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COMMUNICATION FROM MS. PAULETTE WITTWER, DISARMAMENT DIRECTOR,
AMERICAN FRIENDS SERVICE COMMITTEE, CONCERNING THE TRUST
TERRITORY OF THE PACIFIC ISLANDS

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

AMERICAN FRIENDS SERVICE COMMITTEE

PACIFIC NORTHWEST REGION
PORTLAND AREA PROGRAM OFFICE

2249 East Burnside Street
Portland, Oregon 97214-1678

11 May 1983

Dear Senator Hatfield:

In 1979, the Republic of Palau - a United States Trust Territory - was the first nation in the world to adopt a Constitution that banned the storage, testing and disposal of nuclear materials within its Territory. United States officials have repeatedly pressured Palauans to withdraw the nuclear provisions in their Constitution. In spite of this opposition, Palauans have confirmed the Constitution in three separate referendums.

On 10 February, the people of Palau voted on the compact of free association. The Palauan voters refused to provide the legally required 75 per cent approval for section 314, the nuclear provision of the compact. Thus, the compact in its present form must be interpreted as dead.

In the plebiscite on 10 February, Palauans once more expressed their unwillingness to modify their stand on nuclear weapons. While many would like to maintain a relationship with the United States, they expressly do not want this relationship based on military prerogatives, especially the right to base nuclear weapons in Palau.

In a press statement issued by the United States Department of State in late February, the official United States position was made clear. The Department of State is demanding that "Palauan authorities ... devise an acceptable method of

reconciling their constitutional provisions to comply with the mandate of the Palauan electorate for a free association with the United States". Clearly, the State Department has chosen not to accept the other mandate of the Palauan people which does not accept provisions in the compact.

The plebiscite on the compact of free association must be reviewed and differences reconciled in such a way that honours the integrity of the Palauan Constitution and vote of the people. Instead of waiting for this review, we have well-founded reports that the State Department is moving to implement the compact before Congressional investigation or approval. In fact, it is reported that "transition offices" are being established to implement the compact in Palau right now.

I am writing this letter and submitting petitions, 1/ signed by many concerned citizens. These were gathered in a very short time to show support for the United Nations trusteeship hearings on Micronesian status negotiations beginning 17 May.

We ask for your attention to these matters as soon as possible and call for investigation by Congressional oversight committees and consideration by both houses of Congress before further actions by the State Department.

Sincerely,

(Signed) Paulette WITTWER
Disarmament Director
American Friends Service Committee

cc: Chairman Seiberling, Subcommittee Public Lands and National Parks
Senator Matsunaga, Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
Chairman Ron Dellums, Subcommittee on Military Installations and Facilities
The Secretary, United Nations Trusteeship Council.

Notes

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