

EXECUTIVE

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United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20240

JAN - 9 1973

Dear Mr. President and Mr. Speaker:

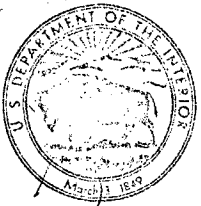
On behalf of President Nixon, I wish to thank you for your letter of December 1, 1972, concerning the selection of senior officials in the executive and judicial branches of the Trust Territory Government.

As you are aware, during this Administration the Department of the Interior and the High Commissioner have undertaken an intensive program of placing qualified Micronesians in senior administrative and policy positions wherever possible. As a result of this policy, Micronesians now hold office as district administrators, department directors, deputy department directors, bureau chiefs, and so on. We are pleased that we have been able to make so much progress in the implementation of this policy in the relatively short period of three and one-half years.

During this same period, progress has been made in involving the Congress of Micronesia in the making of senior level appointments, through the "advice and consent" procedures to which you referred in your letter. This process has resulted in the consideration by the Congress of the qualifications and suitability of proposed appointees of the High Commissioner to Executive Branch positions. The assigned committee of the Congress has recommended appointment of most nominees, and has also recommended against the appointment of other nominees, many of whom were Micronesians, for a variety of reasons. We think this has been another progressive step toward self-government.

We are appreciative of your statement that you "are thoroughly convinced of the equity of the democratic process under which Micronesia has been governed by the United States during the past quarter of a century." Indeed, the intentions of the Department are to proceed steadily toward the time when Micronesia's own democratic processes can take over responsibility for the welfare of the people of your islands. As you are aware, however, the United States Government is in the meanwhile responsible for their welfare to the United Nations, pursuant to the Trusteeship Agreement, and to the Micronesians themselves. In this

cc: / Michael B. Smith
The White House Office
with return of original incoming correspondence



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respect, we remain, until termination of the Trusteeship Agreement, obligated to work toward advancement in health, education, social matters and economic development and commerce, in addition to the political advancement about which you have written.

As a result of this multiple responsibility, we are unable at this point to give over-riding consideration to the suggestions for political advancement contained in your letter. Rather, they must be considered in the context of the overall U. S. responsibilities for Micronesia. While it is impossible at this time to make any definite commitment regarding their implementation, we remain desirous of working with you, as we have in the past, toward solutions which increase overall Micronesian responsibility for the welfare of the people of Micronesia in all the areas I have cited. In this manner we can develop a balanced program for moving toward Micronesian self-government.

We appreciate your interest in this matter of mutual concern.

Sincerely yours,

(sgd) Rogers C. B. Morton

Secretary of the Interior

Honorable Amata Kabua
President of the Senate
Honorable Bethwel Henry
Speaker, House of Representatives
Congress of Micronesia
Saipan, Mariana Islands 96950