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DRAFT

Dear Senator Murray:

I am concerned over developments which have arisen during the hearings before the Sub-committee of the Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs on Alaska and Hawaii Statehood. According to the transcript of the hearings on February 22, Senator Jackson has construed my letter to you of February 4, 1955 as indicating that "it is going to hurt our foreign policy if we do not make it (Alaska) a state."

In my letter of February 4, 1955 I stated that granting statehood to Alaska and Hawaii "would serve to support American foreign policy and strengthen the position of the United States in international relations." It is not correct to infer that the corollary Senator Jackson would draw is true.

The matter was covered by the President in his State of the Union message when he said: "As the complex problems of Alaska are resolved, that Territory should be expected to achieve statehood. In the meantime, there is no justification for deferring the admission to statehood of Hawaii. I again urge approval of this measure."

From the foreign affairs standpoint, the question of when a greater degree of self-government is given is not so important as the fact that a great degree of self-government exists and that ultimately

the

The Honorable
James E. Murray,
Chairman, Committee on Interior
and Insular Affairs,
United States Senate.

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the two Territories should be expected to achieve statehood. As indicated by the Department of State representative in testimony before the Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs of the House of Representatives on February 8, it is for the Congress and the President to decide if and when these two Territories should become states.

Sincerely yours,

Thruston B. Morton
Assistant Secretary

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IO:ODA:RRRobbins:ecp
2/24/55