

PEACE CORPS / MICRONESIA

TRUST TERRITORY OF THE PACIFIC ISLANDS

EYES ONLY

January 8 1971

Headquarters
P.O. Box 392
Saipan, Mariana Islands
96950

*H. Comm. made
received in Jan 70*

MEMORANDUM

TO: Charles
FROM: Larry
SUBJECT: OEO Lawyers

Yes, they have finally decided to do it, and it cheers me no end. I think you are perceptive in questioning whether or not Johnston realizes the dynamite involved in the program. I don't think he does. The OEO Regional Director is a personal friend of the Hicom and because of that he feels, perhaps wrongly, that the San Francisco office will support his feelings when some of the OEO lawyers gets out of line. I think the Hicom has made a mistake.

The Micronesia Director, Mitchell was here for a very short time and we had a very limited opportunity for discussions. We did come away with the feeling that Mitchell is not going to be constrained by the Hicom or the Regional Director, and that he will operate independently following the tenets of the legal program explicitly. I suspect that the first six months after their arrival will be a rather hectic time for the Attorney General, Public Affairs, and steady Ed (who may become unsteady.)

The first information was that the program in its entirety would be operational by January. Mitchell was here to find housing for his family and then returned to the states to complete the recruitment of the district lawyers. Mitchell advised that he thought the lawyers would not be arriving until June or July.

Now, to answer some of your questions.

I am not sure about lawyers travel to outer islands. I rather doubt that it will take place, as there are plenty of jobs for them in the district centers. Chief Justice Burnett has expressed a strong interest in having the OEO lawyers involved in the legal trade school in Ponape. I questioned the Regional Director about the plans for expansion, new areas, etc, but he did not commit himself on these topics.

92
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As for the OEO program being permanent, I am sure there will be strong support from the Congress and Micronesians for the lawyers if they handle themselves well. It would be very difficult for the TT to unseat the program.

There is a little history that indicates that OEO has been unseated in the past. At one time they had a technical assistance program on Saipan for the District OEO operations. The personnel involved created unfavorable impressions with the executives, and after about a year their services were discontinued. All the details are now history and much of the history I am not aware of except that I do know the Hiccom brought pressure to have it discontinued.

The only reaction that I am aware of is from the Attorney General, Bob Hefner, who is not having good thoughts. Other people, such as Heine, Craley, Kabua I have not talked with, but will do so now that Congress is about to be in session. Hefner's opinion now has little utility, as he has resigned and will be departing the TT shortly.

[REDACTED]

Keep the faith.

Peace.

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THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT, AS AMENDED IN
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22
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