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Mr. Rommel

May 6, 1969

Natural Resources Programs Division (Earl Darrah)

Trust Territory political future

Harry McKittrick and I talked to Interior Under Secretary Train about recent developments leading to stories in local papers regarding Secretary Mickel's trip to the Trust Territory. Two of the relevant press stories are attached. We were interested in the accuracy of the press comments and the extent to which they had been cleared at the White House.

Interior, State, and Defense were the main agencies involved. There was also some participation by NSC and other groups. Discussions were held at three levels--Under Secretary, Assistant Secretary, and staff. The final proposal, we are told, was okayed by the President about May 1. The press story in the Washington Post apparently is accurate. There were also some discussions on the Hill.

The likely next step when Mickel returns is to draft and submit a proposed organic act. Separate legislation, which Interior hopes might move on a faster track, probably would be drafted to ease the restrictions on travel and commerce between the Territory and the United States.

The current thinking on an organic act is to start with unincorporated status with provisions for transition to incorporated status.

Attachments

cc: NRP Records
Mr. Schwartz

NRP:ELDarrah:md 5/6/69