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8 JUN 1949

From: Deputy High Commissioner, Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands.

To : Commander in Chief, Pacific Fleet.

Via : (1) Commander Naval Forces, Marianas.
 (2) High Commissioner, Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands.

Subject: Pagan Island - Change in Status of, Request for.

Reference: (a) CincPacFlt Hest. Spd. Ltr. Ser. 1303 of 25 Apr. 1949.
 (b) CNO secret ltr. ser. 006P22 of 25 Mar. 1949.
 (c) JAG Memo to Deputy CNO (Admin.) of 8 June 1948
 JAG:III:EGS:WGM:lbr; "Alien Property in the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands".
 (d) United Nations Charter.
 (e) Trusteeship Agreement.

1. In view of the infrequent use of Pagan Island Range and the great potential value of Pagan Island to the indigenous inhabitants of the Saipan District of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, it is requested that the continuation of Pagan Island as a training area as contemplated by reference (a) be reconsidered and Pagan Island be made available for civilian use.

2. Pagan Island comprising 18.65 square miles is the largest of the Marianas Islands north of Saipan. Before the war, it was used as a copra plantation and is now largely planted with coconut trees which give a particularly high yield of copra. The Civil Administrator, Saipan desires, if possible, to resettle Pagan Island with about 400 Chamorros, most of whom lived there before the war. These Chamorros have been actively interested in the project for sometime. If resettlement is permitted, it is estimated the yearly out-put of copra will be about 600 long tons.

3. Attention is invited to the fact that reference (b) states that Navy land requirements in the Trust Territory as distinguished from Naval Civil Administration, will be confined to Kwajalein Atoll, Yap (Aerological Station), and Saipan. It further states that all areas within the Trust Territory not delineated in reference (b) can be considered, "at the present time", as not required for permanent military development by the Armed Services.

4. Recent experience and best information available here as to future plans indicate that the Pagan Island range, if continued, would only

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
HEADQUARTERS, HONOLULU, HAWAII

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be used for firing about 20 to 30 days a year, and that only part of the island would be used as a target, though the days of firing would be scattered throughout the year. While Pagan Island is considered government land in which the United States as administering authority has succeeded to the Japanese government's rights, reference (c) makes clear that the United States holds these rights, not for its own benefit, but "as Trustee for the benefit of the native inhabitants of the Trust Territory". By Article 73 of reference (d), the United States has formally recognized the principle that "the interests of the inhabitants of these territories are paramount". By paragraph 2 of Article 6 of reference (e), the United States has undertaken both to "promote the economic advancement and self-sufficiency of the inhabitants" and to "protect the inhabitants against the loss of their lands and resources".

In view of the above commitments, it is submitted that the small amount of naval use contemplated does not justify withholding from resettlement a rich copra producing and formerly populated island target in size than the great majority of the islands of the Trust Territory. This seems particularly true as the Navy already has such a target range in Hawaii. If a range within Micronesia is determined to be of overriding military importance, under substantially peace-time conditions and even though not included in the permanent land requirements under reference (b), it is believed that such occasional use of a part of the island should not prevent the resettlement of other parts of it. It is accordingly requested that such parts, if any, of Pagan Island as are deemed essential as either a target or troop operating area be definitely defined, the rest of the island be made available for resettlement with such rights to use the target and troop operating areas as are consistent with the occasional military use of these areas, and that arrangements be made to notify the inhabitants in advance and protect them against injury whenever either the target or operating areas are to be used for military purposes.

Chief of Staff of the Pacific Fleet stated that the status of Pagan Island as a training area, reserved for use of elements of the Pacific Fleet, would remain unchanged.

Permanent facilities are presently under construction for the Fleet Marine Force, Guam indicating that the Chief of Staff, and intends to maintain, in the foreseeable future, combat-ready units in the Marianas. Pagan, at present, is the only place meeting the requirements necessary to maintain these forces at the required standard of proficiency. Further it is the only area of this type west of the Hawaiian Islands.

S. C. ANDERSON,
Chief of Staff.