

Memorandum on the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico

November 30, 1992

Memorandum for the Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies

Puerto Rico is a self-governing territory of the United States whose residents have been United States citizens since 1917 and have fought valorously in five wars in the defense of our Nation and the liberty of others.

On July 25, 1952, as a consequence of steps taken by both the United States Government and the people of Puerto Rico voting in a referendum, a new constitution was promulgated establishing the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico. The Commonwealth structure provides for self-government in respect of internal affairs and administration, subject to relevant portions of the Constitution and the laws of the United States. As long as Puerto Rico is a territory, however, the will of its people regarding their political status should be ascertained periodically by means of a general right of referendum or specific referenda sponsored either by the United States Government or the Legislature of Puerto Rico.

Because Puerto Rico's degree of constitutional self-government, population, and size set it apart from other areas also subject to Federal jurisdiction under Article IV, section 3, clause 2 of the Constitution, I hereby direct all Federal departments, agencies, and officials, to the extent consistent with the Constitution and the laws of the United States, henceforward to treat Puerto Rico administratively as if it were

a State, except insofar as doing so with respect to an existing Federal program or activity would increase or decrease Federal receipts or expenditures, or would seriously disrupt the operation of such program or activity. With respect to a Federal program or activity for which no fiscal baseline has been established, this memorandum shall not be construed to require that such program or activity be conducted in a way that increases or decreases Federal receipts or expenditures relative to the level that would obtain if Puerto Rico were treated other than as a State.

If any matters arise involving the fundamentals of Puerto Rico's status, they shall be referred to the Office of the President.

This guidance shall remain in effect until Federal legislation is enacted altering the current status of Puerto Rico in accordance with the freely expressed wishes of the people of Puerto Rico.

The memorandum for the heads of executive departments and agencies on this subject, issued July 25, 1961, is hereby rescinded.

This memorandum shall be published in the *Federal Register*.

GEORGE BUSH

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 11:27 a.m., December 1, 1992]

Note: This memorandum was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on December 1.

Remarks at the Presentation Ceremony for the President's Environment and Conservation Challenge Awards

December 2, 1992

Thank you all very much. Barbara and I are just delighted to welcome everyone to the White House. And let me single out a few people. I'll get in trouble on this in this distinguished group, but our Cabinet mem-

bers here: Jim Watkins, who brought our National Energy Strategy through the Congress; Manuel Lujan, who's helped expand our parks and refuges; Secretary Barbara Franklin, her team's been out there pushing