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COMMUNICATION FROM MR. LAURENTINO ULECHONG, MEMBER OF THE PALAU
LEGISLATURE, CONCERNING THE TRUST TERRITORY OF THE PACIFIC
ISLANDS

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PALAU LEGISLATURE
P.O.Box 8
Koror, Palau
Western Caroline Islands
96940

27 March 1980

Honourable Kim B. Batcheller
Acting District Administrator
Palau District
Koror, Palau 96940.

Dear Mr. Batcheller:

This is in reference to your letter of 20 March 1980 to our Speaker, Tosiwo Nakamura, relating to House of Elected Members resolution No. 007 (see enclosure), which requests the High Commissioner of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands for an additional Civic Action Team to undertake a road construction project in Ngaraard municipality.

As one of the two legislators from Ngaraard in the seventh Palau Legislature, and the principal sponsor of the subject resolution, I am extremely disappointed in your recommendation to the High Commissioner that he abort the intent of the resolution and refrain from sending another civic action team to Palau for the purpose of constructing roads in Ngaraard municipality. Your negative recommendation is based, according to your letter, on the apparent lack of cost estimates or feasibility study on the project. Yet, you state that the Community Development personnel had been requested by you "along with the Sea Bees to make a formal estimate of the cost of completing the project. Informally, the Sea Bees have estimated that the project will cost in excess of \$US 1.0 million.

As a matter of fact, at the date of this letter the said joint survey team composed of Mr. John Hancock, your Community Development engineer, and representatives of the Civic Action Team were dispatched to conduct an on-the-spot survey for road projects not only of Ngaraard but Ngarchelong municipality as well. What I cannot now understand is why you recommend not sending another contingent of the Civic Action Team to Palau while cost estimates of the project they were to be detained to do, are being worked on. Moreover, I am advised that the Civic Action Team Co-ordinating Committee is not aware, nor was it consulted regarding the request in resolution No. 007. One would assume that the Co-ordinating Committee's role is to review the merits and demerits of similar requests for work projects before a decision is made as to whether to ask for the services of Civic Action Team or not.

The contention that because there are no cost estimates for the road project in Ngaraard, no Civic Action Team should be requested to do the work is, to me, baseless. In the first place, the Ngaraard road project was commenced in 1978 when \$US 100,000 was made available for that purpose from funds of the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). There must have been some working figures with which the project was initiated and the same could perhaps be updated and modified in order for the construction project to be resumed. I recall vividly that the sixth Palau Legislature appropriated the sum of \$US 6,000 as supplemental funding for the Ngaraard road project when it became known that the original \$US 100,000 might not be adequate. In fact, the \$US 6,000 was to be expended towards payment of per diem allowances of the personnel of the Department of Public Works who were involved in the project.

As an elected representative of the people of Ngaraard municipality in the current seventh Palau Legislature, I delivered a prepared statement to the municipality on Saturday, 22 March 1980 on the occasion of the visit there of the United Nations Visiting Mission to the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, 1980. (A copy of said statement was given to your Acting Public Affairs Officer and should be available in your files.) I did discuss the road project and how it was difficult to accept the fact that over \$US 100,000 had been expended, yet less than a mile of road had been completed. I must submit that the failure of the project was largely due to mismanagement of the funds and personnel. Logistic problems contributed also to the situation. In fact, I witnessed first-hand the kind of dump trucks that were being employed to haul gravel from seashore to the site of the project. The trucks were so full of holes that more gravel fell by the wayside. By the time these reached the final designation, the trucks were less than half full, if at all. Needless to say, you are aware of my earlier request for proper auditing and accounting of all funds and property that were used on the project.

In this connexion, I wish to bring to your attention the attached documentation 1/ relating to the purchase of a brand new truck at the cost of \$US 20,000 for use in the project. My understanding is that there was a surplus

1/ The documentation has been placed in the files of the Secretariat and is available to members of the Council for consultation.

of Public Works allotments at the end of fiscal year 1978 and \$US 20,000 was earmarked for procurement of said vehicle. You will note in the requisition your predecessor's note that "This truck is to be specifically assigned to Ngaraard (HUD) Road to replace the old truck currently in Ngaraard". The subject truck was never delivered at the site of the Ngaraard road project. My information is that it was purchased but used here in Koror. I hereby request that tracing be conducted to track down the vehicle.

