



UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20240

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Note to Douglass Cater
The White House

Ross Pritchard's memorandum to you of October 12, suggesting that the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands be made "an open area of economic development for the people of East Asia", and that it be used as a site for the training by the Peace Corps of nationals of East Asian countries, was brought to my attention informally yesterday. Mr. Pritchard proposed that such a program be announced by the President during his current trip.

This Department would strongly oppose such use of the islands of the Trust Territory at this time. Although the economic benefits to the Trust Territory arising from such a program might be substantial, the immediate political dangers far outweigh them. A principal objective of the United States Government in the Trust Territory, an objective supported by the three interested Departments of Defense, State, and Interior, is the creation of a permanent, close, political association between the United States and the people of the Trust Territory. As matters now stand, this close association is likely to result from an act of self-determination by the Micronesian people, probably in the form of a plebiscite, which is likely to occur within the next five years at most. The efforts of the United States Government, necessarily unannounced, have been directed toward assuring as large a pro-U.S.-association vote as we can achieve.

In our judgment, the admission at any early date into the Trust Territory of significant numbers of nationals from East Asian countries could only interfere with the result which we seek. Such East Asian nationals could not be expected to hold uniformly pro-American sentiments. Many would doubtless be articulate on the subject of the virtues of sovereign independence as the only respectable political status. There can be no question but what their views would be made known to the Micronesians, at least some of whom would find them persuasive.

Accordingly, this Department urges that the program proposed not be announced by the President and that it not come to pass prior to the termination of the trusteeship status of Micronesia.

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Authority E.O. 12356, Sec 3.3, Interior letter

By isp/, NARA, Date 9-19-88

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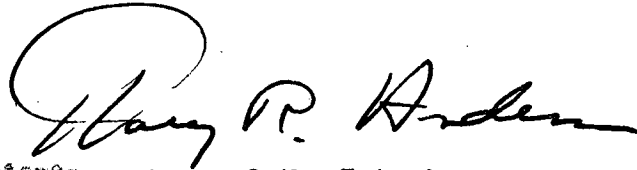
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Mr. Pritchard noted that this Department, the State Department, and AID should be consulted concerning his suggestion. I urge that the Department of Defense also be consulted.



Assistant Secretary of the Interior

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