

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

411720

June 19, 1972

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7-8-72  
MR  
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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.

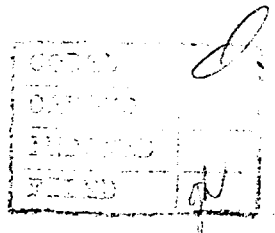
Attendees were:

- 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. Roger Ray

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*MIA-7 Trust Territory*



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<sup>a</sup> on determination of national policy and AEC policy within that framework.

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



UNITED STATES  
ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION  
NEVADA OPERATIONS OFFICE  
P. O. BOX 14100  
LAS VEGAS, NEVADA 891

JUN 8 1972

R. E. Hollingsworth  
General Manager, HQ

ENIWETOK

During the past approximately one year, NV has become aware of, and I have become increasingly concerned about, certain conditions and activities at Eniwetok Atoll. My concern stems from three facts:

- a. It has appeared probable that Eniwetok, which has not yet had a Bikini-style radiological cleanup, would soon be a candidate for rehabilitation and return to the Marshallese. Since mid-April 1972, this probability has become reality, with a public commitment by the United States to return Eniwetok to the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands by the end of 1973. (See Encl. 1).
- b. It has been known, due to the nature of the testing which was conducted at Eniwetok, that cleanup and rehabilitation when it did occur would be significantly more difficult and more costly than had been similar activities at Bikini. It was also suspected that increased environmental sensitivity and political and public visibility would be complicating factors in an Eniwetok rehabilitation.
- c. There were and are on-going activities of the Department of Defense and other public and private agencies which could aggravate the known (and unknown) radiological problems and which could subject their participants to unnecessary and unacceptable radiological exposures.

The following is a chronology of recent NV actions pertaining to Eniwetok:

July 1971

NV and EPA participated with Air Force PACE Program personnel in a preliminary site selection visit to Eniwetok. The Air Force



Weapons Laboratory was furnished a copy of the report of NV's radiological survey, which included certain recommendations regarding radiological safety and control. At this time the Island of Runit (Yvonne) was identified as a significant and potentially serious radiological hazard area.

August 1971

NV participated with Dr. Walter Schmitt of Scripps Institute of Oceanography in discussions of aquaculture experiments which he proposed to conduct on Runit Island. NV representatives expressed concern because of the known widespread contamination of Runit and strongly recommended the adoption of stringent radiological surveillance and controls including a bio-assay program for all participants.

March 1972


NV representatives together with the Director, DOS, Hq, made a liaison and planning visit to the Trust Territory in connection with a planned May '72 survey of Bikini. The NV representatives took this opportunity to visit Eniwetok for a firsthand view of the operational implications of a preliminary survey of Eniwetok. At the conclusion of this visit, NV recommended informally and later formally and in writing that the Air Force adopt more stringent and comprehensive radiological control of Eniwetok Atoll than had been observed during this visit.

May 1972

The AEC survey team having completed its survey of Bikini Atoll devoted approximately one week to a preliminary survey of Eniwetok. Although this was not separately funded, it was done with DOS approval and at small incremental cost.

May 1972

NV Assistant Manager for Operations accompanied Trust Territory officials, Eniwetok traditional native leaders and others on a visit to Eniwetok. Two members of the NV survey team were retained at Eniwetok to provide a radiological escort for this visit.



May 1972

Enroute returning from the Eniwetok visit, NV representatives while at Kwajalein learned of certain disquieting results of the survey which had just been completed. Preliminary laboratory analysis had confirmed the presence on Runit Island of pieces of either plutonium metal or of another metal heavily contaminated with plutonium. A recommendation was therefore originated on Kwajalein addressed to the host agency (USAF SAMTEC) recommending that Runit be quarantined until appropriate radiological control actions could be taken.

For the most part the above actions have been taken without at least specific Headquarters direction although they have been discussed from time to time with the staff. However, at the present time it seems appropriate to seek policy direction and to recommend certain Washington level actions. Most fundamentally, there appears to be no question that a cleanup and rehabilitation of Eniwetok will be undertaken in the reasonably near future and that the AEC will have an essential and vital role in the planning and execution of that action. It would appear that the Commission's role would be the provision of technical support, advice and assistance to whatever agency is assigned overall responsibility. Pending such assignment, it seems clear that the AEC has an obligation to advise and assist from a radiological standpoint any agency which is pursuing a legitimate activity at Eniwetok. NV requires direction as to the extent to which this office should continue to take the initiative in this regard.


