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PETITION FROM SENATOR CARL HEINE, REPRESENTING THE VOICE OF
THE MARSHALLS (VOM), CONCERNING THE TRUST TERRITORY OF THE
PACIFIC ISLANDS

(Circulated in accordance with rule 85, paragraph 1, of
the rules of procedure of the Trusteeship Council)

19 May 1981

The Secretary
Trusteeship Council
United Nations
New York, N.Y. 10017

Dear Sir:

Due to travel funding restriction placed on members of our party by the Marshall Islands Government, it will not be possible for me to travel to New York to give an oral petition.

Enclosed is a written petition submitted to the United Nations Trusteeship Council on behalf of our party. I respectfully request that this petition be distributed to all members of the Trusteeship Council.

Sincerely yours,

(Signed) Carl HEINE
Senator, Marshall Islands Legislature
Representing Voice of the Marshalls (VOM)

Enclosure

Statement submitted to the Trusteeship Council by Carl Heine,
18 May 1981

1. Mr. President, I would like to thank you and the Council for this opportunity to petition the Trusteeship Council. The people I represent and our party are appreciative of this opportunity.
2. Our desire to petition the Trusteeship Council is not necessarily to voice opposition as ungrateful members of the Marshall Islands Legislature and of the Marshalls political structure, but rather to reaffirm our faith in the democratic process, a process which guarantees, among other rights, the right to petition. As a petitioner, I hope and believe that the Trusteeship Council will consider the views and thoughts expressed in this petition. Our party has faith in the American sense of social justice and we hope the new administration in Washington, D.C. will also consider our views on our particular problems and the general problems we think we are facing and will be facing under the draft compact of free association if adopted in its present state.
3. I would like to confine my petition to the following issues: first, the compact of free association between the United States of America and the Marshall Islands; and second, organized political minorities and the allocation of funds under the compact.
4. The compact of free association: The compact of free association between the Marshallese people and the United States Government has been initialled by representatives of the previous administration in Washington, D.C., and our representatives from the Marshall Islands Government, but, to date, the text of the compact has not yet been distributed to the public. Few outside negotiators for the Marshall Islands Government have seen the subsidiary agreements and the economic development plan mentioned in the text of the compact.
5. Previous negotiators under the Carter administration and our own Government have been trying to push for an early ratification of the compact, but it is difficult to see how the general public will be able to make an intelligent choice as to whether the compact is acceptable or not without any public hearings and public political education programme regarding the compact.
6. At the present time, the Government of the Marshall Islands is pushing for a plebiscite this year, and yet there is no assurance either from the United States or the United Nations that the act of approving the compact in a plebiscite is also an act of assuring the termination of the Trusteeship Agreement. 1/ Our party wishes to know what are the options open to us if the compact is not approved by the Marshallese? In addition, what will be our status if the compact is approved both by the United States Congress and the Marshallese, but not by the United Nations Security Council.

1/ Trusteeship Agreement for the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands
(United Nations publication, Sales No. 1957.VI.A.1).

7. Organized political minorities: Of greater importance is the status of political minorities under the compact. It is our belief that the United States and the United Nations have an obligation to be concerned with interests of parties outside the central Marshall Islands Government. One method of showing this concern is by inviting them to participate in the proceedings of this Council as you have allowed us to petition or to come before you. Another is by assuring their participation in the negotiations and, finally, by assuring equitable distribution of the government monies under the compact.

8. We note that in the Federated States of Micronesia, a distributional formula has been worked out for the allocation of grants which will be obtained under the compact to assure funds for local government. This question of distribution should not necessarily be regarded as a purely internal matter by the central Government particularly when there already is an extraordinary concentration of power in the central Government.

9. In the Northern Mariana Islands Covenant, 2/ we observe that funds were earmarked for local governments and political minorities (Rota and Tinian). I believe a distribution formula for the 24 atoll and island municipalities that constitute the Marshall Islands Government should be negotiated. Furthermore, in the Marshalls, there is no mechanism to involve the municipalities in national development planning. There is a strong trend toward centralization of power in the Marshall Islands Government.

10. There is a grass-roots movement in the Marshall Islands today to kill the compact in a forthcoming plebiscite. It is our belief that if a distribution formula is not adopted and if the local municipalities are not brought into the over-all planning process, there is strong indication that the compact may not be approved in the Marshall Islands.

2/ For the text of the Covenant to Establish a Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands in Political Union with the United States of America, see Official Records of the Trusteeship Council, Forty-second Session, Sessional Fascicle, annexes, document T/1759.