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COMMUNICATION FROM SISTER BARBARA GLENDON, FOCUS ON MICRONESIA  
COALITION, NATIONAL COUNCIL OF THE CHURCHES OF CHRIST IN THE  
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, CONCERNING THE TRUST TERRITORY OF  
THE PACIFIC ISLANDS

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NATIONAL COUNCIL OF CHURCHES OF CHRIST IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA  
FOCUS ON MICRONESIA COALITION

13 January 1983

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

Because of your special relationship with the affairs of United States-  
Micronesian negotiations, we wanted to send you the enclosed copy of a letter we  
addressed to Ambassador Zeder (see annex). We would appreciate any comments you  
may have in regard to the issues raised in the letter.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

(Signed) Sr. Barbara GLENDON  
OSU

ANNEX

Letter dated 13 January 1983 from Sister Barbara Glendon, Focus on Micronesia Coalition, National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America, addressed to Mr. Fred Zeder, Office of Micronesian Status Negotiations

At the time of the December special session of the United Nations Trusteeship Council, the Focus on Micronesia Coalition stated: "It is our prudential judgement that the 10 February voting date [in Palau] is premature". a/ We based that judgement on reports we had received from our Church contacts in Palau who were concerned at the slow pace of the political education programme. Since then, we have learned that the Palau Senate was also critical of the political education programme. I've enclosed with this letter a copy of a news story which reports that the Senate expressed "concern and disapproval of the inadequate work being done by the political education programme and the lack of information and vast amount of misinformation" (see appendix). This environment does not augur well for a fully-informed electorate prior to a 10 February plebiscite date.

At the time of the Trusteeship Council meeting, we had not as yet received a copy of the official ballot so we were unable to comment on it. As an outside observer who is quite well-informed on the contents of the compact and the subsidiary agreements, it is difficult to come to any other conclusion than that the ballot wording in Proposition One, Part B is extremely misleading. In Part A there was no attempt to characterize free association other than referring to the compact. Why, in Part B was a description given of the radioactive, chemical and biological agreement which places restrictions and conditions on the United States? A simple naming of the agreement should suffice, particularly if the political education programme has done its job. The people should decide whether or not they see it as restrictive. Also, if Proposition Two is to be representative and effective as an advisory vote, it must be obligatory and include three options. The words "You may" should be deleted and the voters instructed simply to "Mark your ballot". The options should be restated:

(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.

In summary, the Focus on Micronesia Coalition requests that the plebiscite in Palau be postponed to allow for sufficient political education and to correspond with the timing of the plebiscites in the other parts of Micronesia. We also request that the wording of the ballot be changed in light of our concerns mentioned above.

We look forward to hearing from you in regard to your disposition of our requests.

Notes

a/ See T/PV.1541.

APPENDIX

Article contained in the Marshall Islands Journal,  
15 December 1982

Palau headed for 10 February vote on Compact

PALAU, Dec. 10 - The Senate of the First Olbiil Era Kelulau today approved the Compact of Free Association, paving the way for the people to approve or reject the compact in the voting booth. The House of Delegates had given its approval to the compact in October during the OEK's eighth regular session.

The OEK's approval of the compact, however, is "contingent" upon the approval of the compact by the citizens of Palau in the plebiscite to be conducted on 10 February 1983.

Although both Houses approved the compact with the contingency clause amendment made by the Senate, the Senate made known in a separate resolution their concern and disapproval of the inadequate work being done by the political education programme and the lack of information and vast amount of misinformation.

The single resolution also expressed the Senate's concern on certain portions of the compact of free association, namely the subsidiary agreements regarding construction projects to be completed in Palau; the agreement regarding radioactive chemical and biological substances; the agreement regarding military use and operating rights; and the agreement regarding jurisdiction and sovereignty of the Republic of Palau over its territory, and the living and non-living resources of the sea. It further expresses the Senate's opinion that renegotiations should be pursued regarding these sections of the compact prior to the conduct of the plebiscite.

The resolution calls for the plebiscite to be held on 10 February 1983 as agreed upon with the Administration, based on the mentioned concerns and the prevailing atmosphere in the Republic of Palau.

The Administration is currently working with government workers to resolve their demands. In addition, various States are also conducting state constitutional referenda and elections for government offices. The government-owned radio broadcasting station has also been out of operation for some time, and all these factors have created an atmosphere not conducive to such a plebiscite on the compact.

The plebiscite had been scheduled for 11 January 1983 but the Senate felt more time was needed to educate the people and make them fully informed of the facts and impact of the compact.

Senator Moses Uludong, the lone dissenting vote of the House joint resolution approving the compact, says more time is needed to allow the executive branch and the ambassador to renegotiate the subagreements of the compact. Some of these subagreements were only recently concluded and they do not reflect the initial high expectations of the people and what the political education committee has been doing.

Delegate Ignacio Anastracio voiced concerns on the contingency clause and whether it met the requirements of the constitution. The constitution calls for the compact to be approved by both houses of the Olbiil Era Kelulau and the people before it takes effect, saying, "It is clear OEK has to approve the compact before the people can vote on it but our conditional approval sounds like a half-approval to me". Delegate Santos Olikong of Koror, however, saw it differently and said that the approval should be looked at as a "light approval" and that, therefore, the requirements have been met.

Both Houses agreed on the significance of the compact and the importance of voters to make an intelligent choice.

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