

Pres. Message

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

February 27, 1980

The following elaborates on the President's February 14 message to Congress:

The President's statement reaffirms the right of the peoples of the U.S. territories to self-determination. This means that each of the U.S. territories has the right, through free and democratic means, to determine their preferred future political status including independence, statehood, or mutually agreed modifications of the present relationship. The United States is fully committed to the principle of self-determination for the peoples of its territories as an inalienable right.

The U.S. Constitution gives Congress plenary power with respect to the U.S. territories. Because of the multitude of ties between the U.S. and its territories, any change of status would require a fundamental examination of existing and proposed arrangements. In this regard, the economic viability referred to in the President's message refers to one of the historic tests for statehood utilized by the Congress. National security considerations might require consultation on agreements on military operating rights to ensure protection of U.S. interests in the area of national security. Any such agreements associated with a change in political status would be made on a mutually acceptable basis.

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cc Kileen
Kitty

Twenty-three points from the President's Message on the territories:

1. Reaffirm the U.S. commitment to self-determination.
2. Political development talks policy.
3. Encourage constitution adopting in Guam and the Virgin Islands.
4. Commission on the applicability of Federal laws.
5. Interior recommendations on Senate representation for the territories, Northern Mariana Islands Congressional representation, and Guam/Virgin Islands court reform.
6. Interior study on Federal constraints to territorial economic development.
7. Presidential memorandum to territories encouraging strengthening of grant coordination and development of comprehensive and investment plans.
8. Executive Order requiring agencies to inform Interior on grant.
9. Legislation authorizing Federal/territorial planning financed by Federal grants.
10. Test proposal for block grants to replace categorical aid.
11. Interior lead (including economic development).
12. Assistant Secretary for territories.
13. DPS Staff
14. Assign Interior responsibility for the Northern Mariana Islands.
15. Assign State the post-trusteeship freely associated states of Micronesia.
16. Legislation to extend the Internal Revenue System to the territories.
17. Financial assistance policy.
18. 90/10 cost-sharing for capital improvement projects.

19. Legislation for the selective waiver of territorial matching requirements.

20. Legislation for increased Federal oversight of territorial budgets.

22. Ceiling on operational funding provided by Interior.

23. Assess ability of Federal entity to finance private sector development.