

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

September , 1949

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

Subject: Interior-Navy Agreements on transfer of administrative responsibility for American Samoa and Pacific Trust Territory from Navy to Interior.

Attached are drafts of two letters for your signature addressed to the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of the Navy. These letters give your approval to memoranda of understanding between the two Departments on the transfer of administration of American Samoa and the Pacific Trust Territory from Navy to Interior.

I recommend that you sign these letters.

You will remember that in May you instructed Interior and Navy to get together and work out a time schedule for transferring these islands and Guam from naval to civilian control without waiting for passage of organic legislation establishing a government for each of them.

The agreement on the transfer of Guam to Interior was previously submitted, and was approved by you on August 10. That becomes effective July 1, 1950, with a transitional period which has just started during which Guam will be administered by a civilian Governor selected by Interior but responsible to Navy.

The two agreements now before you are consistent with the previous agreement on Guam. There are only two significant variations. The date of transfer from Navy to Interior in each case will be July 1, 1951 (rather than 1950 as in the case of Guam) with a similar transitional period under a civilian executive during the year prior to actual transfer.

There is also a provision in the Trust Territory agreement specifying that the transfer date has been selected on the assumption that non-naval air and sea transportation services will be available after that date to meet the Territory's essential requirements. Thus, if they are not available, it will be possible to postpone the transfer date. These transportation services are of prime importance in the



Trust Territory (the former Japanese mandated islands of which the UN Security Council made us the administering authority under a trusteeship agreement), since this Territory consists of about 390 inhabited islands with a population of 51,000, covering 3 million square miles of ocean, although their total land area is only 687 square miles. Transportation costs are, therefore, a major element in the administration of this Territory. The same situation does not apply in the case of Samoa, which is composed of 5 or 6 adjacent islands with a population of 19,000 and a total area of 73 square miles.

Executive Orders will eventually be necessary to formalize these two transfers. You issued such an Executive Order covering the Guam transfer on September 7. However, since the Samoan and Trust Territory transfers become effective a year later than that of Guam, it will not be necessary to issue Executive Orders on them until about July 1, 1950.

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The approval of these agreements will be in accord with your civil rights program. As you stated last May, "It is the announced aim of this Government to accord civil government and a full measure of civil rights to the inhabitants of its Pacific territories".

Respectfully,



CLARK M. CLIFFORD

