

Op22/flf  
Serial 989F22

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*22B. G.*

7 NOV 1949

MEMORANDUM FOR THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE NAVY:

Subject: CNO policy concerning the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands.

1. On 18 June 1947 the Secretary of State sent to the President the "Four Secretaries Agreement" (State, War, Navy and Interior) wherein it was stated, in substance, that the Four Secretaries had agreed that the Navy Department should have administrative responsibility for the Trust Territory on an interim basis pending the transfer to a civilian agency of the government at the earliest practicable date, such date to be determined by the President.
2. By letter of 11 February 1948 the President advised, in substance, that it was his intention upon approval of an organic act for the Trust Territory to designate the Department of the Interior as the civilian agency with general supervision over civil administration of the islands.
3. For some time there was considerable feeling throughout the Navy that it would be better if the administration of the islands were to remain in the Navy permanently. It was believed that an impartial visiting group of Congressmen might so decide, and that when Congress finally passed an organic act for the Trust Territory the Navy would be designated to continue as the administering agency.
4. By letter of 14 May 1949 the President advised that he wanted planning accomplished to develop a date, within the next two to three years, when the Trust Territory would be transferred to Interior, regardless of the status of pending legislation. Planning has so proceeded and an agreement has been reached with Interior, and subsequently approved by the President, that Interior shall assume responsibility for the administration of the Trust Territory on 1 July 1951.
5. It is understood that Ambassador Sayre, following his inspection of the Trust Territory last May, favors retention by the Navy of responsibility for civil administration in the Trust Territory, but using all civilian administrators to replace naval personnel now engaged in that task. Such an arrangement is not favored by me. I believe that the success and strength of Navy's civil administration in the Trust Territory has been possible because naval personnel have been used. Continued successful administration there

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by the Navy would be jeopardized by the use of civilians, who in many cases would inevitably go stale with continued tropical duty.

6. In view of the foregoing, and particularly in view of the President's position in the matter, I am of the opinion that the Navy should cooperate fully in turning over the civilian administration of the Trust Territory to Interior in accordance with plans that the President has approved.

*14 FORREST SIERMAN*

Originated by Capt. F. G. Hale (Op22)  
Ext. 62338 --- 26 Oct 49 .. F Felker