

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

JUN - 9 1961

Dear Mr. Secretary:

In an exchange of correspondence more than a year ago, our Departments reached agreement in principle that responsibility for administration of the Northern Marianas area should be transferred to the High Commissioner of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands. Action to implement that agreement was suspended, however, for a variety of economic, security and other reasons.

As you know, the Visiting Mission of the United Nations Trusteeship Council has made this issue a major point in the report of its recent survey of the Territory. This has led to further discussions among representatives of the Departments of State, Navy and Interior, resulting in agreement that the proposal for transfer be reactivated under conditions which will overcome earlier obstacles.

I have just returned from an intensive inspection of the Trust Territory. Some of the conditions we observed are sources of deep concern, especially in the areas of transportation, medical and educational facilities. Most of these adverse conditions stem from the marginal nature of our resources in terms of equipment, personnel and ability to concentrate unusual material effort on difficult problems as they arise. Regardless of administrative responsibility, it seems to us most essential that we take all possible steps to make the total resources of all United States agencies in the area available in a government-wide effort to raise the economic, health and educational standards of the Trust Territory.

With these two situations in mind, your early and favorable consideration for the following actions is urgently requested:

- (1) Issuance of an Executive Order conferring upon this Department full authority and responsibility for Trust Territory administration, except that jurisdiction over bases or reservations established for military purposes shall remain in the military department concerned.

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(2) Exploration of possibilities for assumption by the Navy Department of responsibility for providing communications and transportation services within the Trust Territory.

The latter proposal appears to offer a sound and reasonable approach to the problem of logistical support on the assumption, of course, that it is within the Navy's external and fiscal capability. To a large extent these services are being duplicated at or between various points within the Trust Territory. They are services in which the Navy is engaged on a large scale world-wide, while Trust Territory experience and capability are necessarily limited. Operation of these facilities by the Navy would also enhance the security precautions which are always a matter of joint concern in that area.

The Department of State has indicated that it would be highly advantageous to be able to make a statement before the end of the Trust Territory portion of the Council agenda to the effect that the United States agrees to the transfer of jurisdiction and that steps are being taken within the executive branch to accomplish that objective. For that reason, an early indication of your views is essential. To the extent that they are acceptable, Assistant Secretary Carver, High Commissioner Goding and the Director of our Office of Territories will be prepared to discuss the details of implementation.

Sincerely yours,

Wm. A. Carver, Jr.
Secretary of the Interior

Hon. John B. Connally, Jr.
Secretary of the Navy
Department of the Navy
Washington, 25, DC