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PETITION FROM MS. PATRICIA J. RUMER, REGIONAL SECRETARY, OCEANIA,
UNITED CHURCH BOARD FOR WORLD MINISTRIES, 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)

UNITED CHURCH BOARD FOR WORLD MINISTRIES
NEW YORK
475 Riverside Drive
New York, N.Y. 10115

19 January 1983

The Honourable Paul Poudade
President
Trusteeship Council
United Nations
New York, N.Y. 10017

Dear Mr. Poudade:

I am writing on behalf of the United Church Board for World Ministries to express concern over the manner in which the Palau plebiscite is being conducted. Our church became involved in Micronesia in 1852 and, at the present time, relates to the United Church of Christ in the Marshall Islands, Ponape, Kosrae and Truk. On behalf of our Micronesian partner churches, we have been active through the Micronesia Coalition in advocacy for the right of Micronesian self-determination. We support an extension of the plebiscite until summer, 1983 in order to allow sufficient time for the Palau people to understand the nature of their decision.

Micronesian as well as other churches in the Pacific area are deeply committed to a nuclear-free Pacific. The wording of proposition one, part B, is quite misleading. The Palau Constitution restricts the use of nuclear, chemical, gas or biological weapons. The plebiscite wording would permit the United States to determine the conditions for use, after three Palaun constitutional referendums have already supported the nuclear-free concept. The Palauns must understand the meaning of this vote through a political education process or rewording of this section.

In proposition two, the ballot wording should reflect clearly the choices available to the people of Palau. The words "You may" should be deleted and replaced with an affirmative "Mark your ballot". The options should be restated as follows:

- (a) A relationship with the United States closer than free association as set forth in the present agreements;
- (b) A relationship of free association with the United States but less close than that described in the present agreements;
- (c) Independence.

The United Church Board for World Ministries urges the United States to implement these recommendations in order to ensure an informed, free vote on the plebiscite by the people of Palau. Thank you.

Sincerely,

(Signed) Patricia J. RUMER
Regional Secretary, Oceania

cc. Hollis K. Wilson, Frances Griebel, Karen P. Dietz
