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COMMUNICATION FROM MR. JOSHUA KOSHIBA, PALAU DISTRICT,
CONCERNING THE TRUST TERRITORY OF THE PACIFIC ISLANDS

(Circulated in accordance with rule 24 of the rules of
procedure of the Trusteeship Council)

AN OPEN LETTER TO THE CITIZENS OF PALAU AND TO MR. ALFONSO OITERONG
CHAIRMAN OF THE PEOPLE'S COMMITTEE

20 September 1979

I would like to request that we agree to unite and support the Constitution on 23 October.

As public leaders, we have a duty to separate the issues surrounding the draft constitution from the issue of who will sit in the future Legislature and the future government of Palau. Let us ratify this constitution so that we can establish our own government and finalize the draft compact of free association. Once the constitution has been ratified, we will be free to settle our internal differences through the elective process in November.

As you know, the Constitutional Drafting Commission maintained the entire governmental structure as originally proposed by the Constitutional Convention. During our meetings in Guam, representatives of the People's Committee, the Political Status Commission, the Administration and the Legislature all agreed that the constitution as originally drafted was not compatible with the draft compact of free association. We all agreed further that changes should be made on the original version of the constitution.

Free association has been under negotiation since 1969. It was first proposed by the Commission on Future Political Status of the Congress of Micronesia under the Chairmanship of Lazarus Salii. The concept of free association is a concept which we in Palau have continued to support, as evidenced by the vote of 88 per cent supporting free association in the September 1976 Referendum.

Aside from accommodating the draft compact of free association, the Constitutional Drafting Commission made only five changes to the original constitution. All of these changes were designed to strengthen the governmental structure as proposed by the Constitutional Convention. The constitution now before us is fundamentally the same constitution as approved by the Constitutional Convention.

In addition, in recent negotiations with the United States regarding the draft compact of free association, we have finally been able to obtain a clarification on the economic offer from the United States of America. The United States is offering Palau financial assistance totalling \$US 250 million over a 15-year period. This includes money to pay salaries and to operate the future government as well as \$US 100 million to build roads, docks, schools and other improvements throughout Palau. Attached is a summary breakdown of the offer the United States has made to Palau. 1/ Surely you must agree that obtaining this package is essential to guaranteeing our future.

Although we may have many differences, at least let us be united in our desire to be a strong and independent nation. Let us think of our lives and the future of our children. We have before us the opportunity to be a free and independent Palau after nearly a century of foreign domination; let us not push it aside because of our own internal political differences. Let us ratify this revised constitution; let us elect our new Legislature and heads of the new nation of Palau. Let us settle our internal political differences through the elective and legislative processes of a free and independent Palau.

Sincerely,

(Signed) Joshua KOSHIBA

cc: Pacific Daily News, Guam
Adrian P. Winkel, High Commissioner of the Trust Territory of the
Pacific Islands
Ambassador Peter R. Rosenblatt
Ruth G. Van Cleve
WALU TV, Palau
WSZB, Palau
MNS, Saipan
President, United Nations Trusteeship Council

1/ The enclosures have been placed in the files of the Secretariat and are available to members of the Council for consultation.