

MEMORANDUM TO THE EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES

Because of the importance and significance of Puerto Rico in the relations of the United States with Latin America and other nations, it is essential that the executive departments and agencies be completely aware of the unique position of the Commonwealth, and that policies, actions, reports on legislation, and other activities affecting the Commonwealth should be consistent with the structure and basic principles of the Commonwealth.

On July 25, 1952, the Governor of Puerto Rico proclaimed the establishment of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico under its Constitution. This proclamation was the culmination of a series of legislative and electoral steps which began with the passage of Public Law 600, 81st Congress. 64 Stat. 319 (1950). Public Law 600 made provision for the organization of a constitutional government by the people of Puerto Rico. In a referendum, held on June 4, 1951, the proposals of this law received the overwhelming approval of the people of Puerto Rico. Following approval, a Puerto Rican constitutional convention drafted a constitution, which was approved by a referendum held on March 3, 1952. Congress in turn approved this constitution. Public Law 447, 82d Congress. 66 Stat. 327 (1952).

The Commonwealth structure and relationship to the United States, which is in the nature of a compact, provide for self-government in respect of internal affairs and administration, subject only to the applicable provisions of the Federal Constitution, the Puerto Rican Federal Relations Act, and the acts of Congress authorizing and approving the constitution.

On November 27, 1953, the General Assembly of the United Nations recognized that the people of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, exercising effectively the right of self-determination in a free and democratic way, had achieved a new constitutional status and that, in view of this new status, it was appropriate that the United States should cease the transmission of information with regard to Puerto Rico under Article 73(e) of the Charter. U.N. Gen. Ass. Res. 748 (VIII)(1953).

All departments, agencies, and officials of the Executive Branch should faithfully and carefully observe and respect this arrangement in relation to all matters affecting the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico. If any matters arise involving the fundamentals of this arrangement, they should be referred to the Office of the President.

The legislative steps which have led to the achievement by Puerto Rico of Commonwealth status have made inapplicable the provisions of Executive Order No. 6726 (March 29, 1934) insofar as they pertain to or are connected with the administration of the Government of Puerto Rico. This order no longer applies to Puerto Rico.

This memorandum will be published in the Federal Register.