

C. Johnson

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April 18, 1962

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NATIONAL SECURITY ACTION MEMORANDUM NO. 145

TO: The Secretary of the Interior
The Secretary of State
The Secretary of Defense
The Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare

SUBJECT: New Policy for the U.S. Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands

1. From 1947, when the United States undertook the administration of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands as a United Nations Trusteeship, until 1961, the U.S. has carried out its obligations to the inhabitants of the Territory in such a manner as to change as little as possible their customary way of life. The present administration has recognized, however, that fundamental changes have been taking place in the outlook of the peoples of the remaining dependent areas and in the attitude of the rest of the world toward these areas, bringing with it a recognition of the need for a greatly accelerated program of political, economic and social development. The obligations of the United States under the United Nations Trusteeship Agreement must be reconsidered in the light of these facts of international life.

2. Under the terms of the United Nations Trusteeship Agreement, the United States is committed to the preparation of the people of the Trust Territory for self-government or independence, according to the freely expressed wishes of the people. It is unlikely that the Trust Territory could ever become a viable, independent nation. Accordingly, I have concluded that it is in the interest of the United States that the Trust Territory be given a real option at the appropriate time to move into a new and lasting relationship to the United States within our political framework. This, then, should

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Approved: FBS-482 (DSC)
By: DCat, ICRA, Date 3-29-80

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be our goal. If it is to be accomplished, the people of the Trust Territory must become an educated people, prepared to exercise uninformed choice, which means a choice by people capable of weighing the realistic alternatives. There is an urgent need for the initiation of programs leading to the improvement of education, as a first step. In addition, improvements in other public services and the economic development of the Trust Territory are as important, if not as urgent.

3. I request the Secretaries of the Interior, State, Defense and Health, Education and Welfare to designate representatives at the Assistant Secretary level for a Task Force to develop, and put into effect, the programs necessary to carry forward the general policy set forth in paragraphs 1 and 2 of this Memorandum. A member of the White House staff will be available to sit with the group to assist in its work. The representative of the Department of the Interior will serve as Chairman. Its responsibilities will include the identification of special problems requiring further investigation. It will, as necessary, draw upon the resources of other agencies of the Executive Branch, and will consult with the Director of the Bureau of the Budget on the additional funds required to carry out the policy described herein.

4. The Task Force will bear in mind the importance to the United States of (a) the attitude of the United Nations, the Trusteeship Council, and the neighboring countries of the Pacific toward the United States as the trust administering power; (b) the security requirements of the United States in the area; and (c) the U.S. long-term objectives of developing the Trust Territory as a viable territory permanently associated with the United States and enjoying a standard of living consistent with such association.

/s/ John F. Kennedy

6/24/63 - cy Paul Daly, P. Corps.

Copy furnished:

The Secretary of the Treasury
cc: The Director, Bureau of the Budget; Mr. Lincoln, Mr. Forrestal, Mr. C Johnson, NSE Files, White House Files

5/10/62 - Cpy to Attorney General
3/20/63 - cy. by CEJ to Mr. Matlock, AID
3/21/63 - cy. by CEJ to Director, USIA; Bure. USA-5/16/63

*6/5/63 - Abba Schwartz
State Dept.*