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. Before a coordinated plan can be developed, responsibility for the plan and for its execution must be assigned. In addition, a far more comprehensive survey of the Atoll must be accomplished. No assignment of responsibility for such a survey has yet been made. Presumably a large part of the rehabilitation effort (including cleanup) will occur after the transfer to the Trust Territory Administration. However, it would seem highly desirable to have the nature, scope and details of the cleanup agreed before the transfer rather than to have to negotiate them later. Included in these agreements should be a common understanding of cleanup standards and criteria.

Our recent experiences with Eniwetok have demonstrated an urgent need for agency-level coordination of future United States actions pertaining to that Atoll. The visit of the Marshallese in May included senior members of the Trust Territory Administration headed up by the Deputy High Commissioner, the District Administrator of the Marshall Islands District, Micronesian Congressman Ataji Balos (a severe critic of U. S. actions in Micronesia), the Magistrate and a Councilman from Ujelang (the present home of the Eniwetokese), the District Attorney of the Marshall Islands and several attorneys who are in a lawyer-client relationship to the Eniwetok leaders and people. The thrust of the visit, as evidenced by a close-out meeting on May 20th was the urgency of an early return, the determination on the part of the Marshallese to determine their own destiny by drawing up their own specifications for rehabilitation, their dismay at the continuing use of their lands for a variety of apparently unrelated and uncoordinated purposes and, specifically regarding the lawyers, their clear intention to document in detail current and future United States actions for later use in behalf of their clients. (By a separate informal memorandum, this latter point has been brought to the attention of the General Counsel, Hq).

Because there was no designated spokesman for U. S. Government interests at the May 20th meeting and because there were issues and questions of multi-agency concern, my representative who attended at the request of the Deputy High Commissioner accepted responsibility for two actions:

- a. to convey to appropriate national level authorities the need for central U. S. Government coordination of all future actions pertaining to Eniwetok.
- b. to convey to the same authorities the desire and the need of both the Marshallese and, in their behalf, the Trust Territory Administration for current and accurate information regarding United States actions and intentions. (In this connection, it is noted that there is in the tape recorded record of the meeting an acknowledgement by the Deputy High Commissioner that until March 1972 the Trust Territory Administration was not aware of the PACE Program, although quite substantial efforts on that program had then been underway at Eniwetok for some months.)

I believe that the conditions set forth in this memorandum strongly suggest the establishment at the Washington level of a single manager for all future United States actions pertaining



to Eniwetok. I recommend that the Commission seek to have such a designation made at the earliest possible time in order that timely funding, planning, coordination and execution may replace the currently uncoordinated action-reaction cycle. 2

*fr* *R. E. Miller*  
Robert E. Miller  
Manager

Enclosure:  
Highlights (Trust Territory publication)  
dated May 1, 1972

cc w/enclosure:  
Assistant General Manager for ~~Environment & Safety~~  
Military Application, Hq  
Assistant General Manager for  
Environment & Safety, Hq  
Assistant General Manager for  
Administration, Hq



# HIGHLIGHTS

OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER  
TRUST TERRITORY OF THE PACIFIC ISLANDS  
SAIPAN, MARIANA ISLANDS



May 1, 1972

## US to Return, Rehabilitate Eniwetok

High Commissioner Edward E. Johnston and U.S. Ambassador Franklin Haydn Williams have issued a joint announcement indicating that the United States Government is prepared to return Eniwetok atoll to the Trust Territory at the end of 1973.

Eniwetok atoll is one of the areas of the Marshall Islands District where the United States has been involved in defense research and development projects since 1946. The people of the atoll were relocated to other islands in the Marshalls, and had recently announced their intention to return to their home islands by the end of this year.

