

March 21, 1966

FOR MARVIN WATSON

Delegates from the Trust Territories in the Pacific, in town for two weeks to see Interior, would like to present a gift to the President. They will grind no axes; it will be purely ceremonial.

I sent their request back to Interior, which seemed willing to accept the gift in the President's behalf; now they've had second thoughts, and recommend a brief meeting with the President.

I concur. We are trying to keep the good will of these people, trying to improve living conditions for them, and above all trying to keep somebody from taking the trust territory question to the UN as a "colonialism" issue. Five minutes with this group should be very helpful.

Harry C. McPherson, Jr.

Attachment - Memo for Mr McPherson, March 18, 1966
from Charles E. Johnson

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

March 18, 1966

1. Mr. H. C. McPherson, Jr.
2. Mr. Clifford Alexander

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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

March 18, 1966

MEMORANDUM FOR

MR. HARRY C. McPHERSON, JR.

Harry --

Interior has changed its mind about requesting an appointment for the Saipan delegation. Originally, as Udall told you in his March 9 note, they did not favor such an appointment, but two things have happened since then that have a bearing on the decision. First, in very recent days a number of newsarticles have given the Trust Territory new prominence, and it would be useful both within and outside the Trust Territory if the President were to indicate his awareness of the area. Secondly, the delegation has been told by a Congressman from Texas that if Interior is unable or unwilling to arrange an appointment, he will be glad to attempt to do so.

Interior raised the matter with me and I offered to reopen the question and to add my personal endorsement. In my opinion we are facing some rather serious issues with respect to the Trust Territory and will have to assiduously cultivate the native leadership to make sure that public opinion in the Territory supports the U. S. policy objectives.

The Saipan delegation consists of four important local leaders:

Vicente D. Sablan
Mayor of Saipan

Francisco T. Palacios
Speaker, Saipan Municipal Legislature

Vicente N. Santos
President, Mariana District Legislature

Olympio T. Borja
Delegate, Congress of Micronesia

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They are accompanied by a non-Micronesian lawyer but he would not be included in the visit, which is to be wholly ceremonial. The four Saipanese will be instructed to refrain from discussing any of the substantive issues which have brought them to Washington. They are carrying a gift to the President from the people of the Marianas. The Interior Department would provide an escort officer for them and no more than 10 minutes would be required for the visit.

I strongly recommend an appointment be arranged if the President's calendar would permit it. The Saipanese expect to be in Washington until March 30, 1966

Charles E. Johnson

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