

4027

BLUE ENVELOPE

August 29, 1968

Hon. William R. Norwood
High Commissioner of the Trust Territory
Kwajalein, Marshall Islands
(Hand carried by Commander Kuhn)

Dear Bill:

Immediately upon receipt of your letter of August 22, I sent to you (knowing that it probably could not be transmitted to you personally before the Bikini trip) the enclosed radiogram, dated August 27. I realize of course that your letter was written before you received my long radio of August 21 (a copy of which is also enclosed). I hope that this radio, plus our telephone conversation on August 23, clarified some of your concerns about the Inter-Agency Committee, and I've no doubt that George has done so further by now.

I did think it important, however, that you be filled in as fully as possible as soon as possible, and have thus arranged for Commander Kuhn, who leaves for Kwajalein later today, to hand carry this letter to you. He will also carry another letter to you bearing today's date, one that is neither "blue envelope" nor classified. That letter too is in response to yours of August 22. In order to facilitate the handling of all of those aspects which are not classified, I decided to write two letters, the first being classified and with wide distribution of copies, the second more limited.

I'm truly appalled that we've not filled you in better about this Committee. I can think of a hundred bad reasons why we haven't, and with these I'll not burden you. With my two letters of today's date, you and Marty will both be fully informed, I do believe.

At the outset, please let me assure you as fully as I'm able that this Committee poses no threat to any of us, and no potential for hindrance. It should be of enormous help to us in Washington, and this indirectly to you. It is not another Task Force, nor is it elaborately constituted. We have no written calls to meetings or agenda(s) nor minutes, and I hope we will continue that way.

For many months we, and particularly George and I, had brooded over the desirability of formalizing to some extent our interDepartmental contacts, particularly with State and Defense. Sooner or later, I've little doubt we would have acted wholly on our own motion. This spring, however, we began receiving informally the word that other Departments were thinking along the same line, but with more elaborate organizational consequences. There was talk about creating an inter-departmental committee, probably rather high level, to be attached to various State and/or Defense components, and we foresaw endless position papers and endless energies being devoted to how we would go about our

S E C R E T

business, rather than turning to it. Accordingly, in order to insure that we would be as informal as we here thought useful, and in order ourselves to take the initiative, we launched the letter of June 27 which resulted in the creation of the Committee.

The important point about it is that it has no "dispositive" functions. Our purpose is simply to talk among ourselves about any Trust Territory matter of mutual interest; to inform our colleagues in other buildings of what we're doing, when it matters to them (as it often does, but often also does not); to elicit their support when that can be useful (but such support cannot come from the Committee per se -- its members must go home and work through their usual bureaucratic channels); and to obtain help on particular problems. Yesterday I passed the Roi-Nimur claim problem to Harry Holland, and am sure that through his researches already underway, we will at a minimum find out, with greater speed than we otherwise would, who in Defense has been holding up the resolution of this matter. I also would guess that this channel is more likely than any other to result in a favorable solution to that problem.

After the Committee was created, the House hearings were held and, you will recall from our July discussions, Defense entered into a new era of interest in Trust Territory problems. Mr. Nitze was reportedly very impressed with the House Committee members' views as to Defense' apparent disinterest and lack of cooperation with your Government. He is said to have stated afterward to his own people in Defense that, at a minimum, base commanders in the Trust Territory area (who, like base commanders everywhere on earth, have enormous resources available to them -- not dollars as such, but equipment and facilities and expert personnel), ought to the fullest possible extent to make those resources available to the Government of the Trust Territory.

Mr. Nitze's secret letter of July 25 followed, and paragraph 2 of it explains the foregoing. That, and no more, is what our upcoming trip is all about. I had hoped to quote that paragraph in my unclassified letter to you, but our Defense colleagues tell me that, like everything else on earth, this matter is delicate. There are within Defense a fair number of very suspicious fellows who view our Inter-Agency Committee, and our forthcoming trip, as efforts by Interior and the Trust Territory to raid Defense's coffers. That this is nonsense is clear. But because of these concerns, it's been suggested, and I've agreed to go along, that we explain the trip in terms of "identifying areas for further interdepartmental cooperation, in order to achieve our mutual goals", rather than (as I did in my August 21 radio) stating that our purpose is to find out how Defense can help us more. The two are, of course, wholly consistent, for Defense will surely be helping itself as it helps us. But I understand Defense' preference for avoiding the suggestion that we're trying simply to see what we can get out of them. Enclosed is a copy of my August 16 letter to Mr. Earle, concerning our trip.