In their statement High Commissioner Johnston and Ambassador Williams said that future Micronesian land needs of the Department of Defense were set forth in the third round of status negotiations which took place in Hawaii last year. "There Ambassador Williams stated that in regard to . . . security related land requirements in the Marshalls, the need for research and development activities at Kwajalein would not disappear in the foreseeable future." The statement added, however, that Ambassador Williams further noted that "it may someday become possible to consolidate our testing activities in the Pacific and concurrently reduce our land interests in the Marshalls."

The announcement said that "the status of Eniwetok has been under study by the various departments and agencies in the United States government ever since the possibility of returning Bikini Atoll was first considered. Over the years, the Department of Defense has been striving to bring its work on Eniwetok to a close. (Now

the United States government has in fact been able to structure its research plans and programs in such a way to permit an early return of the atoll to the people of Eniwetok."

High Commissioner Johnston telephoned Marshalls District Administrator Oscar DeBrum late Tuesday (April 18) to announce the return of the atoll, and indicated that the U.S. government and the Trust Territory administration will begin immediately to work with the people of Eniwetok on a timetable and other plans for a rehabilitation program.

In this regard, the HiCom noted that Deputy High Commissioner Peter T. Coleman was to accompany Ambassador Williams on his trip through the eastern districts, ending in Majuro where he had scheduled meetings with Eniwetokese at the district center. Coleman also planned to overfly the Eniwetok complex on his way to an inspection of Bikini atoll, where the agricultural rehabilitation of that former atomic testing site is now being closed out.

The HiCom said that at some future date the leaders of Eniwetok will be invited to Bikini to observe the rehabilitation program there in action. He said further that the people of Eniwetok will be consulted at every step along the way in the rehabilitation program.

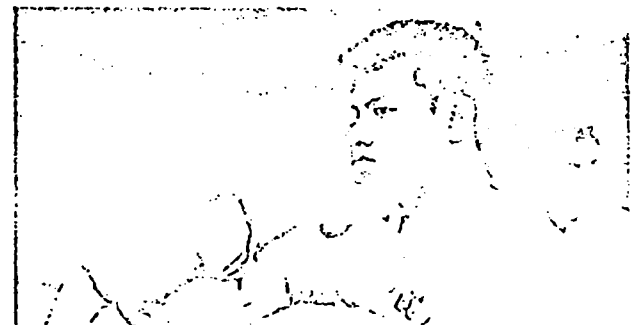
DistAd DeBrum said that he was deeply grateful to the High Commissioner and Ambassador Williams for their long and hard efforts to expedite the return of the atoll to the people. He said he looked forward to the meetings with Deputy HiCom Coleman and to beginning the planning for the reversion of Eniwetok to the Trust

(continued on page 2)

*During "Promotion Ceremonies" held April 21 at the TT school of Nursing, Mrs. Coleman, wife of the Deputy High Commissioner, pins a cap on Miss Theodora Joseph (Truk). Fifteen girls received caps during the ceremonies. Mrs. Kieko Sigrah of the nursing school staff watches at left.*



*Eleven male nursing students received badges during the "Promotion Ceremonies." Shown in the picture is Mrs. Coleman pinning a badge on Caleb Caleb (Marshalls). This particular ceremony makes these students full-fledged member of the TT Nursing School.*





May 1, 1972

Mr. Stanley S. Carpenter  
Deputy Assistant Secretary  
for Territorial Affairs  
Department of the Interior  
Washington, D. C. 20240

Dear Mr. Carpenter:

Pursuant to the enclosed April 5, 1972, letter from the Office of the Legislative Counsel, Congress of Micronesia, our office has been requested to gather background information concerning weapons testing at Bikini Island and Eniwetok Atoll from the Atomic Energy Commission and the Department of Defense.

The Attorney General's Office of the Trust Territory is compiling the information available to their office. We would request your assistance in gathering the information required from the Atomic Energy Commission and the Department of Defense. Our office is not contacting these departments directly pursuant to Department of Interior Order No. 2918.

We request that this matter be expedited as much as possible so that the Congressional Committee may meet its May 25, interim report completion date.

Sincerely yours,

Peter T. Coleman  
Deputy High Commissioner

Enclosure

cc: Acting Legislative Counsel, Congress of Micronesia

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