

JOINT STATEMENT BY HIGH COMMISSIONER EDWARD E. JOHNSTON AND AMBASSADOR FRANKLIN HAYDN WILLIAMS GIVEN AT SAIPAN MARIANA ISLAND APRIL 18, 1972

Today Ambassador Williams, the President's personal representative for micronesian status negotiations, and I would like to make a joint announcement concerning the United States Government's land requirements in the trust territory.

Future land needs of the Department of Defense were set forth during the third round of status negotiations which took place at Hana Maui in October 1971. There Ambassador Williams stated that in regard to our security related land requirements in the Marshalls the need for research and development activities at Kwajalein would not disappear in the foreseeable future. He however qualified this remark with the following statement: "It may some day become possible to consolidate our testing activities in the Pacific and concurrently reduce our land interests in the Marshalls."

The United States Government appreciates the importance that the micronesians place on land and has no desire to retain micronesian land that it does not need. Whenever it can consolidate or eliminate activities in order to reduce or terminate the lands required for security purposes, it will do so.

In this respect, the status of Eniwetok Atoll has been under study by the various departments and agencies in the United States Government ever since a 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. Ambassador Williams and I have taken a personal interest

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in this matter and this afternoon we are extremely pleased to announce that the United States Government has in fact been able to structure its research plans and programs in such a way as to permit an early return of the atoll to the people of Eniwetok.

I am therefore authorized to announce that the United States Government is prepared to release legally the entire atoll to the trust territory government at the end of 1973, subject to retention of some minor residual rights.

The trust territory government will in the coming months be working with the Department of Defense and the people of Eniwetok to settle the details of transfer and to make the arrangements for the survey, cleanup and rehabilitation of Eniwetok. In the meantime the United States is completing some research and development tests on the atoll which will not involve nuclear detonations of any kind or type. These tests will in no way interfere with an early commencement of the rehabilitation process and will be completed by the end of 1973.

Prior to the actual settlement of the atoll, it will be necessary to carry out the same type of survey, cleanup and rehabilitation procedures that have been utilized for Bikini Atoll. As in Bikini, the schedule for resettlement will depend on the results of the survey and the pace of the rehabilitation program. This schedule will be drawn up as soon as practicable.

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As an initial step the United States plans to commence the survey of the atoll probably late this summer. The cleanup and rehabilitation of the three

clean (also tested as contaminated)
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islands -- Terry, Japtan, and Anujaanii -- in the southeastern part of the
atoll, will receive first priority.

The trust territory government looks forward to working with the people of Eniwetok on the actual plan of the rehabilitation and returning of the atoll. They will be able to help us decide upon time schedules and actual locations for the pending program and the agriculture rehabilitation. The people of Eniwetok will be invited at an early date to visit Bikini and Eniwetok in order to familiarize themselves with the program utilized for Bikini and the requirements for Eniwetok.

We hope by this joint planning effort to carry out the rehabilitation program in an efficient and well thought out manner as well as to meet local desires as much as possible.

The trust territory government will enter into immediate consultation with the people of Eniwetok to commence the above process and to conclude any necessary legal arrangements.

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