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APR 11 1975

INFO.....STATUS LNO  
INFO.....NAVY LNO  
INFO.....SA/LA  
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INFO.....LLD  
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R PPT 003

*SIA-23*

VZCZC GSA 003  
PTTUZYUW RUEANAF 0087 1012053-UUUU--RUHGSAA.  
ZNR UUUUU  
DE RUEHC #3174 1012053  
P 112320Z APR 75  
FM CINCPAC REP GUAM MARIANAS ISLANDS  
INFO CINCPAC REP TTPI LNO SAIPAN MARIANAS ISLANDS  
P 112001Z APR 75 ZZH  
FM SECSTATE WASHDC  
TO RUHGSAA/HICONTERPACIS PRIORITY  
INFO RUEHDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 2236  
RUHNSAA/CINCPACREP GUAM/TTPI  
RUHQHQA/CINCPAC PRIORITY  
RUWJAJA/COMTWELVE SERAN  
RUEADWW/WHITE HOUSE  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF  
RUEBKCA/DEPT OF INTERIOR  
BT  
UNCLAS STATE 083174  
E.O. 11652: NA  
TAGS: PFOR, IQ  
SUBJECT: PRESS RELEASE ON MARIANAS PLEBISCITE  
PASS STATUS LNO BERGESON  
COMTWELVE FOR AMBASSADOR WILLIAMS  
DEFENSE FOR OSD/ISA  
WHITE HOUSE FOR NSC  
USUN FOR AMBASSADOR WHITE  
INTERIOR FOR DOTA

FOLLOWING PRESS RELEASE ISSUED BY SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE APRIL 11, 1975:

QUOTE: SECRETARY MORTON ACTS TO AUTHORIZE PLEBISCITE  
- IN THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS FOR JUNE 17, 1975

- SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR ROBERT C. MORTON TODAY  
ISSUED A PROCLAMATION CALLING FOR A PLEBISCITE TO DETERMINE  
ON TUESDAY, JUNE 17, 1975, IN ORDER THAT THE PEOPLE OF THE  
NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS, PRESENTLY ADMINISTERED AS A PART  
OF THE TRUST TERRITORY OF THE PACIFIC ISLANDS, MAY DECIDE  
WHETHER THEY WISH TO BECOME A COMMONWEALTH OF THE UNITED  
STATES. THE ISLANDS, INCLUDING SAIPAN, GUAM, ROTA AND  
OTHERS, LIE NORTH OF THE U.S. TERRITORY OF GUAM.

ON FEBRUARY 15, 1975, THE MARIANAS POLITICAL STATUS

03 022309

COMMISSION AND THE PRESIDENT'S PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVE, AMBASSADOR HAYDN WILLIAMS, SIGNED A COVENANT TO ESTABLISH A COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS IN POLITICAL UNION WITH THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA. THE COVENANT CALLS FOR THE HOLDING OF SUCH A PLEBISCITE. IF THE COVENANT IS APPROVED BY THE PEOPLE OF THE MARIANA ISLANDS DISTRICT AND SUBSEQUENTLY THE CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES, THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS WOULD BECOME A U.S. COMMONWEALTH.

- IN ANNOUNCING THE PLEBISCITE SECRETARY MORTON STATED, "THE PLEBISCITE WILL BE HELD IN A FAIR AND IMPARTIAL MANNER UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF A PLEBISCITE COMMISSIONER. THE PRESIDENT HAS DESIGNATED MR. ERWIN D. CANHAM, TO SERVE IN THAT POSITION AS HIS PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVE." SECRETARY MORTON ALSO DECLARED, "OBSERVERS FROM THE UNITED NATIONS AND THE U.S. CONGRESS WILL BE WELCOME TO WITNESS THE PLEBISCITE AS WELL AS THE PLEBISCITE EDUCATION PROGRAM, THE REGISTRATION OF VOTERS, AND OTHER PRE-PLEBISCITE ACTIVITIES."

- COMMENTING ON MR. CANHAM'S APPOINTMENT, SECRETARY MORTON NOTED HIS LONG AND DISTINGUISHED RECORD OF PUBLIC SERVICE INCLUDING A PERIOD AS A UNITED STATES DELEGATE TO THE UNITED NATIONS DURING ITS FORMATIVE YEARS, AND EXPRESSED APPRECIATION FOR HIS WILLINGNESS TO ACCEPT THE PRESENT APPOINTMENT. MR. CANHAM WAS FOR MANY YEARS EDITOR-IN-CHIEF OF THE CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR AND IS PRESENTLY EDITOR EMERITUS. HE HAS PARTICIPATED IN THE WORK OF COMMISSIONS CONCERNED WITH PUBLIC AFFAIRS AND HOLDS HONORARY DEGREES OR CITATIONS FROM SEVERAL AMERICAN UNIVERSITIES AND FROM THE GOVERNMENTS OF ENGLAND, FRANCE, GREECE, GERMANY AND AUSTRIA."

- SECRETARY MORTON ALSO ISSUED A SECRETARIAL ORDER THAT GRANTS THE AUTHORITY AND ESTABLISHES ADMINISTRATIVE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE HOLDING OF A PLEBISCITE. THE ACTION CREATES THE PLEBISCITE COMMISSIONER POSITION, OUTLINES THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE TRUST TERRITORY OF THE PACIFIC ISLANDS ADMINISTRATION, ESTABLISHES A NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS PLEBISCITE ADVISORY COMMITTEE, OUTLINES THE FUNCTION OF A PLEBISCITE EDUCATION PROGRAM, CREATES A VOTER REGISTRATION BOARD, ESTABLISHES VOTER QUALIFICATIONS, AND AUTHORIZES A SPECIAL PLEBISCITE APPELLATE COURT.

- ON NUMEROUS OCCASIONS OVER MORE THAN TWENTY YEARS THE PEOPLE OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS HAVE SOUGHT A CLOSE

AND ENDURING ASSOCIATION WITH THE UNITED STATES. SECRETARY MORTON'S ACTION WILL PROVIDE AN OPPORTUNITY FOR THEM TO DECIDE, PURSUANT TO THEIR RIGHT OF SELF-DETERMINATION, WHETHER THEY WISH TO BECOME A COMMONWEALTH IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE TERMS OF THE COVENANT. AT LEAST 55 OF THE VALID VOTES CAST IN THE PLEBISCITE MUST FAVOR COMMONWEALTH STATUS BEFORE THE COVENANT IS PRESENTED TO THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS FOR ITS APPROVAL.  
END QUOTE.