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OUTGOING TELEGRAM Department of State

INDICATE: COLLECT:
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Origin
 Info

ACTION: Amembassy CANBERRA

STATE

REF: Canberra's 3422

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1. Situation concerning TTPI's political future has not changed substantially since last Four-Power meeting in Canberra. Neither House nor Senate has acted on Administration's proposed bill to establish Status Commission and hold plebiscite in Micronesia by 1972. However, Insular Subcommittee of House Interior Committee held Executive hearings in March, and Senate counterpart will hold hearings in May. While not optimistic, we have not yet written off prospect of bill's being enacted before Congress adjourns this year.

2. In our confidential presentation to Congress we have stressed national security considerations and objective of achieving some form of lasting association between Territory and U.S. We have pointed out that act of self-determination would have to be consistent with terms of our international obligations under Trusteeship Agreement and generally accepted UN practice. This would involve offering people at least a choice between self-government and independence. As for timing, we have pointed out that reasonable period must be allowed to prepare for plebiscite but

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undue delay might generate situation which could be exploited by unfriendly elements.

3. Congressional Committee reaction has been cautious. Some members who visited Territory early this year question whether people of TTPI feel ready to make intelligent choice regarding their future. Some are also concerned as to how we could accommodate diverse tendencies in Territory.

~~Regarding Canberra, we have stated we would have to maintain Trust Territory as entity at least up to point of confederation.~~

4. Above represents candid review and should be treated with greatest care by British, Australian, and New Zealand recipients.

END

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