

STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT

6/29/51

I have today signed Executive Orders transferring administrative responsibility for the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands and for American Samoa from the Secretary of the Navy to the Secretary of the Interior, effective July 1, 1951.

The establishment of civilian administration in these Island areas is an historic event. It conforms with a long-established American tradition of conducting the affairs of civil populations under civilian authority. It is one further step in the extension of additional civil rights to the Island territories under our jurisdiction.

A similar transfer of responsibility from the Secretary of the Navy to the Secretary of the Interior was carried out on Guam on August 1, 1950, simultaneously with the enactment of organic legislation for that Territory.

For fifty years American Samoa has been served well and faithfully by the United States Navy, which, as the administering authority, had as its primary concern the well-being of the Samoan people.

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Since the end of the Second World War, the United States Navy has exercised similar functions in the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands. The concern of the Department of the Navy for the well-being of the peoples of these areas was an expression of the interest of the people and Government of the United States in the people and culture of these Pacific Islands. That interest will continue and will grow under civilian administration. The experience of the Department of the Interior in promoting the political, economic and social advancement of our Territories will serve as assurance to the people of the United States and of the Islands concerned that sound policies looking toward their welfare will be carried forward without interruption in American Samoa and in the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands.

It is a matter of particular satisfaction to me that this transfer of responsibility has been worked out in a planned, orderly manner, in which the Department of the Navy and the Department of the Interior have collaborated through administrative agreements. These

agreements, embodied in memoranda which were approved by the President, will assure the people of the Islands concerned of the continuation of their essential services, and will assure the people of the United States of the greatest possible economy and most efficient administration.