

**Memorandum**

**To: Secretary of the Interior**

**From: Assistant Secretary, Public Land Management**

**Subject: Visit to Congressman Aspinall concerning Trust Territory status commission bill**

Within recent days I conferred with Chairman Aspinall concerning the Trust Territory status commission bill, and learned that he does not foresee any House Committee action on the bill this year, nor does he seem to favor any. The Senate passed a good bill on this subject on May 29. This is an extremely distressing state of affairs, because legislation on this subject is urgently needed, from this Congress. Your appearance before the Committee on this subject last summer, when the commission proposal seemed to be well received, followed by the President's own letter urging action on the matter, testify to its importance. We have not in recent years boasted of such high level involvement in any matters touching the territories, but we have agreed that this issue is worthy of it.

The question is what to do to move the House Committee. From working level contacts which my associates have at the State and Defense Departments, we understand that both Under Secretary of State Katzenbach and Deputy Secretary of Defense Nitze are so concerned about the House inaction that they are likely to be willing personally to call upon Chairman Aspinall to discuss it and urge action. They are reported to believe, and I fully concur, that such a visit would be likely to be far more effective if you were to join them. If you are willing to do so, please let us know and I will see that the other Departments are informed. I would urge that you, thereafter telephone Secretaries Katzenbach and Nitze, so as to arrange a suitable time of meeting.

Harry R. Anderson

cc: Holland  
Gleysteen

Secretary's Files

VanCleve:emw  
6/10/68