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PETITION FROM THE PALAU LEGISLATURE CONCERNING THE TRUST TERRITORY
OF THE PACIFIC ISLANDS (T/PET.10/48)

Observations of the Government of the United States of America
as Administering Authority

2 June 1969

In this petition the Palau Legislature, citing the fact that the people of Micronesia did not have a voice in formulating the original Trusteeship Agreement and that some of its provisions are not to their liking, requests possible amendment of the Agreement and giving the Micronesians a voice in the process of review.

The United States acknowledges that, as in the case of other trusteeships, the Micronesians did not have a voice in formulating the original Agreement. The United States also agrees that there have been important changes since 1947 and that the Micronesians have every right to expect a greater voice in their own affairs. As Secretary of the Interior Hickel said during his recent visit to the Territory, "For years you have had little voice in your government. This is wrong. Only when the people lead their government can that government be great and the people prosper."

The United States sympathizes with the desire of the Palau Legislature that all Micronesians be in a position to consent to the basic framework under which they live. Rather than amend the Trusteeship Agreement, however, the United States believes that representatives of the Micronesian people should work together with representatives of the United States on the more fundamental question of devising a permanent future status of the Territory and providing its inhabitants with the right of self-determination to which they are entitled.

It is this task to which the United States in consultation with the Micronesians intends to devote its energies. By doing so it will be possible to provide for a far better and more permanent solution to the problem raised in this petition than could be achieved through amendments to the present Trusteeship Agreement.
