

EXECUTIVE

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JUL 20 1961

Dear Mr. Benites:

Thank you very much for sending me your [#]speech to the graduating class of St. Xavier High School. I found it most illuminating.

As you know, the United States considers the economic development of Micronesia to be an extremely important task. This year's debate in the United Nations highlighted our responsibilities toward this Trust Territory. I know I can rely on you and your associates to carry forth these policies in the best interests of the United States.

With every best wish,

Sincerely,

John F. Kennedy

Honorable Jose A. Benites
Deputy High Commissioner
Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands
P. O. Box 542
Agana, Guam, M. I.

RECEIVED
JUL 24 1961
CENTRAL FILES



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
 TRUST TERRITORY OF THE PACIFIC ISLANDS
 OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER
 P. O. BOX 542
 AGANA, GUAM, M. I.

COMMERCIAL
 CABLE ADDRESS
 HICOTT

In reply refer to:

THE UNITED STATES

June 23, 1961

JUN 25 11 06 AM '61

Personal and Confidential

My dear Mr. President:

Reina and I want to express our thanks for all the support you have given us. Here we are living in Agana, half a world away from Puerto Rico, but we like it very much.

Our staff is really working hard to do a good job in order that your administration will distinguish itself in the 3-million square miles covered by the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands. I am also extremely happy to work with such a wonderful man as Mr. Goding.

You can be sure that your Pacific domain is in the best of hands.

I am including a copy of the speech I will deliver to the graduating class of St. Xavier High School on Moen Island in the Truk District. I hope you will like it.

I am very proud of your continuing success and hope this letter finds you in the best of health. Please be assured of my utmost loyalty.

Sincerely,

Jose A. Benitez
 Jose A. Benitez
 Deputy High Commissioner

Enclosures

The Honorable John F. Kennedy
 President of the United States
 The White House
 Washington, D.C.

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ADDRESS TO ST XAVIER HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES, JUNE 26, 1961; By
DEPUTY HIGH COMMISSIONER JOSE A. BENITEZ

I regret that High Commissioner and Mrs. Goding were not able to be with us tonight. However, my wife and I, along with Mrs. Richard F. Taitano, the wife of the Director, Office of Territories, Department of the Interior, want to express our deepest appreciation for inviting us to be with you on this memorable occasion.

We love to be in this group of high islands. Now we realize why the theory that men and women were created in this part of the world.

We like all of your islands -- Tol, Udot, Fefan, Dublon, Uman, and, of course, Moen.

From the air, we could clearly distinguish Winiipwot Peak standing like a banner of inspiration.

Your 40 square miles scattered over 250 islets and islands appear from the sky like a resting place for the fatigued preacher who goes around the world trying to spread his religious philosophy with the intention of creating spiritual contentment.

Your customs inspire us to improve our own customs.

Your legends amaze us. Especially the Trukese story of the two turtles, when your people tried to please that great chief, Samon Iong, with a big village fiesta, and when the people of Pata Village tried to bring all the makings for the huge feast, that giant of the mountain of Wonei named Oneiap swooped down and pirated away their food, leaving the people terrified and empty-handed. When most of the villagers went back to Pata, some men went on and reported what had happened to Samon Iong. That night, Samon Iong could not sleep for worry. As he lay on his mat, he suddenly heard his name being called. Examining, he found two turtles who asked him why he was worried; and, when he explained, the two turtles offered to provide a new road for the people of Pata. All through the night, the turtles worked on the road, cutting it straight through the high mountain. Thus, the next morning there was a great tunnel reaching from Pata Village to the home of their chief. So, at the end they had their great fiesta. The giant, Oneiap, never was able to harm those good people again.

This is a great story. It is an example of the animal kingdom helping human beings, both acting under one reaction....survival.

Also, we enjoy the legend of the two brothers, Rongerik and Rongelap. In this story there is a similar lesson--restoring life to those who want to do good and destroying that which is evil.

St. Xavier High School, in which graduation we participate tonight, for us is "the nearest educational nest to God" located on Moen, center of this garden of islands known as the Central Carolines. No better view can you enjoy than the wide lagoon formed by the huge barrier reef. Nothing closer to what we imagine Paradise is.

Innocent children of great parents -- parents that against adversity have raised themselves to such a level that all mankind is proud of their existence. For them, for their sterling stand, is that today liberty and freedom exist in the world. An example of that appreciation is that all of us are here, combining efforts to solve those problems that might affect your lives.

Children who only yesterday were like sheep playing in this natural Eden, tonight are becoming men, well educated, getting ready to lead, in a responsible way, their people out of the darkness toward the light.

The teachers, all members of what is considered the most educated and dedicated group of religious servants, the Society of Jesus, like shepherds, in continuous contact with nature -- with their knowledge -- with their love -- pouring wisdom to you, brothers of ours, with the only purpose -- that that acquired knowledge will bring you -- your family -- your neighbors -- your community -- your island -- your country a better life, a more happy life -- surrounded by purity, success and spiritual calmness. To them, to those professors, go our greatest admiration and thanks.

The mission of the Trust Territory administration in this area of the world is well known by all of you because it is very clearly stated in the Trusteeship Agreement between the United Nations and the United States -- an agreement that you people and us respect, follow, and obey, because it is an agreement between the greatest international organization existing, the United Nations, and on the other hand, the great democratic nation of the United States of America. It is our responsibility to help you develop politically, socially, and economically, so that in the near future all of Micronesia will be self-government by means of self-determination.

