

INTERAGENCY MEETING ON RADIOLOGICAL PROBLEMS IN THE
MARSHALL ISLANDS

October 12, 1978

The meeting was hosted by the Department of Interior, Office of Territorial Affairs and was attended by representatives from Defense Nuclear Agency, Department of Energy, Brookhaven National Laboratory, Office of Micronesian Status Negotiations, and the hosts.

The meeting agenda, attendee list, and biographies of James A. Joseph, Ruth G. Van Cleve, Adrian P. Winkel, and Vice Admiral Robert R. Monroe are enclosed along with additional items as referenced in the text below.

The following statements are summary highlights of the speakers' presentations and are presented in the order of the topics as listed in the agenda.

I. Opening Remarks:

Under Secretary James A. Joseph, DOI

The DOI is fully committed toward meeting the obligations, responsibilities, and commitments to the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands. (A list of these commitments is given in the enclosure titled "Statement of Understanding on the Part of the Government of the U.S. and the Government of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands Concerning the Move of the People of Bikini Island, August 1978). The meetings with the people were described as emotionally draining and physically exhausting!

II. Status Report on the Northern Marshall Islands Radiological Survey (DOE):

L. Joe Deal (DOE)

The historical and factual background leading up to the need for the survey was reviewed.

T. McCraw (DOE)

The 13 Atoll survey is proceeding smoothly and is on schedule. The initial series (3 series total) has been concluded. Excellent support has been received from the Department of the Navy and the DOI.

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In response to a question from DOI, it was stated that DOE will be able to distinguish which atoll islands would be habitable within a few weeks after the aerial portion of the survey has been concluded. This time frame is early January 1979. The final dose assessment report will require nearly 2 years to complete. The Eneu garden plot is a separate program under LLL and the data analysis and assessment results are expected in early January 1979.

III. Need for Expanded Health and Environmental Monitoring (DOE and DOI):

Robert Conard, M.D., Brookhaven National Lab

The historical background of 25 years of medical followup and surveillance was reviewed ending with the recommendation that the Bikini and Enewetak people should have a continued medical followup program with an annual medical examination. These people consider the discovery of any disease or medical problem as being radiation caused regardless of the level of exposure. Dr. H. Pratt related that the exposure level of the Bikini and Enewetak people is no higher than that received by the people in India who live in the Monazite sand areas.

The general question is who should conduct the medical programs. The report titled "The Radiological Status of the Bikini People" A Summary Report, prepared by Dr. Conard, is enclosed.

L. Joe Deal

The whole body counting program is essential and will be continued. The exposed Bikini and Enewetak groups will be measured. We are planning to measure (whole body count) the Bikinians as soon as the logistics can be worked out, hopefully prior to January 1, 1979.

T. Mitchell, Micronesian Legal Counsel

Enewetak people must be included in the program. We will depend on DOE to advise us on what is required.

IV. Status Report on Bikini Situation and What Must be Done in the Immediate Future (DOI:

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Ruth Van Cleve (DOI)

The August trip to Micronesia and the DOI discussions with the people were extremely important. It was a "first" in many respects, e.g., the party included Under Secretary Joseph (DOI). They heard the full catalog of 30 years of complaints and as a result made many commitments. These commitments have led to new homes, school, and community facilities on Kili Island with plans to build a dock in early 1979. (See List of Commitments referenced in I. above).

Adrian Winkel (TTPI)

The meetings with the Bikinians prior to the move were difficult but laid the groundwork for the successful move in late August. High credit was given to the DOI/TTPI public relations staff for ending with a positive press and media reporting stance. Over 40 news and TV representatives including many foreign countries covered the Bikini move.

\$1.2 million has been spent on the rehabilitation program for the Bikinians so far at Kili Island.

The Kili Council (Resident Bikinians) gave their return location preference as (1) Bikini or Eneu and (2) Hawaiian Islands (National Park land on the Island of Hawaii).

Ruth Van Cleve (DOI)

The return of the Bikinians to Eneu still remains a question to be resolved when additional data becomes available from DOE. A location in Hawaii is a potential solution.

Ambassador Rosenblatt Status of Micronesian Negotiations:

The negotiations began in 1969 and fell flat in 1976 until the Carter Administration reviewed the activity. President Carter wants to terminate the negotiations by January 1981 prior to the termination of the Trust Agreement.

