

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF INTERIOR
TRUST TERRITORY OF THE PACIFIC ISLANDS
OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER
SAIPAN, MARIANA ISLANDS
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COMMERCIAL
CABLE ADDRESS
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September 20, 1967

Lt. Col. Clarence D. Walters, Jr.
Staff Judge Advocate
Department of the Air Force
Headquarters, Air Force Western Test Range (AFSC)
Vandenberg Air Force Base, California 93437

Dear Colonel Walters:

Thank you for your letter of 18 September 1967 to Mr. Shoecraft concerning the Use and Occupancy Agreements for Bikini and Eniwetok.

With reference to the five-year periodic reviews required by these agreements, our records indicate that such a review was held in 1961 and that we concurred in the determination that the land was still needed by the United States. We do not have any indication in our files that we were requested to concur in a similar determination in 1966.

At any rate, I have become increasingly concerned because of mounting pressure from the Marshallese people who were former residents of those islands for some indication as to when they might be permitted to return to their home islands. From time to time, we have received rather informal indications that the danger from radioactivity may no longer exist. We have also had indications that the people removed from those islands are not satisfied with the amount of compensation they are receiving from the income from trust funds established at the time the islands were acquired for military use and we foresee some additional pressure that the question of the amount of compensation be reopened. For some years we have also been aware that the former Bikini people, who were relocated to the Island of Kili, feel that Kili has never been suitable mainly because of its relative inaccessibility at some times of the year and the difficulty of the people in obtaining natural foods and fish. For all of these reasons it would be most helpful to us if we could have some indication of the plans of the United States for future use of Bikini and Eniwetok. We are particularly interested in whether or not there are any prospects for early return of those islands in order that their people may be repatriated.

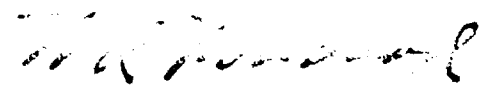
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Usually we are advised of a determination of the continued need of the United States for islands in the Trust Territory by the Commander, Pacific Division, Naval Facilities Engineering Command and we are taking the liberty of sending a copy of this letter to that office since we foresee that a coordinated reply to the above questions may be necessary.

I join Mr. Shoecraft in looking forward to meeting you and hope that you will be able to make your contemplated trip to Saipan in the near future. Mr. Shoecraft also adds that if you have occasion to be in touch with Colonel Whittington, he would appreciate it if you would give to him his very kindest regards and tell him that he still remembers with a great deal of pleasure the few days he spent with him at Vandenberg as his guest and that he hopes to have the opportunity to play your beautiful golf course again.

Sincerely yours,



W. R. Norwood
High Commissioner

cc:
Rear Admiral W. M. Heaman
Commander, Pacific Division
Naval Facilities Engineering Command
FPO San Francisco 96610