

encl

25-09 Crescent Street
Astoria, New York 11102

29 July 1971

SA

The Hon. Richard M. Nixon
President of the United States
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. President:

INTERIOR DEPT.

JUL 1 1971

**ASSISTANT
SECRETARY
RBM**

Enclosed is a copy of my letter to Congressman Wayne Hays. I was shocked, as were many of my friends, by his suggestion to "sink" Micronesia rather than pay damages. Although I do not mean to imply that you are responsible for Congressman Hays' remarks, it is my hope that you will use your good office to urge Congressman Hays to offer an apology to the Micronesian people.

The feelings of anger and resentment that I share with my Micronesian friends are certainly detrimental to a meaningful dialogue between the United States and Micronesia.

Respectfully,

Susan K. Costello
Susan K. Costello
former Peace Corps Volunteer

THE WHITE HOUSE OFFICE

REFERRAL

To: The Secretary of Interior

Date: August 5, 1971

ACTION REQUESTED

- Draft reply for:
 - President's signature.
 - Undersigned's signature.
- Memorandum for use as enclosure to reply.
- Direct reply.
- Furnish information copy.
- Suitable acknowledgment or other appropriate handling.
- Furnish copy of reply, if any.
- For your information.
- For comment.

NOTE

Prompt action is essential.

If more than 72 hours' delay is encountered, please telephone the undersigned immediately, Code 1450.

Basic correspondence should be returned when draft reply, memorandum, or comment is requested.

REMARKS:

Description:

Letter: Telegram: Other:


To: The President

From: Susan K. Costello, 25-09 Crescent St., Astoria, New York

Date: July 29, 1971

Subject: Enclosed copy of letter to Congressman Wayne Hays expressing anger at his remarks about Micronesia

By direction of the President:


Michael B. Smith
Staff Assistant

8-41750

(Copy to remain with correspondence)

25-09 Crescent Street
Astoria, New York 11102

July 29, 1971

Hon. Wayne Hays
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D. C.

Dear Congressman Hays:

I am writing you to vigorously protest your remarks about Micronesia. Your suggestion to "sink" Micronesia is a gross insult and thoughtlessly racist. Had any part of the United States requested such just compensation, particularly your own constituency, I am sure your attitude would not be so cavalier.

The people of Micronesia have suffered and lost a great deal at the hands of the Americans, both because of the battles wages on their islands and the twenty-five years of American domination. Callousness and thoughtlessness such as yours have contributed to a good deal of sinking in Micronesia already.

Travel to Micronesia, Congressman Hays. Experience for yourself the discomfort and shame of those islands that you would so casually destroy. Witness the beautiful potential of the Micronesian and his land going to waste and pollution through neglect and ineptness.

Twenty-five million dollars is a pittance. It cannot buy back the lives lost nor pay for the destruction of the Micronesian cultures so deeply rooted in their precious land. It can never compensate for the radicalization of a gentle and trusting people.

What do you know of Micronesia? Do you know about the displaced people of Kili, who for over twenty years languished on an isolated island unreachable for most of the year because of rough seas. They are to return to their home island, Bikini, but they have suffered and their losses cannot be monetarily wiped away.

PRESERVATION COPY

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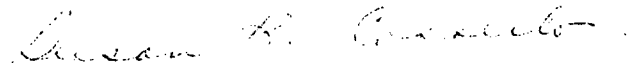
What do you know of the people of Ujelang? They vainly live for the return of their home atoll, Eniwetok. They have survived for so many years on a rat-infested, barren and isolated rock unable to sustain any kind of agriculture. Their compensation for the "temporary" loss of their home was \$175,000, \$150,000 of which was invested for them by the U. S. Government in United States Bonds at 3%. The income from this provided them with an average allowance of \$1.67 per person per year. Yet, they have rejected offers of additional money. They want their home returned to them and a decent way of life.

What do you know of the people of Rongelap who were showered with radioactive fallout from a Bikini test bomb. These Marshallese people were compensated with a few hundred thousand dollars, while the crew of the Lucky Dragon, a Japanese fishing boat illegally fishing in Micronesian waters, received several million. These islanders have been assured an earlier death because of this contamination, and they believe, as do many Micronesians, that they were purposefully used a guinea pigs for atomic testing.

What do you know, Congressman, about Pingelap eye disease; Micronesian infant mortality rates of up to 50%; epidemic parasites, impetigo, hepatitis, gastroenteritis, venereal disease; juvenile delinquency rates of high school graduates with fourth-grade educations; rising suicide rates? How would you pay off these miseries.

As an American, I am deeply ashamed. I urge you to retract your remarks, and to offer your profoundest apologies to the good people you have scorned. The United States owes Micronesia more than a few million dollars. Rather than sink these precious islands, America owes them our best efforts to elevate Micronesia to a proud and sovereign nation.

Respectfully,



Susan K. Costello
Former Peace Corps Volunteer

cc:

Hon. Richard M. Nixon, President of the United States
Hon. Amata Kabua, President of the Senate, Congress of Micronesia
Hon. Bethwel Henry, Speaker of the House, Congress of Micronesia

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