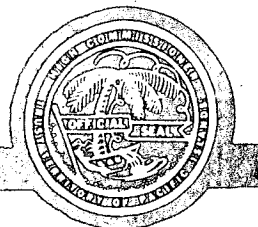


PRESS RELEASE



TRUST TERRITORY OF THE PACIFIC ISLANDS

Office of the High Commissioner

Saipan, Mariana Islands

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Marianas

Closing Statement to the United Nations Trusteeship Council by The Honorable William R. Norwood, High Commissioner of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, June 15, 1967.

Trust

From the time of earliest migrations into the west central Pacific the Micronesians, along with other island peoples, have been skilled and daring voyagers.

Even today many of them ply canoes or other small craft in open ocean out of sight of land as they travel from island to island.

Ponape

In former times the voyagers in the Marshalls, the most widely-scattered islands in all of Micronesia, learned to rely on the relative location of land masses and the resulting formation of wave action and ocean currents to chart their direction.

They could sense where they were and how far from their destination by the formation and action - the currents and cross currents - of the seas through which they sought to progress.

Marshalls

In like manner the discussion and debate of the past several days have produced a body of thought and concerns which provide a sense of direction and some indication of how much farther we must go to reach our destination.

Yap

That destination is a Micronesia with a physical, economic and political environment which offers assurance to the people of these far-flung islands that as they venture further into the uncertainties of the Twentieth Century there is a rewarding future for them and their children, and the future is theirs to make of it what they will.

Palau

The report of the Visiting Mission was a careful and thorough assessment of where we are today and how far from our objective. The supplementary discussion of recent days has sharpened the definition of those areas of effort and those programs which need continuing and increased attention.

We have observed little disagreement. Members of the Council appear to be generally of one mind with respect to where we want to go and

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what we must do to get there. If there are differences, they relate in the main to how rapidly we should seek to move.

I shall return to Micronesia with a clearer concept of what needs to be done and with a strengthened sense of purpose and direction.

It is encouraging to note that, as they have examined the various program areas and the efforts by the Administering Authority in Micronesia, the members of the Trusteeship Council have acknowledged some progress. It is recognized, however, that much remains to be done.

Out of the report of the Visiting Mission and the subsequent discussion at this meeting of the Council there has emerged a unanimity of opinion that no single program can stand alone. All are interdependent.

Health, education, economic development, transportation, communications, political and social development are all essential components of the total environment which must reflect progressive total improvement in the months and years ahead.

Health standards and services have been subjected to most critical scrutiny. It has been acknowledged that progress has lagged.

Now with the selection of a new health director it is hoped and expected that there will be more effective long-range planning and action to improve facilities and to strengthen the staff further.

The need for better training of Micronesian health personnel and the provision and maintenance of improved equipment are recognized.

It has been noted that funds have been budgeted for a new large central hospital for referral and training purposes. This may cost about \$5 million. It is recognized, however, that all districts need better medical and health facilities and there must be an appropriate balance between the services available in district centers and those required in outlying islands.

Our plans for this next fiscal year envision the expenditure of almost \$300,000 for other health construction. This includes some \$120,000 for new or improved dispensaries and \$175,000 for sub-center hospital. An additional \$300,000 is required for medical personnel housing.

The need to re-evaluate the educational system is recognized. A survey is already under way. It is expected this will produce recommendations for a more realistic balance between academic study and vocational training. In this connection our 1968 construction program calls for the start of a new polytechnic high school at a cost of \$700,000.

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There is an obvious need to develop curriculum materials that are more directly related to the Micronesian environment.

We shall continue to stress the teaching of English as a second language and are shifting to a new system of instruction which has proved effective in other Pacific island areas.

As previously noted, this past year we contracted for surveys of our power, water and communications requirements. And now as we move into the 1968 fiscal year we expect to begin acquiring necessary new equipment at an ultimate cost of almost \$2 million for electric power and a modern communications network.

The latter is essential not only to meet administrative requirements to tie the districts together more effectively, but will also benefit distribution of information for educational and political development purposes.

If a single component of our infra-structure has been identified as more urgently in need of attention than others, it is transportation-- air, sea and land.

