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OFFICE OF THE WHITE HOUSE PRESS SECRETARY
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THE WHITE HOUSE

STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT

In October, 1975, the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Puerto Rico, appointed jointly by the President of the United States and the Governor of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, recommended a new Compact of Permanent Union between Puerto Rico and the United States, to provide maximum self-government and self-determination for Puerto Rico.

The proposed Compact would institute fundamental and far-reaching changes in the relationship between Puerto Rico and the United States, and its provisions would affect a wide array of Federal programs and interests.

Members of my Cabinet have thoroughly analyzed the proposed Compact and made recommendations to me.

After studying their comments and recommendations, and giving deep thought to this important proposal, I have concluded that the proposed Compact, significant and important though it is, does not advance as rapidly as it might freedom and opportunity for the American citizens of Puerto Rico.

I believe that the appropriate status for Puerto Rico is statehood.

I propose, therefore, that the people of Puerto Rico and the Congress of the United States begin now to take those steps which will result in statehood for Puerto Rico.

I will recommend to the 95th Congress the enactment of legislation providing for the admission of Puerto Rico as a State of the Union.

The common bonds of friendship, tradition, dignity, and individual freedom have joined the people of the United States and the people of Puerto Rico. It is now time to make these bonds permanent through statehood, in accordance with the concept of mutual acceptance which has historically governed the relationship between Puerto Rico and the United States.

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