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July 17, 1956

TO: The Secretary

THROUGH: S/S

FROM: IO - Mr. Wilcox

SUBJECT: Reply to the Secretary's Questions Concerning the Transmission of Information on Alaska and Hawaii under Article 73 (c) of the Charter

In accordance with your request, as transmitted by Mr. Howe, we have taken a fresh look at our policy of reporting to the United Nations on Alaska and Hawaii. We have held further discussions with representatives of the Office of the Legal Adviser and the Department of the Interior, and we continue to believe that it would be against the interests of our foreign relations for the United States to discontinue transmission of information on Alaska and Hawaii until the two territories have made further constitutional advances.

However, we have revised the memorandum to be enclosed with your reply to Senator Knowland and have deleted from it the reference to your statement on this subject at the General Assembly in 1946, and the passage suggesting that the Department favors statehood. On the latter point I wish to call to your attention that the Department has been requested by the Senate Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs on several occasions to give its opinion as to the effect the admission of Alaska and Hawaii to statehood would have on our foreign relations; in response to the latest request, from Chairman Murray of the Senate Committee on January 21, 1955, we replied on February 4, 1955, that statehood "would serve to support American Foreign policy and strengthen the position of the United States in international relations."

Mr. Howe's memorandum posed three questions that were in your mind. These three questions, and our answers to them, follow:

1. Has our policy of reporting on Alaska and Hawaii been successful in encouraging other governments to report on their non-self-governing territories?

We can cite no specific evidence that our policy encouraged any other government to report, but we nonetheless believe that our decision was one of the factors that influenced other governments to give a broad interpretation to the term "non-self-governing" and to report initially on practically all their territories.

2. What

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2. What other countries are in a comparable situation and what position have they taken?

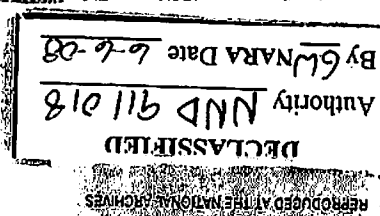
Seven other Governments transmitted information on their territories in 1946. At the maximum, the United Nations was receiving reports on seventy-four non-self-governing territories. By 1955, five Governments had stopped reporting on fifteen territories - the United Kingdom on Malta; Denmark on Greenland; the Netherlands on Indonesia, Surinam and the Netherlands Antilles; France on Martinique, Guadeloupe, French Guiana, Reunion, St. Pierre and Miquelon, the French Establishments in India, the French Establishments in Oceania, New Caledonia, and Indo-China; and the United States on the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico. In all these cases the Governments concerned informed the United Nations that their territories had made constitutional advances. When the United States stopped reporting on Puerto Rico we were also able to justify our action by citing the new constitutional status of Puerto Rico. In the case of Alaska and Hawaii, however, there has been no basic change in their constitutional status since we began reporting on them in 1946.

3. What are we achieving now by continuing to report?

On the positive side we continue to benefit from our liberal attitude on Article 73 (c) issues, an attitude that has been commended on several occasions in the United Nations. On the negative side, the danger lies in what we would lose if we stopped reporting. It is our opinion that we would probably be attacked by those Governments which take a highly emotional attitude on colonial questions in the United Nations. These Governments would view the merits of any United States decision to stop reporting on Alaska and Hawaii in the larger framework of the colonial question as a whole. Some of them would be afraid we would be setting a precedent for other administering powers to stop reporting on their territories without granting any constitutional advances to these territories. We had real difficulty in getting the Assembly, by a vote of 26 to 16 with 18 abstentions to accept our decision to stop reporting on Puerto Rico despite its new constitutional status; many of the Governments which voted "no" or abstained had in mind the precedent that might be established to enable France to stop reporting on Morocco and Tunisia before they attained their independence.

As pointed out in the memorandum to Senator Knowland, it is also important to note that the General Assembly and the Committee on Information from Non-self-Governing Territories have now systematized their procedures for dealing with those cases in which Governments stop reporting to the United Nations. It is now the

practice



practice for Governments which cease transmitting information to send the United Nations the constitutional documents or legislative enactments by which the territory has advanced to self-government. Moreover, representatives from the territories now come to the Committee on Information and to the General Assembly to explain the new constitutional status of the territory and to answer questions. This means that, if the United States followed the prevailing procedure, representatives of Alaska and Hawaii would be closely questioned by representatives of Member Governments, and would probably be embarrassed by their inability to cite a basic constitutional change in either Alaska or Hawaii since we started reporting on them in 1946.

We are also afraid that, if such a situation did develop, the United States press might publicize the debate by quoting statements of United Nations Members to the effect that the United States does not have the right to stop reporting on Alaska and Hawaii without the consent of the General Assembly. This would not be true, in our view, but it might give those elements in this country who are unfriendly to the United Nations additional ammunition with which to attack the United Nations.

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