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Mr. N. Nelson Craley, Jr.
Assistant Commissioner for Public Affairs
Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands
Saipan, Mariana Islands 96950

MAIL 25 1963

Dear Mr. Craley:

Your letter of July 10 seeks information about Status Commission developments, and I wish we were in a position to offer you comforting information in reply. There have been developments, but not ones which point toward early enactment.

For many months the House Committee gave no indication of interest in the measure, notwithstanding your efforts and those of others to make clear the importance which the Executive Branch attaches to the matter. Accordingly, about two weeks ago, following much high-level telephoning, Chairman Aspinall was visited by Secretary Udall, Under Secretary of State Katzenbach, Under Secretary of Defense Nitze, and several uniformed officers of imposing rank.

Following the meeting he indicated that he would hold a hearing, if our Secretary could present to him a statement, concurred in by the other Departments, indicating the real nature of the problem and the foreseen solutions to it. The statement was prepared forthwith and the concurrences obtained. Earlier this week I gave to the High Commissioner a copy to pass to you. (It is classified.)

A hearing was held on July 16, and Messrs. Udall, Katzenbach, and Nitze (the last two then as Acting Secretaries) appeared, with the Acting Chairman of the Joint Chiefs. Mr. Norwood was present and can fill you in as to the details. We were generally of the view that the hearing had gone quite well, although there were no indications from the members of enthusiasm for the approach. (In my judgment there was also lacking any useful indication as to the approach any or all members might prefer.)

Since then there has been no action at the several executive sessions held, and the predictions are that none is likely. Given the harried atmosphere in this city at this time, it is our expectation that we will probably not press further on this subject until the Congress returns in early September for its foreseen further session.

We shall keep you advised.

Sincerely yours,

Mrs. Ruth G. Van Cleve
Director

VanCleve:emw 7/25/68