New proposals for improved air service are expected shortly from carriers who recognize the potential of developing a travel market in Micronesia. Similarly, invitations will be sent shortly to shipping companies who have indicated an interest in providing new ships and improved schedules.

Complaints against the present inadequacies of shipping between and within the districts are justified. Acquisition of new administrative vessels to reduce governmental dependence on the schedule of trading vessels is contemplated.

Much attention has focused on land ownership and land use. Questions have been raised regarding the high percentage (more than 50 percent) of the land under control of the Trust Territory Government.

It has been noted that the Congress of Micronesia has enacted legislation establishing land commissions. Land use in relation to master planning will receive proper attention.

Our discussions may have left the impression that all lands now held by the Government of Micronesia are in dispute with private claimants and that the Government is embarked on a program of acquiring more and more land. Over the years a program was carried out to determine title to lands claimed by both the Government and private parties or clans. The result has been that most of the lands now used by the Government or held as public domain are not the subject of claims by Micronesians.

MORE

Similarly, the Government wherever possible, makes use of Government lands for Government or public purposes. However, there have been and there will continue to be some cases in which additional private lands must be acquired for public purposes. At the same time it would be shortsighted if the Government did not maintain some land in reserve for future public uses as the rapidly expanding population requires additional public facilities and services. Land areas surplus to public requirements should be made available for private use that is consistent with the economic and social needs of the various communities.

It should be noted, however, that some Government land should be held in reserve to accommodate population pressures in some islands, so that overcrowding can be relieved and the islanders on socially-congested islands can be relocated elsewhere.

The Nathan report has provided helpful guidelines for economic development. Recommendations of this report are being evaluated. Each department of the administration has been requested to examine recommendations specifically applicable to that department. This is to identify opportunities for action and to set priorities.

A summary of the report will be widely distributed throughout the Territory to stimulate discussion and to create broad public understanding of what must be done to achieve economic development in Micronesia.

Meantime, steps are being taken to strengthen our administrative ability to implement those recommendations regarded as presently feasible.

Agricultural programs must shift now from experimentation toward economic production. Crops which have shown promise as experiments need to be tested in the market place. Farmers must be encouraged by the extension of advisory services and technological assistance.

We are already experiencing increased interest in Micronesia's vast oceanographic resources. Prospects are that commercial fishing for export and domestic markets will show marked growth in the near future. But existing trade restrictions need to be modified.

Micronesia is endowed with areas uniquely suitable for oceanographic and biological research. A number of well established agencies have indicated an interest. A research facility is required and possibilities of obtaining funds for a marine science center are currently being explored.

The most important resource of Micronesia, however, is the human resource--the people whose proud traditions and history reflect ample

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evidence of their courage and ability to cope with the limitations and challenges of their natural environment.

It is evident that the time has come for Micronesians to assume more responsible roles in the administrative as well as the legislative branch of the Government. The ability of the Micronesians to shoulder legislative responsibility has already been convincingly demonstrated by the Congress of Micronesia.

Comparable opportunity for administrative leadership must now be identified and qualified Micronesians should be moving into positions of increasing responsibility in the executive branch.

Related to this is the difficult problem of devising some procedure by which the Congress of Micronesia can participate more directly and more influentially in formulation of the annual budgets and allocation of funds made available by the Congress of the United States.

In that connection, the presence of several U.S. Congressmen at the Trusteeship Council sessions was further evidence of their interest and that of the committees they represent.

Their attendance may also be construed as an indication that they expect the substantial increase in grants to Micronesia, which the U.S. Congress has authorized, will be prudently programmed and will produce results benefitting the people of Micronesia.

As the special representative of the Administering Authority, I am grateful for the dedicated and informed interest of the members of the Trusteeship Council. These members represent a broad background of varied experience. Their views and recommendations provide a constructive and helpful audit of the accomplishments of the Administering Authority and our efforts to fulfill our obligations under terms of the Trusteeship Agreement.

Even complaints and criticism are welcome because they cut through complacency and cause us to re-examine and test anew the effectiveness of our stewardship.

In closing, Madam President, I should indeed be remiss if I did not acknowledge the genuine pleasure we have derived from the opportunity to become acquainted with all members of the Council and their respective staffs.

The privilege of getting to know you individually as well as collectively has provided added dimension to the value of this experience.

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