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COMMUNICATION FROM MESSRS. JACK JORBON AND LANINRUJ ABON
CONCERNING THE TRUST TERRITORY OF THE PACIFIC ISLANDS

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

16 July 1983

Mrs. Carmen Bigler
Chairperson
Commission of Public Education on
Draft Compact of Free Association
Majuro, Marshall Islands 96960

Dear Chairperson:

Several days ago we indicated to you that we have several matters to discuss with you concerning the direction in which the Commission is conducting the public education programme on the compact. You told us that you prefer that we put these matters in writing.

First, the Commission's policy is that the public education programme should be fair, impartial and a fair attempt to point out the advantages and disadvantages of the compact. All of us in the Commission have agreed to this policy. We now request that all of us should put it in writing and sign it.

Second, there is the matter of selecting the members of the Public Education Task Force. You have never consulted us on how to select the members of the Task Force but you went ahead and appointed persons, we presume, you assumed we would approve of. In this case, we want to appoint additional members of our own choice to the Task Force. You have also appointed persons to take the place of those who resigned and you have asked all departments to assign some of their employees to the Task Force. You have appointed school teachers to the Task Force. You have done this without our knowledge and approval.

Third, you approved Mr. Oscar De Brum, Chief Secretary [of the Government of the Marshall Islands], and Brother Henry Schwalbenberg, S.J., both of whom are

consultants to the Commission, to have direct participation in the actual conduct of the public education programme. You allow them to have a radio programme daily on the government broadcast station WSZO. You have allowed Mr. De Brum's own Marshallese translation of the programme to be aired without having other well-educated Marshallese persons check Mr. De Brum's translation. Many Marshallese told us that Mr. De Brum's translation is not accurate. For example, one English version of the programme says "one quarter of a billion dollars". Mr. De Brum translated that as "very close to one billion dollars" when in fact one quarter is not even close to one half of one billion dollars. In another broadcast Mr. De Brum used many English words which he did not translate such as "limited", "infrastructure", "economic development".

You have also allowed Brother Schwalbenberg, a member of the clergy, to actively participate in this programme. Although we hold a high respect for his expert knowledge on the compact we want you to know that a member of the clergy should not take an active role in the programme. If you allow a member of one church to take an active part in the programme, then you should also allow the members of other churches to participate. You have done all of these things without our knowledge.

Fourth, we understand you have approved of sending the whole compact and related agreements to be published in the Republic of the Philippines.

If this is the case, we want to know the name of the publishing company and if any United States citizen or company has stocks in the company and if this company was selected through bids. We want to raise the distinct possibility that there may be errors in the Marshallese versions and there may be no time to republish the Marshallese versions between completion of the printing process and the plebiscite date (7 September 1983). We should have preferred that the compact and the agreements be published here in Majuro, if not for sentimental reasons, then certainly for obvious economic reasons. You have done this without our knowledge and approval.

Fifth, in your memorandum to the President of 30 June 1983 you reported as follows:

1. "In November of 1983, (emphasis added) the Committee on Political Education (CPE) formally commenced ...". The rest of the paragraph discussed things in the past tense as if November 1983 is a thing of the past.
2. You listed the persons who hold key positions in the programme: Mr. Oscar De Brum, Mr. Whithen Philipppo, Mr. Carl Ingram, Brother Henry Schwalbenberg, S.J., and Mr. Mason Altiery. You have allowed them to commence working without our knowledge. As you know, Mr. Altiery enjoys printing his rebuttal in the local newspaper to someone's article criticizing the compact. We consider Mr. Altiery's views biased and he should not take part in the programme.

3. You also reported that there is a fiscal officer for the programme. Why didn't you ask him to prepare the report on the aborted \$75,000 instead of allowing Mr. Ingram to do it? We do not question Mr. Ingram's ability but we do not want our work to be duplicated.
4. You reported that the money (\$225,000) is not enough to do the job. That is why we cannot hire our own people.
5. You made the report as Secretary of Internal Affairs and not as Chairperson of the Committee. Why? We want to know.
6. You also reported that there is \$225,000 left in the fund.

