public shall be compensated \$75 per diem for his services when engaged on Commission business, and all members shall be entitled to reimbursement for actual travel and per diem in lieu of subsistence when engaged on Commission business. The Commission is authorized to procure services as authorized by 5 U.S.C. 3109.

~~SEC. 5. There is authorized to be appropriated out of moneys in the Treasury not otherwise appropriated such funds as may be necessary for the purpose of carrying out the provisions of this joint resolution, but not to exceed \$200,000, to be available until expended.~~

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PROPOSED WHITE HOUSE ANNOUNCEMENT

The President today announced the establishment of a Commission which will consider the future political status of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands. The Commission will consist of 16 members, half of whom will be members of Congress representing both Houses while the remaining members will be drawn from public life and the Executive Branch. Justice of the Supreme Court, Tom Clark, will be the Chairman.

The United States administers the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands under a Trusteeship Agreement of 1947 with the United Nations Security Council. Under this Trusteeship Agreement the United States is not only pledged to foster the economic, social and educational advancement of the people of the Territory but is also obligated to promote their political development towards self-government or independence. The quickening pace of political development in the Trust Territory is reflected in the establishment in 1965 of an elected, territory-wide legislature, the Congress of Micronesia, and in the increasing numbers of Micronesians who are assuming responsible positions

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in the government of the Trust Territory. The Congress of Micronesia petitioned the President in August 1966 to "establish a commission to consult the people of Micronesia to ascertain their wishes and views and to study and critically assess the political alternatives open to Micronesia."

In response to this petition from the Congress of Micronesia, the President has established the Commission which will be asked to consider the views of all interested persons, including representative Micronesians, and to recommend to the President and the Congress a program by which the people of the Trust Territory will continue to advance rapidly toward self-government and an exercise of self-determination. The United States Government believes that the people of the Trust Territory should be given an early opportunity to determine their future status. Therefore, the United States Government proposes to hold, not later than June 30, 1972, a plebiscite in which the people would choose between independence and free association with the United States.

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