

DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
WASHINGTON

15 March 1950

My dear Mr. President:

In your letter of September 23, 1949, you approved proposed plans for the transfers on July 1, 1951 of administrative responsibility for American Samoa and the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, respectively, from the Department of the Navy to the Department of the Interior. The proposed plans referred to had been drawn up in response to your letters of May 14, 1949 to the Secretaries of the Navy and Interior in which you requested that a specific time schedule be developed within which transfers of these islands and of the Island of Guam were to be made.

It is understood that the transfer of these islands to civilian administration is in keeping with the announced aim of our Government to accord civil government and a full measure of civil rights to the inhabitants of the Pacific Islands. Arrangements have been completed to transfer responsibility for the civil administration of Guam to the Department of the Interior on July 1, 1950. Procedures for transfer of such responsibility in American Samoa are under way and it is expected the transfer will take place on July 1, 1951 as scheduled.

The proposed plans for the transfer of the Trust Territory include a proviso that July 1, 1951 has been selected as the transfer date on the assumption that regular air and sea transportation, other than naval, will be available after the transfer date to meet essential civilian and governmental requirements in the Trust Territory, and that plans for carrying out arrangements for such transportation will be submitted to you for approval by May 1, 1950. Although the Department of the Navy agrees that it should relinquish responsibility for the civil administration of all Pacific Islands at the earliest practicable date, it is felt that this important transfer of responsibility should not be effected until it has become clearly apparent that all problems concerned therewith will be completely and satisfactorily resolved.

Recent re-examination of the problems in the Trust Territory and Guam connected with the orderly and economical transfer of civil administration to the Department of the Interior causes me to

believe that the proposed transfer date for the Trust Territory may be premature, and that it may not be possible to determine finally by May 1, 1950, that adequate transportation will be available, and that other requirements will have been adequately met by July 1, 1951.

It is respectfully requested, therefore, that the projected transfer date of July 1, 1951 be considered tentative and that a firm transfer date be determined after a complete resurvey has been made of the problems involved, including transportation. This resurvey will be undertaken at an early date and a report thereof submitted to you by November 1, 1950.

I am sending a copy of this letter to the Secretary of the Interior.

Sincerely yours,

/s/

FRANCIS P. MATTHEWS

The President
The White House
Washington 25, D. C.