

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

Memorandum

CONFIDENTIAL

TO : IO - Mr. Cleveland

DATE: April 11, 1968

FROM : UNP - Joseph J. Sisco

SUBJECT: Chairman Aspinall's Concern at US Trust Territory Policy

We have been confidentially informed that the Chairman of the House Interior and Insular Affairs Committee, Wayne Aspinall, is angry at what he believes to be the critical and unpatriotic attitude of the Department of State toward the exercise of the American trusteeship in the Pacific Islands. Aspinall is alleged to have cited your California speech and its press coverage as examples of State's hostile attitude and to have contrasted it with the customary expressions of American self-congratulation contained in past editions of the US Annual Report to the United Nations on the Administration of the Trust Territory. Although the latter report is prepared in the Trust Territory and reviewed at the working level by State for its foreign policy impact (and by Interior and Navy in their spheres), Aspinall reportedly now fears that State's negative attitude will be reflected in a report this year that will be critical of the US stewardship. He is supposed to have communicated his alarm to the White House staff (Mr. Lee White) who, presumably in consequence, has asked to clear this year's report. (This, of course, will be arranged although there is nothing in the report to cause any excitement.)

It is difficult to believe that Aspinall's anger proceeds from your speech or that he really is concerned about the usual anodyne report to the United Nations. More likely, he perceives in current US policy, and particularly in State's more active role in it, a real threat to his Committee's hegemony. If he persists in this frame of mind he could pose a difficult obstacle to the successful implementation of the President's policy. Consequently, it would seem both prudent and rewarding to enlist Aspinall's active assistance in supporting current policy by showing him that his responsibilities at the end of the process will exceed those he now possesses.

Aspinall's Committee has scheduled hearings on the Trust Territory omnibus bill for April 29-30. Interior has been informed that State and Defense may attend if this is deemed desirable. Although you may wish to discuss the advisability and level of State's representation with Assistant Secretary Carver, you might risk unnecessary harassment if you were to appear before Aspinall before you had re-assured him about our role.

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE Recommendations A/CDC/MR

REVIEWED BY W. V. Huel DATE MAR. 4 1968

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Recommendation:

That you consult with Assistant Secretary Dutton on the best tactics at least to neutralize Chairman Aspinall's ire, and hopefully at most to gain his active support (a luncheon might be useful). You will very likely also wish to discuss with Mr. Carver of Interior any contemplated wooing of Aspinall.

LA MRM
IO:UNP:RVHennes:bp

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