On 19 February 1980, Mr. Masuo Kyota, the Executive Director of the Palau Housing Authority, met and informed the Ngaraard Council of the availability of an additional \$US 100,000 that had already been approved for resumption of the road project. Our concern is that if an additional Civic Action Team is not assigned to the project, the \$US 100,000 may be reprogrammed or reallocated to other Capital Improvement Programme (CIP) projects, thus frustrating the intent and the purpose for which it was granted.

Completion of the road system in Ngaraard municipality resulting in linking the five hamlets therein is the first and foremost priority of my people. Had the Public Works fulfilled its promise, a road network commencing at Urung through Ulimang and connecting Choll hamlets would have greatly facilitated the anticipated dam project in Ulimang. Completion of the road system in Ngaraard municipality would also make it possible to centralize elementary school education in Ulimang, thus eliminating the necessity to maintain an elementary school in Choll and another in Ngkeklau at high cost to the municipality. Furthermore, a sound infrastructure would result in the improvement of the standard of living of the people of my municipality whose population is second to that of Koror. It would also create additional means of livelihood in agricultural production and other areas so that no large segment of the population would migrate to the district centre in search of jobs.

In conclusion, I would like to again stress my strong disagreement to your recommendation to the High Commissioner that no additional Civic Action Team be dispatched to Palau in contravention of the intent and purpose of HEM resolution No. 007. The people of my municipality of Ngaraard understand their needs and know what they want. To this end, I authored HEM resolution No. 007 as an expression of their priority as far as CIP projects in our municipality are concerned. They will indeed be disappointed if their aspirations and desires are frustrated in not having the road project resumed in the very near future.

Sincerely yours,

(Signed) Laurentino ULECHONG

cc: Adrian P. Winkel, High Commissioner of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands
Sheila Harden, President, United Nations Trusteeship Council
Chairman, United Nations Visiting Mission to the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, 1980
Tosiwo Nakamura, Speaker, Seventh Palau Legislature
Ngaraard Municipality Magistrate, Uchel
Trust Territory Co-ordinator for the Civic Action Team, Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, Saipan

Enclosure

TRUST TERRITORY OF THE PACIFIC ISLANDS
Office of the District Administrator
Palau, District
Palau, Western Caroline Islands 96940

20 March 1980

Honourable Tosiwo Nakamura
Speaker
Palau District Legislature
Koror, Palau 96940

Re: House of Elected Members Resolution No. 007

Dear Mr. Nakamura:

I have recently received a copy of HEM resolution No. 007 requesting another Civic Action Team to continue the construction of roads in Ngaraard municipality. I discussed this matter with Mr. Joe Ratholz, Trust Territory Co-ordinator for Civic Action Teams and with several officers from the Naval Construction Battalion which is in charge of the Sea Bee Teams.

To date no estimate of costs or feasibility study has been done on the project. As you know, \$US 100,000 was used to start the project a couple of years ago with the result that little work was accomplished and the cost to the administration was in excess of the amount allocated. I have requested the Community Development people along with the Sea Bees to make a formal estimate of the cost of completing the project. Informally, the Sea Bees have estimated that the project will cost in excess of \$US 1.0 million.

Without knowing the cost of the project and without having the feasibility study it is not appropriate to continue this project. In addition, it is my recommendation that a second Civic Action Team not be recruited for this project. The Civic Action team has 13 men and a limited amount of equipment. In two years they have been able to construct only about 3 miles of road on the Nekken project because they are not set up to do major road work.

By copy of this letter I am informing the High Commissioner of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands that the Palau District administration recommends against bringing in another Sea Bee team to work on the Ngaraard road project.

Very truly yours,

(Signed) Kim B. BATCHELLER
Acting District Administrator
Palau District

cc: High Commissioner of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, Saipan,
Mariana Islands
Trust Territory Co-ordinator for Civic Action Team, Trust Territory of the
Pacific Islands, Saipan, Mariana Islands
