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The first revision in our military support concept which General Clarkson considers logical is the basing of the Air Task Group at Kwajalein. Our original intention of basing that group at Eniwetok certainly was in consonance with the old idea of shooting several shots at Eniwetok and only one or two at Bikini. But now that Bikini is the center of activity for most of the operation it doesn't matter, from an operational standpoint, where the Air Task Group is based. [However, from a money standpoint, it will be much cheaper to base the group at Kwajalein.] This concept should appeal to the AEC since the Eniwetok Rehabilitation Project would be substantially reduced in scope, and General Clarkson contemplates use of Task Force funds to make Kwajalein suitable for re-use. In considering the return to Kwajalein, we studied all the operational implications such as sampling, staging the samplers through Eniwetok on the last shot, communications, distances and control, and we are convinced that no new problems would be involved. Consequently, unless you have cogent reasons to the contrary, we intend to coordinate this revision in concept with the AEC, CINCPAC, Kwajalein and CTG 7.4.

There is a second important problem that needs more thinking in light of our new shot concept. In considering the fact that Bikini now becomes the principal area of activity, it can be easily deduced that where the shot sites are located, that is where the bulk of your scientific personnel will always want to be; where key scientific and 7.1 operations people are located, that is where the support and lift problems will lie; where the support problems lie, that is where the Task Force Commander and his operational people ought to be. No matter what is done to curtail it, everyone will either have or create a need to be at Bikini. Once at Bikini, those people living afloat will either have or create a need to be ashore to get their jobs done. This, I think, is a realistic picture of what will probably take place, despite many written words to the contrary. If this is reasonably true, what would your attitude be to an idea substantially as follows?

1. Establish a rudimentary tent camp at Eryu Island for not more than 500 tenants and perhaps 150 overhead personnel. (These figures are probably high). The 500 tenants to be broken down somewhere along these lines: 350 for principal people of 7.1 and 7.5, and 150 total for Task Force and military task group headquarters personnel.

2. Mobile facilities to provide camp utilities, and messing under field conditions. Camp to be evacuated for less than a 24-hour period on the 3d, 4th and 5th shots, by all except firing party bunker personnel. This temporary setup might well serve as a base camp site for a subsequent operation.

3. If you contemplate detonating all the Bikini devices remotely from the AGC, and Eryu will not serve any major purpose, how about extending the Eniman Island camp to accommodate all except those key personnel who will be aboard the AGC with you and General Clarkson?

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This idea has not been broadly discussed beyond CJTF and the J-3 shop. It merely came about when we realized that a transport hired for about a half-million dollars will not completely solve the billeting and operating problem for as many cabin-class people who must be at Bikini, because these people will operate better and will prefer to remain ashore under field conditions rather than stay aboard any vessel for many weeks. We can and will get a transport for a half-million if necessary, but will it still be necessary when everyone starts a mass movement ashore as was done right after MIKE? Your thoughts on this subject would give us an inkling of whether the idea is worth pursuing.

I noted with great interest all the publicity you and Paul Preuss received in the local papers in connection with the first shot yesterday. A fine picture of you appeared in the Washington Evening Star the other night. It is nice to know such famous people.

Very truly yours,

Bill

WILLIAM S. COWART, JR.
Colonel USAF
AC of S, J-3

2 Incls

1. D/F to CJTF 7, subj:
Weather Phenomena
Resulting from Megaton
Detonations, dtd 4 Mar 53
2. Newspaper clipping

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