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SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES RELATED TO SEVERAL PACIFIC ATOLLS

BIKINI ATOLL

As a result of a decision by President Johnson in 1968, Bikini Atoll was the site of an extensive cleanup effort by AEC and DOD in 1969. Part of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, Bikini Atoll is under the control of the Office of Territorial Affairs, Department of Interior. The Secretary of Interior has stated he will look to the AEC for assistance in the radiological aspects of the rehabilitation of Bikini Atoll. Most of the coconut trees, some 80,000, have been planted and a portion of the 40 houses under construction on Bikini Island should be ready for occupancy sometime in March 1972. It would then be possible for some of the Bikini families to return to the Atoll.

The first followup radiological survey of Bikini Atoll was conducted in May-June 1970, after thorough coordination with the High Commissioner of the Trust Territory in Saipan. Air sampling was performed and many soil samples obtained. It has been concluded that the additional measurements and analysis of samples during cleanup and during the 1970 survey would not indicate the need for significant changes in the 1968 estimates of exposure to residents which stand behind the decision to allow the Bikini people to return home.

Preparatory to the 1972 Bikini survey, Mr. Roger Ray and Mr. Frank Cluff of NVOO and I are to visit Saipan in early March 1972. We will be prepared to discuss with High Commissioner Johnston the plans and purpose for the next Bikini survey. Our aim is to renew past working relationships with his staff and to obtain the necessary logistic support and concurrences for the AEC team visit to Bikini Atoll in May 1972. We expect to learn from Mr. Johnston the plans and progress in the agricultural rehabilitation of the Atoll and additional information on the schedule of return of the Bikini people.

On return from Saipan we plan a short visit to Bikini Atoll to observe the implementation of AEC recommendations in the agricultural and housing construction projects and also a short visit to Eniwetok where project PACE is underway (to be covered later in this summary).

The 1972 followup radiological survey of Bikini Atoll is to begin about May 1, 1972, for twelve days. Within the ten-man team will be technical staff from the University of Washington Laboratory of Radiation Ecology (LRE), Western Environmental Research Laboratory (WERL) of EPA, Division

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of Operational Safety (DOS) AEC, and Office of Assistant Manager for Operations (AMO) NVOO. The survey will investigate the islands of principal interest in the atoll and will include sampling of soil, air, sea and well water, terrestrial and marine organisms and agricultural crops as well as measurements of radiation levels in collected scrap metal and of gamma levels in and around new structures. Particular emphasis is to be given to collection and analysis of new food crops now being grown in the atoll. The team will obtain housing and messing support from Trust Territory but will bring to the atoll its own water transportation and communications. The field survey will be followed by laboratory analysis of samples by WERL and LRE.

RONGELAP ATOLL

Dr. Robert A. Conard, Brookhaven National Laboratory, with support from Division of Biology and Medicine, is continuing the followup medical surveys of the people of Rongelap and Utirik Atolls. His next field survey will be conducted during the month of March 1972. Accompanying Dr. Conard will be staff from the National Institutes of Health and the Cleveland Metropolitan Hospital and possibly three physicians from Japan. Dr. Conard and his team are there to identify and evaluate any long term effects in the exposed population. Complete treatments of such diagnosed effects are carried out in Hawaii and in the U.S. In addition, daily supportive therapy in the form of thyroid hormone is provided for those showing thyroid deficiencies. Other medical problems requiring definitive treatment are called immediately to the attention of the Department of Health Services of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands. Rongelap and Utirik people will be examined at Ebeye in Kwajalein, at Rongelap, Utirik, Majuro and Honolulu. Dr. Conard's findings are published in a series of BNL reports. Currently, Dr. Conard is receiving complete cooperation by the Rongelapese. However, the people of Utirik have been expressing discontent because they did not receive a payment of money as did the Rongelapese (those on Utirik received a much lower exposure). The medical support provided these people was the subject of considerable discussion in the January 1972 session of the Congress of Micronesia and a resolution, H. B. 199, was introduced by Representative Ataji Balos of the Marshalls District and co-signed by all members of the House of Representatives. If enacted there would be established a "Special Joint Committee of Congress Concerning Rongelap and Utirik Atolls" to investigate the results of irradiation of people of Rongelap and Utirik Atolls, to secure medical assistance and aid, to obtain compensation for injuries and, having power to conduct hearings and investigations, to issue subpoenas for witnesses and to bring suits in any court of the Trust Territory. In presenting the bill, Representative Balos made one of the strongest and most bitter attacks against the U. S. and Trust Territory. He stated he was convinced the U. S. knowingly and consciously allowed people of Rongelap and Utirik to be exposed to fallout in 1954 in order to use them as human guinea pigs in development of its medical capabilities to treat its citizens in event of war. The attack was apparently precipitated by refusal

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for a Japanese team who came into the Trust Territory in December at the invitation of Representative Balos. The Japanese had planned to perform medical examinations on Rongelap and Utirik.

