

David P. Searles, IO/MANEAP

7-23-75

THRU : Jorge L. Cordova, GC

A. R. Kasdan, GC

Marianas Political Status Change

Sections 703 and 1003(b) of the Covenant to Establish a Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands in Political Union with the United States of America require the United States to make available to the Islands the full range of Federal programs and services available to United States territories within 180 days after its final approval. Approval is required by the Congress of the United States, the Mariana Islands District Legislature and by a plebiscite of the people of these Islands. The President of the United States will determine the exact effective date within such 180 day period. We understand that only United States Congressional approval is still required.

Although the Islands would not become a commonwealth until the UN Trusteeship Agreement ends, in our opinion, Section 703 commits the United States to provide a full range of Federal programs earlier than its termination. Thus, programs under Title I of the Domestic Volunteer Service Act of 1973, "including VISTA, would now be authorized. (Programs under Titles II and III of the Act are already authorized.) To accommodate the development of full-time domestic volunteer programs, Peace Corps programs in the Islands should be gradually phased out. Such phase out need not take place by the effective date of Section 703, but not long thereafter.

The question of ACTION headquarters office in Micronesia administering both IO and DO programs is a troublesome issue. Both Peace Corps and domestic programs have separate personnel systems. Peace Corps overseas staff are Foreign Service Reserve Officers. ACTION staff in Puerto Rico, a commonwealth, are General Schedule. An FSR program person

IV  
65 ✓

22- 430799

- 2 -

could not administer a domestic program and the reverse is also true. Allocating staff salaries proportionately between appropriations is possible, but difficult.

What could be done is to have both IO and DO program housed in the same administrative office with each program headed by a separate individual with separate support staffs. This will permit the programs to coordinate their activities throughout Micronesia.

cc: GC Subj; GC Read; ARK Chron ; JLC Chron

GC:ARKasdan:ema 8-8-75

IV ✓  
22-459800