



DEPARTMENT OF STATE

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Department of the Interior Secretary Rogers C. B. Morton, in a "message to Micronesia" January 23 predicted that "the next three years will see a decisive turning point" in the history of Micronesia.

Under a 1947 Trusteeship Agreement with the United Nations, the United States---through the Department of the Interior---administers the more than 2,100 islands lying in the three million square mile expanse of the western Pacific Ocean. Fewer than 100 islands are inhabited by the population of approximately 110,000 persons.

The United States has been preparing the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands for a new political status after termination of the UN trusteeship and is actively engaged with Micronesian leaders in negotiations on the shape of the future relationship between the Territory and the United States. Secretary Morton outlined important steps which will be taken toward self-government.

"First," he said, "the United States Congress has approved funds for a Micronesian Constitutional Convention...(to) provide the Micronesian people with the responsibility to draw up the blueprint of their future government and society."

He announced that economic development of the Territory toward self-sufficiency and Micronesian control is to receive ^{NEW} emphasis during the next few years. He said that to promote further control by Micronesians he had lifted restrictions on foreign investment.

Secretary Morton told the Micronesian people they are moving

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toward a "new era of political self reliance and increased economic self sufficiency" and that they "must be ready to accept the responsibilities that will come with these developments."

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