

# A Week in The Venomous Spring

[\[The Day After Ragnarok\]](#)

Major General Joseph Cowles Mehaffey (USA) is still the Governor of the Panama Canal Zone, and will be for as long as he wants the job. He does not consider this to be good news. It's not his duties, which are even more vital in the post-Serpentfall world. It's not living in Panama, either. No, what worries General Mehaffey is that what's left of the United States is under the constant temptation to drastically scale back its overseas obligations, particularly in a world where Fascist encroachment has simply been replaced with Soviet encroachment. The American government under McCarthy and Warren still recognizes the need to hold key strategic areas, thankfully - but neither of those two men will live forever. What happens if their eventual successors are foolish men? The country is at a state of existential peril not seen since the Revolutionary War; there can be no chances taken.

Fortunately, General Mehaffey has a plan. There are numerous overseas areas that are clearly under American control that meet the residency requirements for admission as new states. His own fiefdom is one of them, thanks to some quiet negotiations with the Panamanian government (indeed, if Mehaffey's plan works, there are elements in that government who would be amenable to

having the entire country annexed). Governor Tugwell of Puerto Rico is likewise on-board for his island territory. Alaska and Hawaii are in the process of pushing for statehood anyway.

That leaves the Philippines. Even after a half-decade of war, there's still over twelve million people on those islands. That's enough for two states! Better yet, the military governor (General James M. Scott, USAAF) was absolutely receptive to talks about bringing the islands into the country. Scott's been invaluable to Mehaffey's strategy: there are a lot of high-ranking military officers who are worried about which way the country's going, and the idea of getting more say in the matter *without* starting a coup appeals to them. So does Scott himself; he's a heavily decorated officer who absolutely shone during the worst days of 1945 and 1946. Should he ever stand for President himself, there's an excellent chance that he'd be elected.

If Mehaffey's plans succeed, the following states would be added:

- Alaska (4 EVs)
- Canal (4 EVs)
- Hawaii (4 EVs)
- McKinley (North Philippines) (19 EVs)

- Puerto Rico (4 EVs)
- Roosevelt (South Philippines) (19 EVs)

The complications from having these states voting in the 1948 Election - and having that happen is an integral part of the plan - are obvious. With the exception of Puerto Rico, all of those states are currently under direct military government. Assuming the states all vote for the same candidate, they will have 54 EVs between them. The current confirmed EV count for the next election (not counting Utah, Texas, or New Hampshire, in other words) is only 50.

Also, it should be noted that while Vice Admiral Topping Wilson, CinC of the Caribbean Fleet, is theoretically under Tugwell's authority, he is also signed off on Mehaffey's plan. Gen Scott brought him in, just like he brought in Generals Theodore Daniel (USAAF) and Thomas Hastings (USA), who are the second in command for Generals Delos Emmons of Alaska and Robert Richardson of Hawaii, respectively. Mehaffey himself has another one of Scott's proteges (General George Seager, USAAF) running the day-to-day planning operations.

Put another way: if MacArthur gets wind of this plan ahead of time, he'll skip right ahead from 'worry' to 'grim panic.' As he himself knows, the definition of a 'coup' can be very

loose. If things go very badly, the United States could flip to an effective military dictatorship within, say, a week -- and damned if MacArthur will let that happen. If *he* doesn't get to be an American Shogun, then by God nobody *else* will.

Naturally, this situation would need to be dealt with quietly. Deniably. And absolutely by somebody with no *direct* connection to the US government. This is one of those situations where the story getting out would be almost as bad as the plan itself succeeding. Troubleshooters should keep that in mind.

- Moe Lane
- <http://www.moelane.com>