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TERRITORIES

JUN 29 1951

My dear Mr. High Commissioner:

Please extend my warmest greetings to the people of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands and to both Federal and indigenous employees in the Trust Territory on the occasion of the assumption by the Department of the Interior today of administrative responsibility for the Trust Territory, pursuant to Executive Order 10265 of President Truman of June 29, 1951.

I wish to commend you and your staff and the naval personnel who have been assigned to the Trust Territory Government for the orderly manner in which the transfer from naval to civilian administration has been carried out in the area. The Navy Department and its able personnel have brought credit to the United States for the effective manner in which they have discharged the international obligations of the United States under the terms of trusteeship.

The Department of the Interior is determined that the high standards of public service which have characterized the Navy's administration of the Trust Territory will be maintained under civilian administration. This Department will dedicate itself to the principle that the interests of the indigenous inhabitants are paramount, subject only to the requirements of international peace and security. It will foster the maximum practicable participation by the indigenous inhabitants in their own governmental, social and economic affairs. It will encourage scientific research and particularly the use of applied science in the development of policies and programs in consultation with the islanders. The Department will apply in the Trust Territory the knowledge it has gained from its long experience in promoting the welfare of our territorial populations and the conservation and development of natural resources toward the fulfillment by the United States of its international trusteeship obligations.

I plan to issue policy directives from time to time as guides for you and your staff in formulating interim regulations and administrative programs and in the conduct of your relations with international and other Federal agencies. To facilitate the conduct of Trust Territory affairs pending issuance of such directives, it is hereby ordered as follows:

1. Interim Regulations. The present interim regulations and the procedure for establishing and amending such regulations shall remain in effect, provided that the authority heretofore exercised thereunder by the Secretary of the Navy shall hereafter be exercised by the Secretary of the Interior, and provided further that the high Commissioner shall, insofar as practicable, take steps to conform the interim regulations with the provisions of the draft Organic Act

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for the Trust Territory which has been submitted to the Senate of the 82nd Congress with the approval of the President. Policies now in effect shall be continued except insofar as they may be at variance with the above-mentioned draft organic legislation and unless and until such policies are modified by the Secretary of the Interior.

2. Executive Authority. The executive authority of the Government of the Trust Territory, and the responsibility for carrying out the international obligations undertaken by the United States with respect to the Trust Territory, will be vested in the High Commissioner and such officials as he may designate, under the supervision and direction of the Secretary of the Interior.

a. Relations with the Congress. The relations of the Government of the Trust Territory with the Congress of the United States on all legislative matters, including appropriations, shall be conducted through the Department of the Interior and with the approval of the Secretary of the Interior.

b. Relations with Interior Department. With freedom to consult directly with the Secretary as may be necessary, the High Commissioner shall normally communicate with the Secretary of the Interior through the Director of the Office of Territories. The High Commissioner shall be responsible for all United States property in the Trust Territory which is required for the operation of the Government of the Trust Territory and to which the Department of the Interior has custodial title or may use under permit. The High Commissioner shall perform such other functions for the Department of the Interior in the Trust Territory as may be delegated to him by the Secretary.

c. Relations with other Federal Agencies. Initial contact by the Government of the Trust Territory with Federal agencies on other than routine matters shall be established through the Office of Territories of the Department of the Interior. Once the relationship has been established, direct contact between the Government of the Trust Territory and the Federal agencies concerned may be maintained and the Office of Territories kept informed of significant developments in the relationship. Federal agencies should be encouraged to extend their normal Federal services and assistance to the Trust Territory wherever practicable, and the Government of the Trust Territory should be reimbursed for services which it performs for other Federal agencies.

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d. Relations with Foreign Governments and International Bodies. Communications of the Government of the Trust Territory with foreign governments and international bodies shall be cleared through the Department of the Interior for transmittal by the Department of State unless otherwise approved by the Secretary of the Interior.

3. Judicial Authority. The judicial authority shall be independent of the executive and legislative. Budgetary requirements for the territorial judiciary, with supporting justification, should be drawn up by the Chief Justice and submitted for the approval of the Department by the High Commissioner as a separate item in the annual budget for the Trust Territory. The High Commissioner should call the attention of the Department to any questions he has regarding the budget for the judiciary. Regulations bearing on the organization or operation of the judiciary shall be approved by the Secretary of the Interior, prior to issuance.

Sincerely yours,

/s/ OSCAR L. CHAPMAN
Secretary of the Interior

Hon. Elbert D. Thomas
High Commissioner
Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands
Pearl Harbor, T. H.

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