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Honorable Wayne M. Aspinall
Chairman, Committee on Interior
and Insular Affairs
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman:

The Department of State has carefully examined H.J. Res. 594 which would establish a commission to examine the future political status of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands. We agree with the aims of this resolution, which appears to be in part a response to a petition from the Congress of Micronesia in 1966 to the President asking that he "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."

The Department of State believes that a commission set up under H. J. Res. 594 or any other proposal can only be effective if it operates within the framework of the international obligations of the United States. Of basic importance in this regard is the 1947 Trusteeship Agreement between the United States and the Security Council of the United Nations. Under Article 6 of that Agreement, the United States, as Administering Authority, is pledged "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 people and

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the freely expressed wishes of the people concerned." This requirement under Article 6 is a binding legal commitment of the United States, and hence any commission recommendations regarding the future political status of the Trust Territory which are to be implemented by the United States will have to be consistent with this stipulation.

There are in addition such questions as the appropriate terms of reference, composition and membership of any proposed commission. We expect to discuss these and other aspects of the issue with the Congress in the near future.

The Bureau of the Budget advises that from the standpoint of the Administration's program, there is no objection to the submission of this report.

Sincerely yours,

William B. Macomber, Jr.
Assistant Secretary for
Congressional Relations

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6/27/67

Clearances:

EA/ANZ - Miss McReynolds *WFP*

L/UNA - Mr. Starn *WFP*

H - Mr. White

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