EDO Principal Correspondence Control

FROM: DUE: / /

EDO CONTROL: G20010005
DOC DT: 12/23/00
FINAL REPLY:

President William Clinton

TO:

Agency Heads

FOR SIGNATURE OF : ** GRN ** CRC NO: 01-0009

DESC:

Resolution of Puerto Rico's Status

ROUTING:

Travers
Paperiello
Miraglia
Norry
Craig
Burns
Bird, HR
Cyr, OGC

DATE: 01/05/01

ASSIGNED TO: CONTACT:

STP Lohaus

SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS OR REMARKS:

For Appropriate Action.

Template: SECY-017 E-RIDS: SECY-01

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
CORRESPONDENCE CONTROL TICKET

Date Printed: Jan 04, 2001 11:25

PAPER NUMBER: LTR-01-0009 **LOGGING DATE:** 01/04/2001

ACTION OFFICE: EDO

AUTHOR: WILLIAM CLINTON

AFFILIATION: WH

ADDRESSEE: AGENCY HEADS

SUBJECT: RESOLUTION OF PUERTO RICO'S STATUS

ACTION: Appropriate

DISTRIBUTION: RF

LETTER DATE: 12/23/2000

ACKNOWLEDGED No

SPECIAL HANDLING: OCM #4891

NOTES:

FILE LOCATION: ADAMS

DATE DUE: **DATE SIGNED:**

4891

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

December 23, 2000

MEMORANDUM FOR THE HEADS OF EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES

SUBJECT: Resolution of Puerto Rico's Status

Although Puerto Rico was acquired in connection with the Spanish-American War and United States citizenship is granted to persons born on the islands, Puerto Rico's ultimate status has not been determined. Until that issue is resolved, questions remain about how United States economic and social policies should apply to the citizens of Puerto Rico.

Further, although our citizens in Puerto Rico have been granted the exercise of authority on local matters similar to that of citizens of a State, they do not have voting representation in the Federal Government.

All three of Puerto Rico's major political parties are based on different visions of what the options for a fully democratic status are, and what the best status would be. And all advocate a substantial change in the islands' status. The Commonwealth held a referendum on options for its future status in December 1998, including the current governing arrangement, and other recognized options, but a majority of the vote was for a "None of the Above" column.

Much of the debate on the issue concerns what options are available to Puerto Rico, in light of the Constitution and the basic laws and policies of the United States. The elected representatives of the people of Puerto Rico have, therefore, repeatedly petitioned the Federal Government to clarify the islands' status options as well as the process by which Puerto Ricans can determine the islands' future status.

The United States has a responsibility to answer such questions. Successive Presidents, and the Congress in 1998, have supported the people of Puerto Rico in determining their status preference from among options that are not incompatible with the Constitution and basic laws and policies of the United States. I have made it the policy of the executive branch to work with the leaders of the Commonwealth and the Congress to enable

Puerto Ricans to choose their future status. We also have the responsibility to help Puerto Ricans obtain the necessary transitional legislation toward a new status, if chosen.

To ensure that the Federal Government continues to address the fundamental question concerning the islands until it is resolved, by the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, including Public Law 106-346, I have today issued an Executive Order establishing the President's Task Force on Puerto Rico's Status (President's Task Force) and further direct as follows:

1. The Co-Chairs of the President's Task Force shall conduct an ongoing dialogue with the Governor and Resident Commissioner of Puerto Rico, Puerto Rico's major political parties and other groups that advocate a change in the islands' status, and the Chairs and Ranking Minority Members of the House of Representatives Committee on Resources and the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources. This dialogue shall focus on the options for Puerto Rico's future status and the process by which Puerto Ricans can realize such an option. It shall seek to facilitate communications among the offices that the aforementioned officials represent on matters relating to the status of the Commonwealth, and ensure official attention to, and facilitate action on, such matters. In particular, the dialogue shall seek to clarify the options for Puerto Rico's future status and enable Puerto Ricans to choose among those options.

2. The Co-Chairs of the President's Task Force shall monitor the expenditure of funds for public education on and a public choice among Puerto Rico's status options pursuant to Public Law 106-346. This monitoring shall include ensuring that educational materials are accurate, objective, and nonpartisan and that they are consistent with the standards set forth in the Executive Order entitled "Establishment of the President's Task Force on Puerto Rico's Status."

3. The heads of executive departments and agencies shall cooperate with the Co-Chairs in fulfilling the assignments provided for herein and in the accompanying Executive Order.

William J. Clinton