In order to succeed in our endeavor, in order to succeed and accomplish our responsibility to the United Nations, we need you people, we need each one of you. Because the young, educated generation of Micronesia are the ones that have the destiny of your country in their hands.

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With the wisdom and advice of the old and the knowledge of the young combined together is the necessary strength that will be generated to advance the achievement we all are looking forward to. Each of you must decide for himself how important a place you will have in this world of today.

Day and night, hour after hour, our office is working for the benefit of this development. To help us in this task, we have a group of the most able staff anybody can dream of. Day after day, Micronesians are occupying higher and higher positions in our administration. It is not too far away when a Micronesian will become the first District Administrator, and it is not too far away the day when all the District Administrators might be Micronesian. That's precisely what we are trying to achieve. Leaders, democratic leaders, from your ranks are showing up every day. More will be coming up in the future. Countries are built through capable leadership. If you don't count with people who sacrifice themselves for the benefit of his own people, you will never develop fast enough to follow in the footsteps of other free countries. I am happy to have lived the experience that the new crop of Micronesians are going to be able, with the advice of the older people, to advance and move as fast as any other race. Other nations have done it: South America, Central America, Europe, Asia, and Africa. You all know the story, and you love to see it in the movies, the story how a bunch of pilgrims arrived in North America and from scratch created the United States of America.

Our programs are aimed to try to solve most of the existing problems in this area:

- a. political development
- b. economic development
- c. Educational advancement
- d. Public Health
- e. Agriculture

All efforts are being made to try to establish a more effective communication. Our airplanes are making extra flights to try to satisfy the demand. Our ships are increasing their life-saving equipment in order to be able to carry more passengers. New landing fields are contemplated, and a new ship is being built. We have just inaugurated a new radio station in Palau. Another one exists in Majuro, and another is scheduled for construction in Yap. Soon, all our districts will offer these facilities.

In Education, new courses are urgently being planned to improve the opportunity that all of you can understand each other through one language. Our Education Department is making every effort to increase the number of teachers. Our Public Works Department is ready to move in the development of roads, to facilitate transportation in all useful areas. Primary roads should be rebuilt and maintained. Secondary roads should also be rebuilt and maintained.

The work done by the different municipalities is encouraging. The work done by the Inter-district Advisory Committee and its sub-committee is inspiring. I just had the opportunity of discussing with members of our staff and Dr. Samuels, Chairman of the Sub-Committee on Social Development, that committee's report. I can tell you that there is complete understanding of the existing problems, between Dr. Samuels and us. Steps immediately will be taken to solve those problems reported by that Sub-Committee.

We all know that in the union of groups is where strength is found. Nationalistic barriers are disappearing. People from small nations and people from big nations following the same philosophy of government are uniting together in order to solve their common problems. So, there is no reason in the world why the Micronesian leaders in the different districts should not work together in the solution of their mutual problems. In this respect, we are making great efforts and those efforts already done have achieved great success, and there is not one single person that cannot be sure that that unity will not become a reality. I have lived that experience. A few days ago, one of your young men from Palau and another young man from Ponape were sent by us to a conference on "Problems of Youths in Urban Communities." That conference was sponsored by the South Pacific Commission in New Guinea. With them, with your brothers, were delegates from British Solomon Islands, from Guam, from Nauru, from Netherlands New Guinea, from French New Caledonia, from French and British New Hebrides, from Australia, and Papua-New Guinea. On their return, I sat down with them to discuss what they have learned and the message that they have to bring back to their people in the district of Palau and the district of Ponape. Do you know what was the most important gain for those young men in going to that conference? Do you know what really you all gained from that trip?

Those two young men, one from Palau and one from Ponape, became so well acquainted, one with each other, that today they consider themselves members of the same family -- brothers with the same blood. That's the big gain for all of us.

Now, the friends of Dr. Preterick in Ponape will listen, will hear him talking, discussing how his friend James Ramerii from Palau, together with him, in a distinguished manner participated, representing the Trust Territory in front of the delegates from other corners of the world. Like one unit, they did a great job, and I'm sure you all here in Truk tonight, together with me, enjoy that great intellectual victory of two of our young men.

Another example of our efforts to achieve the necessary unity and understanding was the great debate that took place three weeks ago at Pacific Islands Central School in Ponape, between two students of your St. Xavier High School and PICS students. I was also there. What an example of cultural stature. What an example of a race that wants to improve itself. They debated like the best of students, with the bravery of a caballero and the finesse of a diplomat. How proud were we all!

Another example was the graduation of the first class from the School of Dental Nursing in the Marshalls about 15 days ago on the island of Majuro. I was also present there, and I saw a student of Truk coming up to receive his diploma, the same thing I saw from a student from Palau, and a student from Yap, and a student from Saipan, and a student from Rota --- all together like members of one family in the same graduation class, getting that certificate which represents such achievements.

Another example: Here tonight in this garden of heaven, here in St. Xavier High School, the closest educational nest to God, young men from Palau, from Truk, from Yap, from the Marshalls, together become the men of the future. How proud we are of each one of you. How many hopes we have in each one of you. Our task is easier when the human factors involved in it serve as inspiration to double our efforts and sacrifice. Leaders of tomorrow, in your hands is the destiny of Micronesia!