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31 May 1973
In Reply Refer To:
1-7119/73

Smith Gideon
Magistrate, Ujelang Council
Ujelang, Marshall Islands
c/o Micronesian Legal Services
Box 376
Majuro, Marshall Islands 96960

Dear Mr. Gideon:

On behalf of President Nixon, I am replying to your letter of 14 May 1973 regarding the Resolution of the People of Eniwetok concerning the clean-up and rehabilitation of Eniwetok.

The Department of Defense is indeed appreciative of the confidence expressed by the people of Eniwetok in requesting that this Department be the sole agency involved in the United States Government's early return of Eniwetok atoll. However, in the interest of that early return, and in the interest of all concerned, it is necessary to functionally assign responsibilities between Departments having primary responsibilities in specific areas of the total rehabilitation process. Accordingly, the Department of Defense in coordination with the Atomic Energy Commission will be responsible for the clean-up of the atoll and the Department of the Interior will carry out the rehabilitation functions.

Be assured that the above delineation of authority will most effectively achieve our mutual goal - the earliest possible safe resettlement of the people of Eniwetok to the Eniwetok Atoll.

Sincerely,

T. J. Bigley
Rear Admiral, USN
Director, East Asia & Pacific Region

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