



# ACTION: Memorandum

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20525

TO : Theron Bell, Acting Regional Director, Region IX      DATE: Dec. 11, 1974

FROM : *Dana Rodgers*  
Dana Rodgers, Executive Officer, DO

SUBJECT: Micronesia

Several months ago it was suggested that Peace Corps and Domestic Operations should begin to consider the future of ACTION programs in the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands (Micronesia) as the people of Micronesia began to negotiate with the United States Government over their future political status. One of the options suggested is that Micronesia, or parts of Micronesia, become a part of the United States. Should that take place, it was suggested that ACTION would look to DO rather than Peace Corps for volunteer programming in the islands.

The specific development which raised this issue was the decision by the Marianas Islands, which comprise one of the six political jurisdictions of Micronesia, to negotiate independent of the other five districts and deal directly with the U. S. Government, rather than work through the territorial legislature. It was reported that the Marianas were considering becoming a part of the United States, perhaps affiliating in some manner with Guam (which is geographically a part of the Marianas, though it has been a possession of the U. S. since the beginning of this century).

Consequently the Micronesia Desk Officer, Sandra Wojahn, met with Chuck Goady and Donna Allsup on her way to Micronesia last summer, and also met with Mike Gale. The basis of informal communication between Mike, who has programming responsibility for Guam, and Stan Druben, who is Acting Peace Corps Director in Micronesia, was laid and I believe there has been some communication between them. Later, Emerson Markham stopped in both the San Francisco Regional Office, and the Peace Corps/Micronesia office and discussed the same issue. On his return to Washington, he suggested General Counsel review the various legal issues involved in any participation by DO in Micronesia. The Micronesia Desk



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Officer and I subsequently met with Dick Kasdan of General Counsel and the remainder of this memo summarizes what was discussed.

There is a lengthy history to Peace Corps work in Micronesia and to the possible role of the domestic programs. First, in 1966 it was decided that Peace Corps would be the volunteer presence of the U. S. Government in Micronesia. While a number of OEO activities were funded in Micronesia, VISTA was explicitly not. Shortly after the ACTION merger, ACTION officials testified before the Congress that Peace Corps would represent ACTION full-time volunteer programs in Micronesia.

When the Domestic Volunteer Service Act was written in 1973, it stated in Section 421(2) that the United States (that area where domestic programs were permitted to operate) included the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands (Micronesia) for Title II (OAVP) programs. The language is worded in such a way as to suggest other titles do not include Micronesia. It can therefore be assumed that we currently have legislative authority to initiate Older Americans programs in Micronesia - but no other programs.

However, should the region, working in cooperation with the Peace Corps/Micronesia, ever develop a plan for funding an OAVP project which was partially or in toto in any part of Micronesia, written clearance would be obtained from the General Counsel's office. Of course, Peace Corps/Micronesia should also be in agreement and I would assume would be heavily involved in any negotiations with local sponsors or government.

On the broader political front, it was stated by the Micronesia Desk Officer that the Marianas District is now preparing a formal proposal on its status (which may be affected by a recent local election), that the Marshall Islands District is considering also engaging in separate negotiations, and that at the fastest this issue will not be resolved for the Marianas until FY 78 and for the rest of Micronesia not before 1980.

Therefore, it makes sense for Mike Gale and the Peace Corps/Micronesia staff to keep in touch, but unless there is a plan for an Older Americans project in Micronesia or perhaps in Guam with parts of Micronesia as volunteer station sites, things will continue along without change. Thus, GC does not plan to undertake any research on this subject at this time.

Please let me know if any more information is required.

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