



Security Council

Distr.
GENERAL

S/15940
31 August 1983

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

LETTER DATED 30 AUGUST 1983 FROM THE ACTING PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE
OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO
THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I have the honour to transmit to you herewith a statement issued by the United States Department of State on 29 August 1983, concerning the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands. The statement responds to the accusations contained in the document circulated on 16 August 1983 at the request of the Acting Permanent Representative of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (S/15927).

I request that the attached statement be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Charles M. LICHENSTEIN
Acting Permanent Representative

Annex

Statement issued by the United States Department of State
on 29 August 1983 concerning the Trust Territory of the
Pacific Islands

On 16 August the United Nations Secretary-General distributed, at the request of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, a 12 August statement of the Government Information Agency of the Soviet Union (TASS) attacking United States administration of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands (S/15927). The Soviet description of the United Nations administration of the Trust Territory bears so little relationship to reality, so totally ignores the democratically expressed will of the peoples of Micronesia and is so misleading as to require the following response.

The United States has administered the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands (TTPI) since 1947 under a Trusteeship Agreement with the Security Council. Final responsibility for TTPI, which is the only strategic trust established under the United Nations Trusteeship System, was assigned under United Nations Charter Article 83 to the Security Council. The Security Council assigned responsibility for assisting it in overseeing United States administration of TTPI to the Trusteeship Council.

The actions and policies of the United States as Administering Authority of the trusteeship have been subjected to close scrutiny by the United Nations Trusteeship Council during the last three decades. The record of the United States administration in Micronesia is contained in the comprehensive annual reports which the Administering Authority has submitted to the Trusteeship Council, in the reports of numerous visiting missions which the Council has sent to the Trust Territory over the years and in the transcript of proceedings before the Council at its annual regular sessions. The Trusteeship Council has provided a forum in which petitioners and Council members - including the Soviet Union - have had every opportunity to question and comment upon the administration of the Trust Territory. It is to this record and the very tangible progress made since 1947 which the Security Council and the international community should address themselves.

Article 76 of the United Nations Charter states that one of the objectives of the trusteeship is:

"To promote the political, economic, social and educational advancement of the inhabitants of the Trust Territories, and their progressive development towards self-government or independence as may be appropriate to the particular circumstances of each Territory and its peoples and the freely expressed wishes of the peoples concerned ..."

In accordance with the Charter and the 1947 Trusteeship Agreement, the United States has established modern health care, communications, transportation and educational systems in the Trust Territory and has worked in close consultation

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with the Micronesian people and their leaders to put in place the infrastructure which will enable these islands to achieve their goals of economic development and self-sufficiency. Though Micronesia faces many of the same problems in seeking economic development which other island peoples throughout the world have encountered, the United States believes the Micronesian people are on the threshold of increased economic well-being, and the future political status arrangements which have been negotiated include economic assistance which will enhance these opportunities.

During the trusteeship the United States has worked to improve the quality of life in Micronesia in a manner compatible with the traditions and cultures of the islands and has provided the people with the tools to develop their own resources for their own benefit. During the last decade, priorities for the allocation of resources and implementation of development strategies have increasingly been established by the Micronesians themselves, who today have primary authority and responsibility for the administration of governmental affairs, social services and economic development policies. These activities take place in accordance with constitutions approved by the people in plebiscites observed by the United Nations Trusteeship Council. The United States has relinquished virtually all executive, legislative and judicial functions of government from the Administering Authority to the constitutional Governments of Palau, the Marshall Islands and the Federated States of Micronesia, reserving to itself only such authority as is required to fulfil its responsibilities under the Trusteeship Agreement. These constitutional Governments have authority and responsibility for their internal affairs and, with the support of the United States, are conducting significant foreign affairs activities in preparation for the termination of the trusteeship.

In 1969, the United States began negotiations with the freely elected representatives of the peoples of the Trust Territory regarding the future political status arrangements which would provide a basis for termination of the trusteeship. Those negotiations have produced agreements with the four Governments of the Trust Territory which have emerged as self-government has been instituted - the Republic of Palau, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia and the Northern Mariana Islands. In 1975 the people of the Northern Mariana Islands elected by an overwhelming 78 per cent majority to become a commonwealth of the United States.

After 14 years of careful negotiations, the Governments of three jurisdictions in the last two years have signed the compact of free association, under which the freely associated States will be sovereign and have the capacity to conduct their internal and external affairs, while the United States will have authority and responsibility for security and defence matters. The new nations will also receive significant economic assistance in order to ensure continued economic stability and development under free association. The compact is terminable by either mutual consent or unilateral action of any signatory Government. Earlier this year, the peoples of Palau and the Federated States of Micronesia approved the compact in free and impartial plebiscites internationally observed by missions of the Trusteeship Council (by majority votes of 62 per cent and 79 per cent, respectively). The third plebiscite will be held in the Marshalls on 7 September. The compact will also be submitted for approval, in accordance with the constitutional processes of all four signatory Governments.

