

June 16, 1967

MEMORANDUM FOR HARRY McPHERSON

SUBJECT: Guam and Virgin Islands Governors

The Guam bill passed the Senate on May 9 as reported by the Interior Committee -- and without the amendments recommended by Bureau of the Budget for Presidential veto or removal of the governor. The Virgin Islands bill has been reported out in the same form and should be passed by the Senate soon.

McNaughton at Defense thinks there is no real security problem -- they don't care what we do.

Wilf Rommel at Budget thinks we should continue to propose the amendments -- although he concurs that the President's residual powers nullify most of the apparent risk. He would be willing to give up our position if we could get anything in return -- but doubts that this has sufficient clout to do so.

Absent some quid pro quo, I think we should continue the amendments for the following reasons:

- We have already been terrible "wobblers" on the bill -- we let Interior testify in favor of it and then had BOB ask for amendments. This didn't sit well with the Senate Committee. Why back down again?
- Nullifying action taken by the territorial governor or legislature in national security cases by inherent authority would be messy -- although feasible. Given our defense needs, we can make a case for erring on the side of safety.
- This is also an authority struggle between the Executive and Legislative Branches and it is bad psychology to throw in the sponge without need to do so.

If you concur, I'll tell Budget to send in the same report -- without fanfare -- if they are requested to do so. But I see no need to volunteer the report in the absence of a request.

What do you think?

DeVier Pierson