

January 18, 1946

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Respectfully referred to the
Department of State for the preparation of
reply for the President's signature.

WILLIAM D. HASSETT
Secretary to the President

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Let. to the President, January 16, 1946
Anna Lord Strauss, President (Miss)
National League of Women Voters,
726 Jackson Place,
Washington 6, D. C.

Refers to NEW YORK TIMES of January 16 which reports that the President made statement in press conference to effect that the U.S. will insist upon being the sole trustee of the enemy islands in the Pacific considered vital to this country; says press report does not indicate that there has been a clarification of our policy on principle of trusteeship. Coming in addition to reports from London that American delegation to the United Nation Assembly has no policy with respect to Pacific islands, says this situation is disturbing.





MISS ANNA LORD STRAUSS
President

January 16, 1946

President Harry S. Truman
The White House
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. President:

The United States is now a world power. What we do and say in the councils of the world exerts more influence than we seem to realize. As one of the initiators of the Atlantic Charter, as the nation primarily responsible for the trusteeship provisions of the United Nations Charter, we are clearly committed to the principles of trusteeship and a better chance for dependent peoples.

The New York Times of January 16 reports that you made a statement in a press conference to the effect that the United States will insist upon being the sole trustee of the enemy islands in the Pacific considered vital to this country. The press report does not indicate, however, that there has been a thorough clarification of our policy on the principle of trusteeship. Coming in addition to reports from London that the American delegation to the United Nations Assembly has no policy with respect to the Pacific islands, this situation is disturbing.

The responsibility for the formulation of our foreign policy lies in the executive branch of government. We find it difficult to believe that the executive branch has so far failed in this responsibility that the reports concerning the lack of policy on the part of our delegation are true.

In southeast Asia, in China, in Korea, in Africa, in the Middle East, the eyes of colonial people are turned to the United Nations. Unless their confidence can be gained, our efforts and hopes for a new era in colonial relationships may be in vain.

The American public should perhaps be reminded that our total acceptance of the principles of trusteeship as formulated in the Charter in no way jeopardizes our vital interests. In order for any territory to come under the trusteeship system of the United Nations there must be an agreement between the nation directly concerned and the UNO. Such an agreement will include the terms under which the trust territory is to be administered. In the case of strategic areas (such as the Pacific islands) the Security Council is responsible for approving the terms of the agreement. However, the Security Council has no specific powers over any strategic areas. Each agreement is an individual case to be worked out between the Organization and the state concerned.

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The Pacific islands are peculiarly our problem. By the stand our delegation to the Assembly takes with respect to them we can set the pattern for the postwar treatment of non-self-governing peoples, and we have the opportunity to make a great stride in moral leadership. The development of the atomic bomb indicates that our own eventual security lies more in building a workable world security system, of which the trusteeship plan is a basic part, than in controlling large numbers of island bases.

People everywhere are looking to the United Nations with hope. The United States has a great responsibility for giving substance to that hope. Does this country not intend to live up in practice to the principles which it has so long professed? If we fail at the outset to exert the wise and farsighted leadership befitting a great power, we shall betray the hopes of our own people and those of people all over the world.

Sincerely yours,

Anna Lord Strauss

President

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