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The blatantly false and deliberately misleading TASS statement accuses the United States of the illegal "dismemberment and annexation" of the Pacific Islands. Nothing could be further from the truth. The record of the United States administration and its political status negotiations with the popularly-elected representatives of the peoples of the Trust Territory demonstrates that the United States was fully prepared to enter into a future political relationship with one Government representing all the peoples of Micronesia, but did not and would not attempt to force upon the Micronesian people an artificial and unwanted territorial configuration as the Soviet Union proposes. Indeed, the crucial element in any legitimate act of self-determination is that it be conducted freely and fairly so that its results reflect the freely expressed wishes of the people concerned; a concept which in itself is apparently alien to Soviet thought and experience. In establishing their constitutions and in voting on their status, the Micronesian people have chosen to become separate political entities within the Trust Territory according to their own cultural, economic and political preferences resulting in the creation of four separate Governments - a decision the United States respects. The form of self-government chosen was solely a decision of the people concerned, not of the United States. Any attempt by the Administering Authority to impose an arbitrary notion as to how the people of Micronesia should organize themselves for the purpose of instituting self-government would constitute callous insensitivity towards the cultural identity, social values and political aspirations of the peoples of the Trust Territory and would have clearly derogated from their right of self-determination.

The irresponsible charge that the United States influenced internal politics in Micronesia to bring about fragmentation - when, in fact, the separate constitutional Governments were established through open debate and the freely expressed choices of the inhabitants of the Trust Territory - is both condescending and an affront to the dignity and right of self-determination of the Micronesian people. The United States followed the only path appropriate for a truly democratic nation serving as Administering Authority.

The United States has always sought to preserve the stability which has been established in Micronesia and the Pacific Basin during its administration of the strategic trusteeship. The mutual agreements providing for continued security of Micronesia under free association were signed by the Governments of Micronesia only after extensive discussion and debate within Micronesia about United States security and defence responsibilities. The political and legal processes required in each Micronesian jurisdiction for final approval of those arrangements are still going forward. That this arrangement is - and in order to endure must continue to be - the product of mutual agreement rather than coercion is clearly evident from the fact that the compact will allow the freely associated States unilaterally to terminate free association in favour of independence, without the loss of either economic assistance or United States security and defence protection, an arrangement few other nations would so generously offer.

The Soviet Union has made several reckless charges about the United States intentions to impose agreements upon Micronesia under which the United States would be able to "expand its missile test range, in the islands, its naval bases, the airfields for its strategic airforce and other military facilities", thereby

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"flouting the basic objective of the Trusteeship System". However, under article 5 of the Trusteeship Agreement between the United States and the Security Council, the United States is explicitly authorized to establish military facilities and station armed forces in the Trust Territory. Despite this plenary authority, United States military activity in Micronesia is limited to just one missile systems testing facility at Kwajalein, in the Marshall Islands, which is operated by a civilian contractor force. Far from expanding its military facilities, the United States has neither naval bases nor any airfields for its strategic airforce in Micronesia. United States military operational authority under the compact of free association will be subject to express conditions, negotiated between the United States and the Micronesians.

In addition to substantial grants for social services and economic development, the United States has offered, under the compact, to establish a permanent fund to pay all claims of persons affected by the nuclear-testing programme at Enewetak and Bikini. Upon approval by the peoples concerned, this arrangement will resolve in a comprehensive and compassionate way a legacy of the post-war era.

The process of negotiation and approval of the compact of free association in free and democratically held plebiscites and in accordance with constitutional procedures in Micronesia and the United States has been and will continue to be open for the world community to observe. Once political status matters are determined in Palau, the Marshall Islands and the Federated States of Micronesia, as has already been accomplished in the Northern Mariana Islands, the United States will be prepared to seek termination of the trusteeship. At that time, it will be the voices of the Micronesian peoples themselves which will be heard above the groundless allegations and misinformation of those who would substitute their will for the will of those island peoples. The Micronesians have learned the lessons of democracy too well to have their future dictated to them by any other nation, and that fact, along with the many other accomplishments which the people of the Trust Territory and the Administering Authority have achieved together, constitute a legacy of which the Micronesians, the United States and the United Nations can be proud.

Instead of recognizing these achievements, the Soviet Union has made baseless charges in an attempt to distract the attention of the world community from its own aggressive designs - which now appear to extend to the Pacific area. It is the Soviet misrepresentation of the situation in Micronesia, not the actions of the United States, which represents a clear effort to thwart Micronesian aspirations for self-government as manifested in their recent acts of self-determination.