Finally, we request that the Commission meet once a week on Fridays to review the progress of the education programme to date and re-examine the whole programme as it progresses. As we understand it, the Commission is independent of the Government, as our main goal is to educate the people so that they can decide for themselves, without us or the Government, or the United States making the decision. We want you as Chairperson to put this in writing for all of us in the Commission to approve or disapprove.

We request you as Chairperson to discuss with the Attorney General to allow us to make our recommendations for the bill on the conduct of the plebiscite.

We recommend the following items:

1. Mr. De Brum and Brother Schwalbenberg's daily broadcast should be stopped immediately. They should concentrate on providing consultation to the Task Force only.
2. We should be allowed to appoint additional members of our own choice to the Task Force.
3. A lawyer or lawyers should be hired to help the Task Force when going out to various islands.
4. You as Chairperson should obtain a memorandum of understanding with the Cabinet that our programme is purely educational and impartial.
5. You should in all matters make your report as Chairperson of the Committee and not as Secretary of Internal Affairs. We are not employees of your department and we do not want you to use us as your employees because our responsibilities are entirely different from those of your employees.
6. You should correct your report on the remaining balance. It is not \$225,000 because there is an unpaid bill of \$29,822.35 from last year's expenses. The true balance is \$195,177.65.

7. We do not agree with using regular government employees to do work for us because they have their own work to do and in the case of school teachers (whom you have just hired) there is very little time left (between now and 7 September) to brief them on the compact and related agreements. A very little knowledge of anything is more dangerous than no knowledge of it at all.
8. If there is not enough time to do a good job, then stop the whole programme and proceed with the plebiscite. It appears to us now that this whole thing is a joke.

We want you to consider the strong possibility that we will resign from the Commission if you continue to take matters into your own hands without first seeking our approval or disapproval. And for this reason we want you to earmark one half of the fund for the public education programme on the compact of free association and related agreements (including the plebiscite ballot) for us to conduct our own programme if and when we decide to resign.

This letter represents our honest feelings as we do not want to hide anything from you and fellow members of the Commission. It is also the result of honest confrontation as well as consulting with our friends, advisers and associates.

We hope this would clarify our position as members of the Commission and representatives of the loyal opposition.

We request your written response within five (5) working days.

Thank you.

Sincerely yours,

(Signed) Jack JORBON

(Signed) Laninruj ABON

cc: Representative Morris Udall
Chairman, Interior and Insular Affairs
Committee

Representative John Seiberling
Chairman, Subcommittee on Public Lands
and National Parks

Representative Sidney Yates
Chairman, Subcommittee on Interior
Appropriations

Representative Ronald Dellums
Subcommittee on Military Installations
and Facilities

Representative Les AuCoin
Appropriations Committee

Senator Spark Matsunaga
Energy and Natural Resources Committee

Senator Gary Hart
Armed Services Committee

Honourable Pedro San Juan
Director, Office of Territorial and
International Affairs
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C.

Honourable Janet McCoy
High Commissioner
Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands
Saipan, Mariana Islands
CNMI 96950

President
Trusteeship Council
United Nations
New York, N.Y.

President
Security Council
United Nations
New York, N.Y.

Honourable Amata Kabua
President
Republic of the Marshall Islands
Majuro, Marshall Islands

Enclosure

18 July 1983

Mrs. Carmen Bigler
Chairperson
Commission on Political Education Program
Republic of the Marshall Islands 96960

Dear Mrs. Bigler,

Please accept my resignation from your Commission on Political Education Program effective today, 18 July 1983.

I find my personal interests to be very much in conflict with the goals and objectives of your programme as it is clearly spelled out in our memorandum to you on 16 July 1983.

Sincerely yours,

(Signed) Jack JORBON
