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Commissioner of Indian Affairs Louis R. Bruce announced today that he has directed the establishment of a reconnaissance patrol along certain portions of the border between the Hopi reservation and the area that is jointly used by the Navajo and Hopi tribes.

"I am establishing this patrol because of my concern for the increasing tension that appears to be present in this area. The patrol will act primarily as a courtesy patrol to prevent or reduce any tensions that might arise or exist along certain areas on the Hopi reservation (District 6) boundary, “Commissioner Bruce added. “Each patrol vehicle will be manned by one Navajo and one Hopi" the Commissioner said.

"The decision was made after discussion with Hopi Tribal Chairman Clarence Hamilton and Navajo Tribal. Vice Chairman Wilson Skeet, II the Commissioner said. An 1882 Executive Order created a 70 x 55 mile, 2,500,000 acre reservation in Arizona "for the use of Moqui (Hopi) and such other Indians as the Secretary of the Interior may see fit to settle -thereon." A 1934 statute defined the boundaries of the much larger Navajo Reservation as completely encompass the 1882 reservation, but expressly provided that it did not "affect the existing status of the Moqui (Hopi) Indian Reservation created by Executive Order of December 16, 1882.

In 1962,' a three-judge Federal Court held that the Hopi had the exclusive, beneficial interest in the 661, 194, acre tract, sometimes referred to as land management district 6, in the South central part of the Executive Order area, and that the remainder of the 1882 reservation, the Navajo Tribe and the Hopi Tribe had joint undivided and equal interests as the surface and subsurface, including all resources appertaining thereto, subject to the trust title of the United States.

Commissioner Bruce said -that markers win be erected to visibly define the boundary between the Hopi, Reservation and the joint use area

“I hope this action will help alleviate tension and encourage joint discussion: between the two tribes aimed at tribal problem to a joint tribal problem with friendly negotiations," Commissioner Bruce said.