



THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR  
WASHINGTON

August 10, 1967

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

Subject: Congress and the Trust Territory Commission Bill

Formal Congressional contact has been necessarily limited. Because of the cooperative interagency effort involved in the preparation of the proposal, it was agreed between the Departments that there would be no Congressional soundings except as agreed upon and participated in by representatives of the three agencies. Before those soundings could be made, the House Interior and Insular Affairs Committee precipitated action by scheduling hearings on H. J. Res. 594, introduced by Congressman Bingham and designed to create a Commission very similar to that which we now propose. Because there was still an area of disagreement between the Departments which precluded the presentation of an Executive branch position, we asked that those hearings be postponed and, in lieu thereof, I appeared before the House Subcommittee on Territorial and Insular Affairs, in Executive session, on July 26 and addressed myself to the problem generally. The Chairman, Congressman Carey, has since asked us on at least two occasions for the Administration's proposal.

I believe we are in the position of either acting now, or running the very real risk of losing the initiative by default, and open the door to independent Congressional action which might or might not meet our objectives.

We believe that the prospects for enactment of this proposal are good. We believe that it is unlikely, however, that the proposal will be enacted in this session of the Congress. Nevertheless, it is important that the measure be sent to the Congress very soon. Both the House and Senate Interior Committees have announced the intention of visiting the Trust Territory this fall, and both are anxious to have the Administration's views before them at that time.

Stewart L. Udall  
Secretary of the Interior