ENIWETOK ATOLL

The former residents of Eniwetok, now living on Ujelang Atoll 150 miles to the southeast, have made the decision to return to Eniwetok before the end of 1972. The leaders of the Eniwetok people have appointed an OEO Legal Service lawyer as their official counselor and representative. Complicating this matter are plans by DOD to conduct a series of high explosive tests in the atoll with cratering events having yields up to 500 tons. This is a portion of Pacific Cratering Experiments (PACE), a program sponsored by the Defense Nuclear Agency (DNA) using the Air Force Weapons Laboratory (AFWL) as the operating agency. Test areas have been identified on six different islands where craters of various sizes will be generated. The sites chosen have been affected by past nuclear tests and contain various quantities of radioactive debris. The people of Eniwetok know of these planned tests. Although an Environmental Statement (dated November 1971) has been prepared, the Director DNA in a memo to Assistant Secretary of Defense (Health and Environment), dated January 17, 1972, states that DNA does not consider this experimental series a "Major Action Significantly Affecting the Quality of the Human Environment."

In a memo to Armistead I. Seldén, Jr., Deputy Assistant Secretary, International Security Affairs, U. S. Department of Defense, dated January 31, 1972, Ambassador Franklin Daydn Williams, the President's personal representative for Micronesian status negotiations, states that these negotiations are in a critical stage and that conducting these experiments before the next series of talks in early April would run the unacceptable risk of focusing unfavorable attention on U. S. military requirements in the Trust Territory, give anti-U.S. elements a theme to exploit, and thus jeopardize the success of the negotiations. He further states the belief that PACE can be conducted without harming the negotiations if the time schedule for commencement can be slipped to about May 1 or later and a time schedule for return of the various islands can be worked out.

Responding to this memo, Mr. G. Warren Nutter, Office of Secretary of Defense, in a memo to the Director DNA, dated February 8, 1972, concurs with continuance of the PACE program provided there is public release of the PACE environmental statement and preparation of a public affairs plan by DNA. AEC staff have now been advised that the environmental statement will be issued about May 1.

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Ambassador Williams and his staff are preparing a statement of position that will include the return of Eniwetok to its former residents, to be release publically about April 2. Because of the sensitivity of the Eniwetok situation, AEC has received approval to visit the atoll but is cautioned to be discrete in discussing the matter with Trust Territory or local officials. Accordingly, AEC's expressed position regarding this trip will be in terms of involvement with the PACE program.

Even without the PACE experiments, Eniwetok presents a more difficult problem for cleanup and rehabilitation than Bikini. There were more nuclear tests at Eniwetok than Bikini. There were 35 announced plus 8 unannounced at Eniwetok versus 23 announced at Bikini. Among the 8 unannounced tests at Eniwetok was one safety test fired on land and two others giving zero yield, one at the water surface and the other on the surface of the reef. The levels of plutonium in soil at Eniwetok are known to be higher than at Bikini. Additionally, there are plutonium burial sites in the Eniwetok Atoll and DOD conducted two beryllium rocket tests on Engebi with contamination of a portion of this island which is one of the largest in the atoll. The effort and cost for monitoring and cleanup of contaminated scrap and soil at Eniwetok can be expected to exceed that for Bikini.

A meeting has been scheduled with Ambassador Williams or his staff on March 16, 1972, to discuss this matter. At that time, our views will be asked on the April 2 statement regarding the feasibility of the schedule for return of Eniwetok natives. You may wish to bring this meeting to the Commission's attention, particularly if Ambassador Williams will be present. Ambassador Williams' deputy has indicated the Ambassador's intent to request disbursement of funds for survey and cleanup of Eniwetok as was provided for Bikini.

~~Original signed by~~

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W. H. ...

Martin B. Biles, Director
Division of Operational Safety

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