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UNITED STATES
ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20545

June 19, 1972

Memo for the Record

DISCUSSION OF ENIWETOK - MR. RUBIN'S OFFICE

The basic purpose of the meeting was to discuss probable responses to a memorandum (Enclosure 1) from the Manager, Nevada Operations Office, to the General Manager, subject: Eniwetok, dated June 8, 1972, and to inform Mr. Ryan as to the several aspects of the Eniwetok situation.

Attendees were:

- Mr. Rubin, Assistant General Manager for Environment and Safety
- Mr. Ryan, Office of the General Manager
- Dr. Biles, Division of Operational Safety
- Mr. Dalton, Division of International Programs
- Mr. Thereault, Assistant to Mr. Rubin
- Mr. Facer, Division of Military Application
- Captain Gay, Division of Military Application
- Mr. Little, Division of Military Application

In his memorandum Mr. Miller had noted that "with a date certain established for the return of Eniwetok to the Trust Territory, the time available for planning a cleanup has now been fixed and is running." (The announced date is the end of 1973).

Mr. Miller also indicated that in a meeting last May 20 with Trust Territory officials and Micronesian representatives, Mr. _____

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AUTHORITY: DOE/SA-20
BY H.R. SCHMIDT, DATE:

HR Schmidt 6/9/94
PSA 6/15/94

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accepted responsibility on behalf of NV "to convey to appropriate national level authorities the need for central U. S. Government coordination of all future actions pertaining to Eniwetok."

Discussion:

Dr. Biles led off the discussion with a succinct though comprehensive history of Eniwetok Atoll (see attachment). He pointed out that an AEC survey team recently visited the Atoll and found rather severe radiological conditions on Runit Island (Yvonne), due to devices exploded between 1951 and 1958, and to later earth moving operations. The survey team found a plutonium bearing sand layer, the apparent existence of plutonium fragments and grains on the island surface and widespread contaminated scrap metal debris. A review of the situation by AEC and SAMTEC resulted in an immediate decision to cease all operations on Runit and to quarantine the island. Prior to the decision, the Defense Nuclear Agency (DNA) had been making preparations for a series of high explosive Pacific Cratering experiments (PACE). DNA subsequently advised AEC that the PACE work on Runit was temporarily discontinued and that the island was quarantined. Dr. Biles advised that AEC would participate with DNA in a limited radiological survey intended to support resumption of preparations for the PACE experiments. In addition, DOS will make a more comprehensive survey in the fall to clarify the radiological situation throughout the atoll.

There followed considerable discussion of the political ramifications and radiological safety considerations. Reference was made by DMA to certain questions (Enclosure 2) which had been asked on behalf of the Micronesian Congress and to certain legal questions (Enclosure 3) raised by NV and forwarded to OGC. The point was also made by DMA that in contacts with NV personnel, there appeared to be no intent on the part of NV to take an unwarranted lead in this matter.

Conclusions:

As a result of the discussion, it was concluded that:

1. NV deserved an answer to its request for guidance.
2. This guidance would have to be predicted on determination of national policy and AEC policy within that framework.

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3. Department of Interior has the basic responsibility for the Trust Territories as Executive Agent although their interface concerning Eniwetok with the Department of Defense is far from clear.
4. Ambassador Williams is the principle point of contact in this matter.
5. The AEC has responsibility for technical surveys and consequent advice and recommendations on radiological matters.
6. The General Manager should be informed as to the situation.
7. The suggested course of action should be to inform Department of Interior (Ambassador Williams) as to the situation and the AEC plans regarding radiological surveys. This information should be accompanied by a request for advice as to national policy and what action Interior proposes to carry out its commitment to give over Eniwetok to the Trust Territory.
8. It appeared that this approach to Interior might be both in a meeting and in writing.

William W. Gay

William W. Gay
Captain, USN
Assistant Director for Tests

Enclosures:

1. Memo fm Miller to Hollingsworth
dtd 6/8/72 w/Attachment
2. Ltr fm Coleman to Carpenter
dtd 5/1/72 w/Attachment
3. Memo fm Fleming to Hoffmann
dtd 6/2/72 w/Attachment
4. Addendum