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Chairman Seaborg
 Commissioner Ramey
 Commissioner Tapp
 Commissioner Johnson
 Commissioner Costagliola

DEFENSE DEPARTMENT ANNOUNCEMENT OF START OF BIKINI CLEANUP

Enclosed for your information is a Defense Department announcement of its part in the cleanup of Bikini atoll and the start of operations there. DOD expects to release it at 4 p.m. Thursday, February 27. The announcement was reviewed earlier by the Divisions of Military Application, Operational Safety, Biology and Medicine and Public Information. It was also reviewed by the Department of the Interior Office of Trust Territories. According to information from DOD not included in this announcement, the first ships and men landed at Bikini on Monday, February 17.

Signed James S. Cannon
 for

John A. Harris, Director
 Division of Public Information

Enclosure

- cc: R. E. Hollingsworth, General Manager
- bcc: H. C. Brown, AGM
- W. B. McCool, SECY
- R. D. O'Neill, OCR
- A. A. Gomes, DMA
- S. A. Lough, DBM
- T. F. McCraw, DOS
- J. D. Threlkeld, PAR
- S. G. English, AGMRD

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SURNAME ▶	GBradshaw:jmp					
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BIKINI CLEANUP INITIATED

Men and equipment have arrived on Bikini Atoll to begin the first phase of a project by the U. S. Government to restore the atoll to a habitable condition for Bikinians who wish to return to their former home in the mid-Pacific.

Preliminary survey indicates about six months may be needed for the cleanup job. The overall resettlement program will last about six years as announced by the Department of the Interior in a press release on January 18, 1969.

The Department of Defense and Atomic Energy Commission have joined the Department of the Interior in undertaking this project. The Bikinians were resettled from the atoll in 1946 before the U. S. nuclear testing program began there.

DOD responsibility will be limited to the cleanup phase which includes removal of vegetative overgrowth, radioactive debris and unusable structures; AEC will be responsible for radiological safety; and Interior will be responsible for replanting coconut trees, construction of housing and community facilities and the actual resettlement of the Bikinians.

The initial phase of the project will be to clean up the islands of Bikini and Enyu, both in the southeast part of the atoll. The atoll itself consists of a chain of large and small islands surrounding an oblong lagoon which measures about 10 by 25 miles. Bikini Island is about two miles long and Enyu is slightly smaller.

The AEC and DOD will jointly fund the FY 1969 cleanup costs, each providing \$300,000. The Department of the Interior has requested an appropriation from Congress for the balance of funds needed to complete the cleanup in FY 1970 and for funds to effect the resettlement. The cost of resettlement of the Bikini people over a six-year period is estimated at three million dollars.

The Department of the Interior estimates that about 550 people have land rights on Bikini. Of these, some 350 now live on the island of Kili in the southern Marshall Islands. The resettlement is expected to be gradual, as Bikini's capability to support its people is developed.

Huge bunkers of reinforced concrete must be surveyed for possible use by the Bikinians or for disposal. Various badly rusted steel towers and tangles of cables and girders must be located, moved to the beach and carried away.

The Defense Atomic Support Agency (DASA) has been named executive agency for DOD participation in the project. Vice Admiral L. M. Mustin, DASA Director, is the DOD project manager. Most of the men and equipment will be provided by DASA's Joint Task Force 8 which is jointly manned by Defense and AEC personnel and supported by an AEC contractor. Air Force Colonel John W. Rawlings, Jr. is in command of the cleanup force on the atoll.