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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON
INTERIOR AND INSULAR AFFAIRS

March 13, 1967

*De Vries noted
3/22/67*

Return to Room

Mr. Harry C. McPherson
Special Assistant to the President
The White House
Washington, D. C.

Dear Harry:

I am enclosing for your use and information copies of the executive reports of the Bureau of the Budget and the Department of the Interior on S. 450, a bill to provide for the popular election of the Governor of the Virgin Islands and for other purposes.

During the Senate Interior Committee's consideration of this measure in executive session, concern was expressed that the Bureau and the Department have apparently taken somewhat different positions on certain aspects of the proposed legislation which relate to Presidential powers and the degree and form of self-government which should be granted the people of the Virgin Islands.

Hearings were held on S. 450 on February 20, 1967. Unfortunately, the Bureau of the Budget's report was not made available to the Committee until March 3, 1967. As a result, the Committee has not had an opportunity to discuss this matter with the appropriate officials.

The primary areas of concern are as follows:

1. The executive report of the Bureau of the Budget of March 3, 1967 goes beyond all

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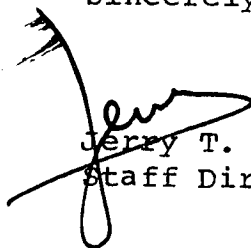
previous executive communications in recommending that "the President be given the authority to . . . veto an act of the territorial legislature when he determines such action necessary." This veto "would be applicable to all territorial laws."

2. It appears to the Committee that as a matter of principle there is a conflict between the purpose of the Act as expressed by the Department of the Interior and retaining (a) the power of the President to remove an elected Governor for cause, and (b) expanding the Presidential veto power to cover all legislation.

As you know, the same problems encountered in S. 450 are involved in S. 449 which would provide for the popular election of the Governor of Guam.

To ascertain and clarify the Administration's official position on these matters, Senator Jackson has scheduled a meeting with the appropriate officials for March 14, 1967 at 2:00 p.m. in Room 3112 of the New Senate Office Building. I anticipate that you or someone from your office will be in attendance at this meeting to informally discuss this matter.

Sincerely yours,



Jerry T. Verkler
Staff Director

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Enclosures

Harry, I strongly believe that the bill gives the President all the power he needs to act in national security instances which you mentioned.