

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

Memorandum

TO : Douglass Cater

DATE: October 12, 1966

FROM : Ross Pritchard 

SUBJECT:

Doug, in sending this over I want to point out that this idea obviously has some rather broad implications, none of which have been raised with AID, State, or Interior. The purpose of sending this thought over to you is to get your appraisal. If you do think this idea has some merit, it would then be time to walk the idea around.

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PEACE CORPS

Washington, D. C. 20525

October 12, 1966

MEMORANDUM TO: Douglass Cater, Jr.
THE WHITE HOUSE

FROM: Ross Pritchard, East Asia and Pacific
Region, Peace Corps

SUBJECT: An Additional Response to Moyers'
Wellington 474: The Trust Territory
as an Open Area of Economic Development
for the People of East Asia

At Hayes Redmon's suggestion, I am sending an addition to the paper we sent over yesterday in response to Bill Moyers' request.

In Wellington 474, Bill Moyers requested information from the Peace Corps on its program in the Trust Territory.

Mention of the Peace Corps' program in Micronesia, a program which followed directly from the President's May 3 request to Jack Vaughn, would certainly be indicative of the President's interest in and concern for the people of the Pacific Basin.

However, in my view there is an unusual opportunity either in Samoa or at Manila to include a very dramatic addition to the President's remarks.

There is the opportunity for the President not only to indicate that he has been interested enough in the problems of the Trust Territory to call for the commitment of 600 Volunteers to the Trust Territory but, in addition, he sees a connection between the Peace Corps program in Micronesia and the alleviation of many of the problems confronting the people throughout East Asia.

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Of course, the President's interest in assisting the people of East Asia is long-standing. This concern was first expressed at Johns Hopkins and has been the theme of several speeches since then. In the Honolulu Conference, the President spent several days enunciating his concern about the problems of illiteracy, disease, hunger, and poverty which are so chronic in East and Southeast Asia. As a result of the President's interest, some action is underway. The principal development, of course, has been the "Asian Bank", but at best the Bank is still in its planning phases. The fact remains, however, that now, after more than a year since Johns Hopkins, there are very few active new person-to-person, grassroots programs of technical assistance relating directly to the needs of the people.

The problems confronting the people in this part of the world are very similar to the problems which Volunteers are now dealing with in the Trust Territory. Peace Corps Volunteers have been assigned to the Trust Territory in programs of disease control and environmental sanitation, in programs of education and teacher training, and in programs of community development. At the present time, the Peace Corps now plans to train its Volunteers for Micronesia in the Trust Territory itself, giving Volunteers a first-hand on-the-job training and exposure to the problems they will be dealing with. In order to make these simple and very basic training installations pay off, the Peace Corps also has plans to use these training sites for the training of other Peace Corps Volunteers who will be going to many East Asian countries to work in similar programs. As a logical extension of this "in-house" Trust Territory training, it would be a relatively simple and low-cost operation to provide training for cadre from East Asian countries. In this way, the Trust Territory could be used as a major training area for both Volunteers going to East Asian countries and for host country cadre who could come to the Trust Territory.

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This development will likely take place to some degree in the normal evolution of Peace Corps developments in the Territory. Public announcement of this in principle by the President would, of course, raise it to the level of a major effort that would re-initiate a Point 4 type of technical assistance for Asia.

The President could announce that it was his intention to transform the Trust Territory from the traditionally closed and secret status as a perimeter of national defense into an open area of economic development for the people of East Asia.

The Presidential announcement would cover the following points:

- (1) On May 3, he had asked the Peace Corps to respond to the problems confronting the people of the Trust Territory;
- (2) In response, the Peace Corps had developed programs for 600 Volunteers in the fields of public health, education and community development. As a natural extension of these programs the Peace Corps was initiating in several districts of the Trust Territory training installations to provide in-house training for Trust Territory Volunteers and for Volunteers destined for service in other East Asian countries;
- (3) As an extension of these developments, it would be the intention of the United States to extend this type of training to host country nationals as well. Cadre being developed in the various countries for service in the fields of education, health and community development could then visit the training installations in the Trust Territory for instruction. Officials from the countries of East Asia could come to the Trust Territory for consultation. In short, the Trust Territory would become a site for a technical assistance partnership between the US (Peace Corps) and the Governments and people of East Asia.

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This announcement need not conflict with our requirements for national defense nor place in jeopardy the freedom of action of Micronesians as they approach their options of self-determination. The advanced state of weapons technology has eliminated many of the strategic considerations that formerly affected the Trust Territory. The few remaining installations such as Kwajalein could be safeguarded. Rather than placing any restrictions on the freedom of Micronesians as they opt for their future political status, it could indeed be said that we were encouraging ties to other peoples of the Pacific Basin and East Asia that would serve no matter what their future political status might be.

In summary, this new status for the Trust Territory would provide an overseas extension of the "Great Society" to East Asia, would provide the Peace Corps with an opportunity to develop to a greater degree the competence in technical assistance it has demonstrated over the past five years, and would introduce a pattern of activity which would allow a number of Micronesians to participate in the development of the surrounding area.

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