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DATE: May 13 3 2 PM '70

SUBJECT : Future of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands: Discussions with Micronesian Delegation
REF : State CA-5708 of October 20, 1969

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Department (IO/UNP) April 30 briefed the British (Boyd), Australian (Smith) and New Zealand (Williams) Embassies on the US Government position regarding the TTPI just prior to discussions with Micronesians on May 4 in Saipan.

Department officers reviewed developments since the October talks, which led up to the proposals to be presented to the Micronesian Status Delegation in May. Assistant Secretary of the Interior Loesch went to the Territory in January. In an attempt to turn the focus of discussion away from specific issues (especially land, on which we had decided we could make no further concessions), he presented them with a draft bill outlining in some detail the type of status we had in mind. Micronesian reaction was extremely negative, possibly not so much because of the substance of the bill as because of its failure to offer them a constitutional convention. They have since, in response to our specific request for their reaction to our bill, submitted a "counter-draft", which is in essence a compilation of the position papers which they tabled in October, in a constitutional convention framework.

We are convinced that the emphasis on a constitutional convention reflects a desire of Micronesian leaders to

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secure a clear and public Micronesian role in the development of their status.

Our primary objective, of course, is to reach an agreement with the Micronesians which will satisfy their needs as well as ours. In the upcoming talks, we also wish to learn as much as we can about their thinking and the status they envisage, and also to make certain that they understand our offer very clearly. This latter point is particularly important as this will be the last round of talks prior to the Delegation's report to the Congress of Micronesia in July.

To this end we have decided first to give the Micronesians a Statement of Principles containing the basic elements of the status we envisage and -- if they do not reject that status out of hand -- we shall give them a draft bill which would provide, inter alia, for a constitutional convention. Under this proposal, Micronesia would become a commonwealth of the United States, internally self-governing in most respects, but with areas of federal supremacy clearly identified.

In response to questions, the following additional points were made:

1. Time schedule --

In answer to Williams' question on the Micronesian statement that the May talks would be the last, Department officers saw no note of finality or ultimatum in this. Rather, we believe they mean the last in this series; the Commission feels that its present mandate will then run out and it will have to report to the Congress of Micronesia prior to its July session. If further talks are to be held, the mandate will have to be renewed. Department officers also felt that there would probably be a large carry-over of personnel if a new commission were to be formed.

2. Termination of trusteeship status --

In response to Smith's query, Department officers reaffirmed our intentions to terminate the Trusteeship Agreement through notification to the Security Council, if

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necessary. We would anticipate little difficulty if we have reached agreement with Congress of Micronesia, and the Micronesian people have approved in a UN-observed referendum.

3. Sentiment for independence --

Boyd asked about sentiment for independence in Micronesia. Department officers replied that although a few members of the Congress of Micronesia have publicly called for independence, there apparently is no firm coalesced sentiment or coalition of forces in favor of it. In this regard, timing and the kind of response from the Status Commission are important.

4. US Congress' Reaction --

Department officers hoped that much opposition could be forestalled by resolving doubts that the ambiguities of the Puerto Rican experience would be repeated. It was conceded that many Congressmen were "comfortable" with the present arrangement in Micronesia, but -- with clear indication from Micronesians that they will accept no less than internal self-government -- we are reasonably sanguine that Congress will accept an arrangement for Micronesian self-government.

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