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THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20301

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4 DEC 1972

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

SUBJECT: Micronesian Future Status Negotiations

I have become increasingly concerned over deteriorating developments in the Micronesian future status negotiations. My concern stems from the apparent erosion of United States initiative in these vital talks.

The strategic value of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands became a recognized fact during World War II. Following that war, the United Nations reinforced that fact by uniquely proclaiming the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands a Strategic Trust. As world circumstances continue to change, it is becoming even more strategically imperative for the United States to have guaranteed permanent base rights in Micronesia following termination of the Trust. This national security objective is now in jeopardy in light of the following:

- Fifth round talks in July 1972 resulted in a negotiated partial draft Compact. Joint agreement was reached on the Preamble and Titles I (Internal Affairs), II (Foreign Affairs), and III (Defense).
- A special session of the Congress of Micronesia was called in August 1972 for the express purpose of endorsing the completed portions of the draft Compact and of initiating legislation which would provide for a Constitutional Convention and transition procedures.
- Instead, the special session of the Congress of Micronesia repudiated the agreement reached by the Micronesian Joint Future Status Committee and approved a band-wagon resolution which obligates the Micronesian Joint Future Status Committee to negotiate an Independence Option in addition to a Free Association Option.
- The sixth round of talks in October 1972 confirmed that previous understandings no longer exist. There is reasonable doubt, even if a revised Compact were agreed to jointly, that the Congress of Micronesia would accept and support the work of their Joint Future Status Committee.
- In November 1972, the majority of traditional chiefs, magistrates, and legislators in Palau issued a Declaration against the use of lands in Palau by the United States military.

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- A wide gap exists between United States and Micronesian views on termination procedures and survivability of those military base rights yet to be negotiated.
- There is continuing anti-military interference and harassment by the OEO-subsidized Micronesian Legal Services Corporation and some members of the Peace Corps.

Because of these growing and compounding confusion factors, I am convinced that we must act now to protect our strategic future in Micronesia. Lack of decisive and positive action will merely allow circumstances and events to deteriorate to the point where we no longer have the ability to control or influence the course of events.

I recommend, therefore, that we immediately adjourn sine die the current negotiations with the Joint Future Status Committee of the Congress of Micronesia. Upon Micronesia's responsible and responsive formation of a body which represents the Micronesian peoples, possessing both the responsibility and authority to deliver what is negotiated in good faith, negotiations may be re-opened and quickly concluded. In the interim, I recommend that all current efforts be focused on the rapid and successful completion of separate negotiations with the Marianas, commencing with the formal opening of these talks on 13 December 1972.

Meanwhile, the circumstances which led to the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands being designated a Strategic Trust will continue to exist.

