

THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY

WASHINGTON

10 JUNE 1949

*Planning*

Dear Mr. President:

I wish to assure you on behalf of the Department of the Navy that steps are being taken to accomplish the objectives set forth in your letter of May 14, 1949, in which you requested that I work with the Secretary of the Interior to develop a time schedule within which the transfer of the administrative responsibility for Guam and American Samoa and the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands from the Department of the Navy to the Department of the Interior might be effected, regardless of the status of pending legislation. In your letter you also expressed the preference that under such a schedule the transfer of Guam might take place within the next year and the transfer of American Samoa and the Trust Territory within the next two to three years.

Pursuant to your letter of February 11, 1948 preparatory planning heretofore had been undertaken to insure an orderly transition to civil government under the Department of the Interior at the earliest practicable date after approval of organic acts for Guam, American Samoa and the Trust Territory. However, in view of your letter of May 14th, the Department of the Navy has adopted a greatly accelerated schedule for relinquishing responsibility for the islands mentioned.

At the present time, no great difficulty is perceived on the part of the Department of the Navy in the accomplishment of an orderly transfer of all the islands referred to at dates well within the time schedule mentioned in your letter of May 14th. With respect to Guam, by letter dated May 31, 1949, I recommended to the Secretary of the Interior that the transfer should become completely effective on January 1, 1950 or on May 1, 1950, as may be decided upon by the Department of the Interior. Furthermore, conferences are now in progress between representatives of the Department of the Navy and the Department of the Interior concerning specific steps to be taken in effecting the transfer of Guam.

Sincerely yours,

/s/ Francis P. Matthews

The President  
The White House  
Washington, D.C.

cc: Interior Dept.