

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20506

April 29, 1966

MEMORANDUM FOR

The Honorable John A. Carver, Jr.  
Under Secretary of the Interior

Obviously the problem of relating announcement of the Peace Corps project to the Congressional action is an important one but I hope that the Interior Department's relationship with its Committees is easy and close enough so that you can pave the way for the Peace Corps announcement so that it will not come as any surprise or shock to them. I understand that the Secretary has looked at the timetable of actions proposed by the Peace Corps and has given assurance that he will undertake to handle the Congressional problem. I talked to Harry McKittrick this morning to find out more about the timing on the authorization bill. It looks as though they can go ahead very soon but will not commit themselves to having it up there by the end of next week. Under the circumstances I think we would have to go ahead with the Presidential announcement sometime next week in order to give the Peace Corps time to do their recruiting.

*On your second point I agree that we cannot promise any specific performance and we are not going to guarantee any firm number of volunteers. The Presidential announcement will be a call for volunteers and not an announcement of how many we are sending.*

Incidentally, I have been told that the Peace Corps lawyers have concluded that the legislative restriction on the expenditures of other U. S. agencies in the Trust Territory contained in the present law does not, for some reason, apply to the Peace Corps. I told them to get in touch with your lawyers to make sure that we all operate from the same legal framework. I know that this raises a question about "hot" vs. "cold" lawyers but in government I know that if you have a good legal brief to back up your action it is often all you need. Obviously nobody is going to sue us or put us in jail if we act on the basis of a well-reasoned legal case even though other lawyers might come to a different conclusion with respect to the same facts.

We are proceeding to get the arrangements in shape for the President to become involved. Bill Moyers has seen the documents and I understand that the Secretary's office is today requesting an appointment for the Secretary and Jack Vaughn to see the President on Monday or Tuesday at which time they will present their agreed project. Walt Rostow will send the President a briefing memorandum before the appointment. This memorandum will briefly describe the problem, the agreed cooperative actions and the Presidential action desired to start the ball rolling.

I understand that you plan to bring Bill Norwood to Washington around the middle of the month. This would be a good opportunity for him to be exposed to this Peace Corps project. Unfortunately because of restraints on Pritchard he was not able to meet or talk with Norwood in Honolulu so that Norwood still has not been briefed. I hope that we can arrange for Norwood to meet the President when he is in town, which will give us another opportunity to make a further announcement of U. S. Government interests and efforts with respect to the Trust Territory. I think Norwood is going to need all the buildup we can give him.

Thanks for sharing your thoughts with me. We should do this continuously in order to keep this operation moving. I feel very encouraged over all the signs of progress and hope that this time we will really go all the way.



Charles E. Johnson