

MEMORANDUM

From: CDR MILLER
To: ADM FELT

Subj: Conversation with ASTSEC Interior Carver *memo*.

1. Mr. John A. Carver, Assistant Secretary of Interior for Public Land Management, passed through Hawaii on 28-29 May on his return from a trip to Guam, the Trust Territory, and American Samoa. He was traveling in the company of Mr. Robert Mangan, his administrative assistant, Dr. Jack Taylor, of the House Interior and Insular Affairs Committee staff, Mr. Wm. Pinale, former District Administrator, Marshall Islands now enroute to Laos, Mr. Jonathan Bingham, U.S. Representative to the U.N. Trusteeship Council, and Mr. Richard Taitano, Director of Territories, Department of Interior. The entire party, plus a number of Samoans, arrived by Navy Special at Barbers Point Sunday evening, 28 May. Mr. Bingham and Mr. Taitano departed by PANAM Monday morning. Mr Carver and the rest of the party, Monday afternoon, also via PANAM.

2. During the conversation at the airport, while CDR Law and I were seeing the party off, Mr. Carver emphasized one particular item. He repeated and strongly concurred in, a recommendation made by the U.N. Visiting Mission that the Navy, having so much of an interest in the area and the facilities already in place in adjacent areas and in the territory itself, should take over the responsibility for communications in the territory. He explained that by this he meant air and surface transportation as well as radio. He is of the opinion that the Navy could do it cheaper and better for the U.S. taxpayer. Interior would retain their administration, presumably of the area they now have. Saipan was not discussed. He also brought up the possibility of the use of Seabees to construct airports on Ponape and Yap as training projects, and possibly another on Babelthuap in the Palaus.

3. He stated that he would like to discuss this at length in Washington while I am there. Neither CDR Law nor I took any position.

4. On the face of it it looks like a reasonable argument, and a chance for the Navy to justify additional ships, aircraft, and facilities of emergency military value in the Pacific Islands. On the other hand, despite the fact that Interior would help justify the increase in Congress, any money spent on this project would come out of NAVY money and be charged against NAVY ceilings on personnel, money, and equipment.

5. He also mentioned the fact that Samoa is in bad shape, saying that the administration has been wearing out the facilities that the Navy left, and now cannot justify replacement all at once.

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6. This is quite a change of attitude in the Interior Department from just ten years ago when Interior experts were telling the Navy Department and the Naval Administrators what inefficient, military-minded, evil, oppressive people they were.

7. It is difficult to make a definite recommendation or even comment on the basis of the information available. It appears probable that the proposition will receive attention in Washington and the United Nations. Since it involves use of already limited military forces it will bear watching and careful evaluation of the pros and cons as finally presented.

Very respectfully,


C. E. MILLER
Commander, USN

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RAIM STROH