

6 April 1953

MEMORANDUM FOR THE FILES

Subj: Administration of Saipan District

1. At a meeting with Assistant Secretary Orme Lewis of the Department of the Interior, RADM Gingrich and LCDR Herrick discussed the clarification of the administrative responsibility for the Saipan District. Among the points outlined were:
  - a. The Navy's entry into the Saipan-Tinian administration as directed by Executive Order 10408,
  - b. The recommendations of the High Commissioner of the Trust Territory and the Commander in Chief, U.S. Pacific Fleet that the transfer of administration be altered to include the whole of the Saipan District vice Saipan and Tinian only,
  - c. The preparation of an amendment to Executive Order 10408 to provide for transfer of the administration of the whole of the Saipan District of the Navy. This proposed amendment was concurred in by the Secretary of Interior by letter on 30 December 1952,
  - d. The drafting of a transfer agreement by representatives of the Navy and Interior covering the transfer of administration from Interior to Navy and the incorporation therein of the concept of the whole Saipan District conditioned on the processing of the amendment to Executive Order 10408,
  - e. The physical transfer on 1 January 1953 of the administration of the Saipan District including equipment on Rota and the assumption of administrative responsibility for the whole Saipan District,
  - f. The processing of the amendment to Executive Order 10408 as far as the Bureau of Budget for the President's signature,
  - g. The transmittal on 28 January 1953 by the Secretary of the Navy of the interdepartmental transfer agreement to the Secretary of Interior for his early consideration and approval. This had not been received as of 6 April 1953,
  - h. The receipt of information from Mr. Sady of the Interior Department on 31 March 1953 that Interior was still administering the Saipan District less Saipan and Tinian and that for the present Interior no longer concurred in the proposed amendment to Executive Order 10408,
  - i. Based on the recommendations of the High Commissioner of the Trust Territory for transferring the whole Saipan District, the indicated concurrence of the Secretary of Interior in an amendment to Executive Order 10408

NARA APPROVED

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transferring the balance of the Saipan District to the Navy, the concept of transferring the administration of the whole Saipan District as set forth in the interdepartmental transfer agreement drafted jointly by representatives of the Navy and Interior Departments, and the actual transfer in the field on 1 January 1953 of the administration of the entire Saipan District, the Navy Department has been actively administering the whole Saipan District to date including the budgeting and expenditure of funds in connection therewith.

2. Mr. Lewis advised that the Department of Interior's position in respect to the above circumstances has not been fully formulated. The present High Commissioner of the Trust Territory, Mr. Frank E. Midkiff, newly appointed to office on 13 March 1953, had indicated to Assistant Secretary Lewis that he preferred to retain for the Interior Department the islands of the Saipan District other than Saipan and Tinian, and he was of the opinion that upon completion of the current naval mission in Saipan and Tinian, these islands should be returned to Interior.

3. Mr. Lewis further advised that he would withhold any comment on the administration of the Saipan District until Mr. Midkiff had completed his current inspection and orientation trip through the Trust Territory. The position of the Department of the Interior in this matter would ultimately rest to a considerable extent on the recommendations made by Mr. Midkiff.