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PETITION FROM MR. JONATHAN M. BULTEDAOB, NGIWAL, PALAU,  
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)

Ngiwal Elementary School  
Ngiwal State, Republic of Palau  
Western Caroline Islands 96940

7 January 1983

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

Dear Sir:

I am a teacher at Ngiwal Elementary School, Ngiwal State on Babelthaup Island, Republic of Palau. I have been working as a teacher for 16 years helping and guiding our young generation for the future. It is my belief that only well-developed man power will help us toward independence in the future. But I was disappointed when I heard and then afterward read the text of the compact of free association concerning the huge United States military base to be on Palau Islands. A plebiscite will take place on 11 January 1983 1/ for us to decide.

With this, I would like to take the opportunity to share a few of my opinions and ideas with you about the impact of a huge United States military base on Palau. It will be a difficult test for us to decide on the referendum day in 1983.

As I think about the future prospects of my country, I must oppose a military base in Palau because it would destroy the basic unique life species of the islands and its reefs which we need now for our subsistence economy. Our everyday life from the past as well as the present is still largely dependent on this living heritage of subsistence food rather than the commercial ones. We do not want to see our taro patches buried and destroyed or the fishing grounds around the reefs ruined. We need these in our daily life. And also we do not want to be a burial place for any dangerous nuclear weapons, including waste materials that could destroy our biological environment for future needs and studies.

Secondly, the United States did not help us to improve and develop our economic security with her best ability to help and guide us to develop these islands so that it could enable us to be self-reliant during the 37 years under her authority. But unwisely she taught us how to be good money users instead with very little improvement to be seen. At the same time, we assimilated many styles of her cultures which are very contradictory to our own culture. In this way, Palau's society has a very confused atmosphere and becomes a nearly lawless place to live in because of crime violations, drunkenness, drug abuse, murders, etc. without any protection under the law. She should help us solve these social problems before using the islands to build a military base.

Therefore, I do not feel comfortable with a military presence in Palau. It would not necessarily help us, but might cause more problems unless she spends millions of dollars to develop our security so that we can become sufficient. It is heartbreaking to think that the United States Government is taking advantage of us because we are a weak and undeveloped nation. She is trying to play a game persuading us to sell our valuable heritage for dollars.

The military base would only benefit our politicians and business, not our common people. Most of our politicians are now misusing our national funds and have spent them for trips to the United States and other parts of the world. They are the ones who are pushing the possibilities of the military base to be on Palau because they want that extra money to go into their pockets then they will have a lot to go around and improve their individual business rather than the official business of the Government.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely yours,

(Signed) Jonathan M. BULTEDAOB  
Ngiwal Elementary School  
Ngiwal State, Republic of Palau

Notes

1/ The plebiscite has been rescheduled to take place on 10 February 1983.

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