Presently, we have three separate governmental bodies to deal with: (1) Palau, (2) Yap, Truk, Ponape and Saipan, and (3) the Marshall Islands. As these negotiations are progressing, the U.S. will establish three bilateral arrangements and end up with an association with three constitutional governments. Hopefully, all will be defined by the same term "free association" which is unique but recognized

in International Law. The "Free Association" term is not a well defined arrangement (it will mean whatever the final agreement says it means) but will be worked out between the separate governments of the Micronesia and the U.S. At this time, the U.S. interprets this to mean that the Micronesian people will have complete responsibility and control of their national affairs except for defense and security which is deemed to mean defense and security against foreign threat in the military sense only. The Micronesian governments will not be "sovereign" governments as recognized by International Law.

The Marshall Islands Political Status Commission, the recognized political voice for the Marshall Islands, has raised the nuclear issue. Assurances were given at the recent negotiations meeting that the U.S. will recognize its responsibilities in this area.

The next round of meetings is scheduled in January 1979.

VI. Status of Enewetak Cleanup and Rehabilitation Program:

A. Cleanup Status - Admiral Monroe, DNA

We are presently at the midpoint of the 3-year program which will be completed in April 1980. The total complement of personnel working in Enewetak is 950.

There are three main efforts:

1. Removal of Uncontaminated Debris

This debris consists primarily of WW II ordinance, vehicle and shipwrecks. This effort is ahead of schedule with 35 of the 40 islands now completed.

2. Removal of Contaminated Debris

This debris consists of equipment, installations, and materials remaining from the U.S. Nuclear Test Program. This effort is ahead of schedule with 35 of the 40 islands completed.

3. Removal of Contaminated Soil

This effort is behind schedule for the following reasons:

- a. DOE required 8 months to learn how to characterize the soil problem.
- b. Discovery of additional radioactive contaminants, namely, ^{238}Pu and ^{241}Am .
- c. The EPA is developing a standard for transuranium contaminant levels in soil which reduces the Enewetak cleanup guidance from 400 pCi/gm to 160 pCi/gm, and
- d. We had to learn how to do the soil cleanup work, to apply our efforts where they will do the most good which means we should not create clean holes on dirty islands.*


We have found that we can clean Enjebi to the living standard, e.g., less than 40 pCi/gm, with an average for the island, perhaps as low as 5 to 10 pCi/gm.

The rehabilitation problems are now beginning. There is a strong need to resolve the coconut planting problem (41,000 seedlings), that is, where to plant them? Other problems include the house construction problem, and how to integrate their construction with the cleanup operations.

The Admiral urged everyone to be fully aware of their "DNA Demobilization Plan." This plan shows the availability of facilities such as buildings, air-strips, etc., with time. The removal of these facilities may impact other plans which may be assuming continued availability when in reality these facilities may already have been removed from service.

He stressed the need for resolving the "coconut planting" problem. Where should the 41,000 seedlings be planted if they cannot be planted on the northern islands which have the high Cs^{137} and Sr^{90} levels? He believed DOE should dedicate additional effort to further characterize the soil problem and schedule alternatives to the original planting plan. He had communicated these considerations to all involved parties in his TWX of September

*It took DOE a year to get DNA to recognize this.

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B. Rehabilitation - Adrian Winkel, TTPI

Expressed great appreciation to DNA for their good efforts. He agreed the "coconut planting" problem was a tough one and should receive high priority. However, seedlings were being planted in the southern islands and he was not too concerned about deferment of planting in the northern islands of Enewetak Atoll.

The temporary rehabilitation efforts on Kili are progressing very well - the housing, school, and community facilities were essentially complete.


In general, he believes the overall resettlement and rehabilitation program is on schedule and proceeding smoothly. TT is awaiting further information from DOE on radiological conditions on Eneu Island at Bikini Atoll. This is due in the January-February 1979 period.


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AGENDA

Interagency Meeting on Radiological Problems in
the Marshall Islands

- I. Opening Remarks by Under Secretary James A. Joseph
- II. Status Report on Northern Marshalls Radiological Survey
(Presented by Department of Energy)
- III. Need for Expanded Health and Environmental Monitoring
(Presented by Department of Energy and Department
of the Interior)
- IV. Status Report on Eikini Situation and What Must Be Done
in the Immediate Future
(Presented by Director Ruth G. Van Cleve and
High Commissioner Adrian P. Winkel)
- V. Status of Enewetak Cleanup and Rehabilitation Program
 - A. Cleanup Status
(Presented by Admiral Monroe, DNA)
 - B. Rehabilitation
(Presented by High Commissioner Adrian P. Winkel)


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