

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
ASSISTANT SECRETARY

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July 3, 1967

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TO : The Under Secretary ✓
THROUGH: S/S ✓
FROM : IO - David H. Popper *DHP*
SUBJECT: Letter from Acting Secretary of Interior Luce
Concerning the Trust Territory of the
Pacific Islands - ACTION MEMORANDUM

[Handwritten mark]

You have just received a letter from the Acting Secretary of the Interior requesting the Department's concurrence in a proposed memorandum to the President and a proposed letter to Congressman Aspinall concerning a commission to determine the political future of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands (TAB C). Mr. Luce's letter was not only sent at the eleventh hour before Congressional hearings begin on July 21 but takes virtually no account of the discussion at the meeting in your office on April 10 this year. Interior has chosen to ignore a draft memorandum which we worked out jointly with them and to substitute their own version which contains serious inaccuracies, suggests to the President that we have the latitude to extend non-self-governing status to the Territory, states flatly that Interior recommends non-self-governing status, and asserts their belief that Congress would not accept any other arrangement. Although the Interior memorandum mentions the State Department's concern, it fails to take account of our considered judgment that non-self-governing status would be incompatible with our obligations under Article 6 of the 1947 Trusteeship Agreement. It all but explicitly concludes that the United States can disregard these obligations.

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GROUP 3

Downgraded at 12 year intervals;
not automatically declassified

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR

REVIEWED BY *B.G. B.A.S.* DATE *8/4/87*

RDS [] EXT. DATE

TS AUTH. REASON(S)

ENDORSE EXISTING MARKINGS []

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E If the President were to act on the basis of the Interior memorandum, we would run the serious risk of commission recommendations which could not be implemented without violating treaty obligations.

To forestall Interior's approach to the President, we recommend you sign the attached letter to Mr. Luce. (TAB A.) The reply: a) states that we cannot concur with their draft memorandum but would be quite willing to work out mutually agreeable language with the objective of informing the President accurately as to the latitude we have in terms of our international obligations; b) cautions that we would find it necessary to explain these constraints in any proceedings of the Congress or a commission; and c) recommends that we seek consultations with the Congress before any Committee hearings. *J*

To reinforce this letter, we would urge that you also telephone Mr. Luce telling him that a letter is coming. Suggested talking points are attached. (TAB B.)

Recommendations

1. That you sign the attached letter.
2. That you telephone Acting Secretary Luce.

Concurrence

L - Mr. Salans *MS*

EA/RA - Miss McNutt *MS*

Attachments

TAB A - Letter to Acting Secretary of the Interior Luce.

TAB B - Suggested Talking Points for telephone Discussion with Mr. Luce.

TAB C - Letter to Mr. Katzenbach from Mr. Luce.

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Talking Points for telephone conversation with Acting Secretary Luce of Interior:

1. I have just signed an urgent response to your letter on the TTPI explaining that we cannot concur in either your memorandum to the President or the letter to Aspinall.
2. The reason we cannot do so is simply that your memorandum implies a latitude of choice on the question of self-government which does not in fact exist. Recommendations to make the TTPI a non-self-governing territory would violate Article 6 of the Trusteeship Agreement. Frankly, I cannot see how your staff could have ignored the agreement that we reached in our conversation on April 10.
3. As for the negative Congressional reactions you anticipate, I thought we had agreed, and I still urge that we privately sound out key members of Congress to explain the national security considerations behind our proposals.
4. I presume our people can get together and try once more to work out acceptable language to the President. If not, we will have to approach him directly to explain the international aspects of the problem.

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