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U.S. Officials Are Concerned Over Discontent in Micronesia

BY ROBERT TRUMBULL
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SYDNEY, Australia, April 3 — Severe political discontent in Micronesia has disturbed the United States administration in those strategic central Pacific islands and atolls, according to authoritative reports here and in Canberra.

The American establishment in charge of the islands has been beset recently by growing agitation for independence, a secessionist movement by pro-American elements in part of the territory and unrest over a proposed income tax, the reports state.

Political motivation has been ascribed to unidentified arsonists held responsible for burning down the building housing the Congress of Micronesia, the elected legislative body of the islands, at the provisional capital on Saipan Island in the Marianas group on Feb. 20.

The 2,141 islands and atolls of Micronesia, also officially called the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, were taken from Japan by United States forces during and after World War II. In 1947 they became a United Nations trusteeship under American administrative control pending settlement of their permanent political status.

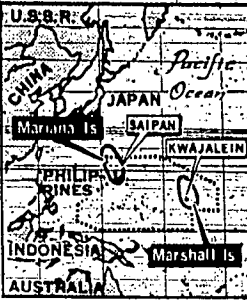
Islands Used for Tests

The United States has used some of the islands for experimental explosions of nuclear devices, and maintains a test site for long-range ballistic missiles at Kwajalein atoll in the Marshalls group. The military operations have caused resentment among many of the islands' 100,000 people.

When Washington offered the islanders a semiautonomous "commonwealth" status similar to that of Puerto Rico last year, the Micronesian Congress refused. The Americans rejected a counterproposal for complete local self-government in "free association" with the United States.

Micronesian students at the University of Hawaii in Honolulu, with the support of American colleagues, have demonstrated in recent months in favor of full independence for the islands. They are the nucleus of a new activist movement among educated young Micronesians.

The students and other critics of the American administration have attacked Washing-



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ton's emphasis on the islands' military potentialities, allegedly disregarding such locally important factors as traditional land rights.

United Nations teams that tour the islands periodically consistently criticize the Americans for neglect of economic development while praising the educational and social programs.

The United States administration is under the Department of the Interior. The current High Commissioner, equivalent to governor, is Edward E. Johnston, a former Honolulu insurance executive and Republican party leader.

Agitation in Saipan

Saipan, one of the most populous islands, with about 10,000 inhabitants, has been the scene of political agitation recently that may have led to the burning of the Congress building. Saipanese have protested strongly against plans for a universal 3 per cent income tax and other levies.

In reaction to the tax proposal, the district legislature of the Mariana Islands has warned the United Nations that the island group intended to secede from the trust territory "by force of arms if necessary and with or without the approval of the United Nations."

India to Get U.S. Wheat

NEW DELHI, April 3 (Reuters)—The United States will supply to India 1,570,000 metric tons of wheat, 250,000 bales of cotton and 75,000 metric tons of vegetable oil under a new agreement concluded here this week.

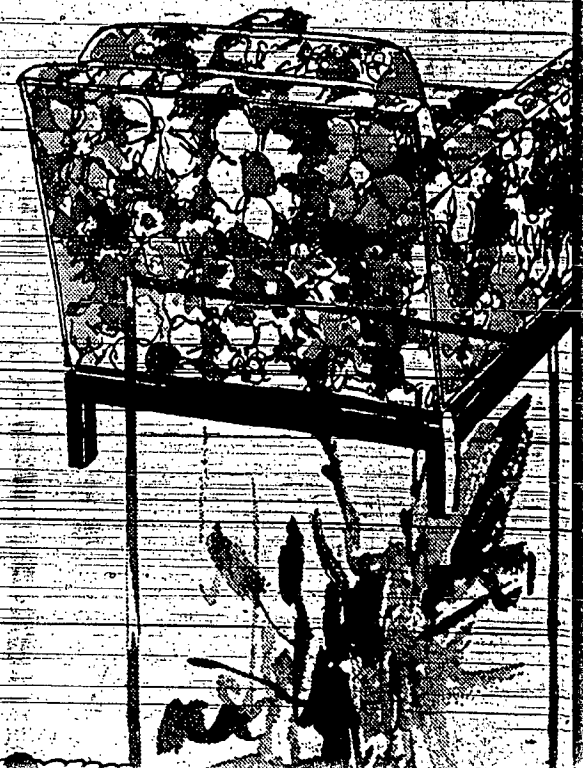
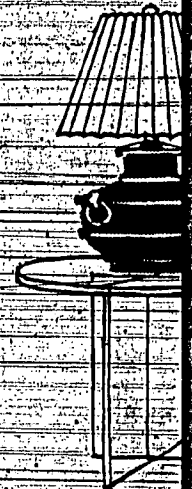
Jakarta Curbs Diplomats

JAKARTA, Indonesia, April 3 (Reuters)—The Government has barred all foreign diplomats from travel in Indonesia until after the general election in July.

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