S E C R E T

S E C R E T

Consistent with the above, I would think the kinds of matters we would discuss on this trip would include: the Ebeye complaints with respect to treatment accorded them on Kwajalein; the Isley field problem in Saipan (if that has not been resolved, and we have too little information here to be sure of its status); ammunition removal; Eniwetok employment. The last of these you mentioned on the telephone, and I assured you that it could be discussed by you and others on this trip. I think you are aware of the problems here, and George can fill you in more fully. The Air Force is very nervous indeed about our launching anything like a back-to-Eniwetok movement. We have assured the military that we understand that it must retain Eniwetok. We have also assured them that we'll do our best to discourage native sentiment on this question. But we have left open (and this Defense confirmed as late as yesterday) that we will continue our discussions as to employment on Eniwetok for some now on Ujelang. Defense is not optimistic on this point and has always discouraged us, but the point at the moment is that the subject is not closed. Defense agrees that, at the barest minimum, we need to know why it cannot accommodate native labor, if it can't, so as to permit you in turn to deal honestly and effectively with the people of Ujelang on this subject. I understand also that there is some discontent over your direct approach to Defense's Eniwetok contractor on this subject, and I agreed to tell you that you ought to deal with the matter through the military, and that direct Trust Territory-contractor discussions or communications should occur only with the military's concurrence. This I hereby do. In any event, the foregoing are only suggestions as to the kinds of items the Committee might consider. What we will need is your help in identifying further areas where Defense might help. You will recall from our July discussions about this trip that we felt, I think mutually, that in order to be useful, our meetings with the military in the Trust Territory should include you or some other suitably knowledgeable Trust Territory Government person (such as Marty), who can talk to the points of where we have problems and needs about which base commanders could be helpful. I'm very glad you will probably be among us in the Kwajalein-Eniwetok-Ebeye talks.

As to the third paragraph of Mr. Nitze's letter, concerning the political future question, this is probably what has given rise to the chatter in the military messages, to which your own letter alludes. (Incidentally, although I'm shown as a coordinator on the long Defense message attached to my other letter of today's date, in fact that "reference" portion at the beginning of it, which contains further reference to the political future problem, was not in fact read to me.) As my other letter states, this item is not on our agenda. Our Executive Branch position on the matter is, for the moment, clear. I have no doubt that if the Congress adjourns without acting on the status commission bill, as it almost surely will, our Inter-Agency Committee will talk about what to do next. But that subject is not before us now. I've no doubt too that during our travels, this issue will arise, and our travelers doubtless will learn useful facts that pertain to the matter. But we plan no organized effort to turn to the subject.

All of my many words have probably answered your August 22 questions, but to be certain, I'll turn in conclusion to responding directly. The committee will operate on this trip in the open. The trip is not a "cover" for any other

S E C R E T

S E C R E T

purpose. It's purpose is as described in paragraph 2 of Mr. Nitze's letter. Defense has really been quite candid about all of this, and splendidly cooperative. As to your relationships to the committee, I would foresee none of a direct sort. We would hope that when you and/or yours are in town, you might meet with us (as Mr. Cralley did on political future matters some time ago), but essentially the Committee is to help us help you more and better. So such channels as are needed would, as usual, run from our office here to yours. I do suppose that matters concerning health, education, economic development, infrastructure, could arise in the committee, but in the context of this-is-what-we're-trying-to-do-and-how-can-you-help-us, not as second-guessing. The travelers believe they have confirmed Air Micronesia reservations, and no SA-16 help from the Trust Territory is foreseen. Housing on Koror and Saipan will be necessary, as stated in my other letter. We would not plan to turn to political future questions, and thus would not need to coordinate our activities with those of the Micronesian status commission.

You will be glad to see that I've come to the end.

Sincerely yours,

Mrs. Ruth G. Van Cleve
Director

Enclosures

cc: Mr. Martin Mangan, TIPI, w/encl.
Mr. George Milner, Kwajalein w/encl.
(Hand carried by Commander Kuhn)

S E C R E T