

*For Secretary of the Navy  
J. J. [unclear] 4/26/48*

*85-4*

DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
WASHINGTON

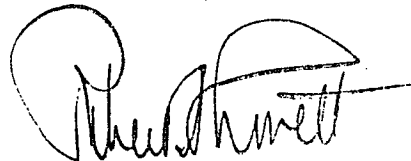
April 14, 1948

*Filed  
4-27-48*

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

Subject: Organic legislation and  
civilian administration  
for Guam, American Samoa,  
and the Trust Territory.

I am sending you herewith a copy of my letter to  
the Secretary of the Navy setting forth the views of  
this Department on some of the questions raised in  
his letter to you of March 24, 1948, a copy of which  
he transmitted to me.



Acting Secretary

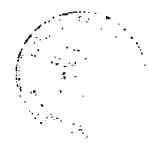
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Enclosure:

Letter to the Secretary  
of the Navy.

*X 1285-B Guam*

*X 1285-B Samoa*



In reply refer to  
DA 890.0146/3-2448

April 14, 1948

My dear Mr. Secretary:

The receipt is acknowledged of your letter of March 24, 1948 transmitting a copy of your letter to the President in which you call his attention to petitions of the Guam Congress and of the General Assembly of American Samoa and their possible bearing on his decision of February 11, 1948 to transfer responsibility for civil administration of these islands and the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands to the Department of the Interior at the earliest practicable date after approval of organic legislation.

With respect to Guam, it is noted that, except for a possible difference in view as to the timing of the proposed transfer of responsibility for civil administration to a civilian department or agency, the wishes of the Guam Congress are basically in accord with the decision of the President. The resolution adopted by the Guam Congress on September 6, 1947 resolves in part "that the Navy Department continue to have the administrative responsibility of Guam, on an interim basis, pending the transfer to a civilian agency at the earliest possible date to be determined by the President of the United States, such date being, it is hoped, when the islands have been completely rehabilitated and the economy of the island fully restored".

With respect to American Samoa, it is recalled that the findings of the Bingham Commission in 1930, the recommendation of organic legislation by the Fono of

American

The Honorable  
John L. Sullivan,  
Secretary of the Navy. X1285-6



American Samoa on April 21, 1945, the conclusions reached by the Hopkins' Commission appointed by the Secretary of the Navy in 1947, and the recommendations of the President's Committee on Civil Rights in 1947 support the President's policy of recommending to the present Congress the adoption of organic legislation for American Samoa. This Department does not have facts on which to evaluate the recent apparent reversal by the General Assembly of Samoa of the long-standing desire of the Samoans for organic legislation; nor is it possible to evaluate the significance of that part of the petition relating to the administering agency without a full understanding of the basis on which this action was taken, i.e. what the Samoans thought the alternatives were and what occasioned the action. Only after these facts have been ascertained should the Samoan petition of February 17, 1948 be used as a guide in assaying Samoan reaction to decisions relating to the future government of American Samoa. In any event, the principle of self-determination of peoples, as generally understood, is not involved in the transfer of administrative responsibility from one agency of the federal government to another.

With respect to the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, as with Guam and American Samoa, this Department considers that the decision of the President to transfer responsibility for civil administration to a civilian department or agency accords with the best interests of the foreign policy of the United States.

For these reasons, this Department reaffirms its support of the President's decisions with respect to organic legislation and civilian administration for these Pacific Islands and notes with appreciation that the Navy Department does not seek to withdraw from its position in agreement with such decisions.

Sincerely yours,

**ROBERT A. LOVETT**  
Acting Secretary

