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January 27, 1979

Theodore R. Mitchell, Esquire
Executive Director
Micronesia Legal Services Corporation
P.O. Box 269
Saipan, Mariana Islands 96950

Dear Mr. Mitchell:

Please forgive the delay in responding to your letter of December 21, 1978. When I received your letter in early January, I knew that I would not be coming out to Saipan for the status talks; hence, this less than prompt reply.

As far as the people of Bikini are concerned, I agree that (1) the United States now has and should retain direct and exclusive responsibility and liability for radiation-related injuries, losses, problems, and long-term needs of the people of Enetewak, Rongelap, Utirik, and Bikini; and (2) it would not be acceptable for the United States to impose such responsibility upon the future government of the Marshall Islands. The only questions we face are which agencies of the United States government should be responsible and with which institutions we should negotiate in reaching our desired ends.

There appear to be at least five long-term goals the people of Bikini wish to pursue: (1) future ex gratia payments; (2) compensation for the taking and/or destruction of land on Bikini Atoll (depending on the results of the recent Northern Marshall survey); (3) resettlement of the Bikini people; (4) future medical benefits resulting from possible exposure to radiation on Bikini from 1970-1978; and (5) periodic radiological survey of Bikini Atoll.

As I see it, the above five goals can be pursued through Congressional legislation or through participation in the Micronesia political status negotiations. On the



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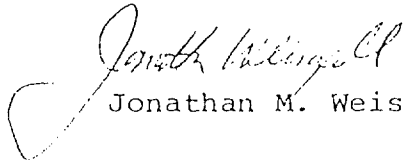
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Congressional side, the people of Bikini have numerous friends in Congress who have proved helpful in the past and who, I expect, will continue to view sympathetically their needs and requests in the future. As for the negotiating group, Ambassador Rosenblatt has offered to provide for the future needs of the Bikinians in the draft Compact of Free Association.

My own reading of the current situation leads me to conclude that the interests of the people of Bikini can best be served by pursuing the above goals through Congressional legislation, and I made these views known to the Office of Micronesian Status Negotiations before the recent Saipan round of negotiations. If your thinking differs from mine on this matter, I would like to know as soon as possible, because I do feel that a unified approach would make some sense, although the people of the four different atolls do have clearly different interests and needs. Similarly, if you feel that Congressional legislation is the best route to follow, I agree that we should meet to determine whether it will be possible to coordinate our efforts. I have no current plans to be in the Trust Territory in the next few months, but your December 21 letter indicates that you expect to be in Washington in late February. Assuming that you are still planning to be here at that time, I would hope that we could meet to discuss these matters.

I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,


Jonathan M. Weisgall