

SUMMARY OF U.S.RESPONSIBILITY FOR ENIWETOK

Micronesia was discovered by Magellan and his contemporaries of the 16th Century. The islands fell under the successive claims of Spain, Germany, and Japan, which was given mandate to the islands by the League of Nations following World War I. On April 2, 1947, the United Nations placed these former Japanese mandated islands under trusteeship of the U.S., and they became the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands (TTPI). When the U.S. formally accepted this trusteeship on July 18, 1947, the President issued Executive Order 9875 which designated the Secretary of the Navy to administer the TTPI. On June 29, 1951, Executive Order 10265 rescinded E.O. 9875 and placed the administration of the TTPI under the Secretary of the Interior, who has retained this responsibility to the present.

Eniwetok itself was secured by the Eniwetok Expeditionary Group, TG 51.11 on February 22, 1944. A military government was established there on March 2, 1944, under Navy jurisdiction. The military government was replaced by civilian administration after E.O. 9875, although the Navy continued as the responsible government agency. On December 2, 1947, the U.S. representative to the U.N. notified the Security Council that as of December 1, 1947, Eniwetok was closed in order to conduct "necessary experiments relating to nuclear fission." This established the Eniwetok Proving Ground (EPG), which included both Bikini and Eniwetok.

The DOD had agreements with Interior to conduct testing operations at EPG, but the AEC never formalized in writing its participation. However, after all testing had ceased in the Pacific, the AEC entered into a written agreement with the Navy (the DOD agent at the time), relinquishing its right to most of the AEC property on Eniwetok, the principal exception being the Eniwetok Marine Biology Laboratory (EMBL) which exists today and is now located on Eniwetok Island. Of particular note in this agreement is paragraph 4, which reads:

"4. AEC agrees to provide periodic radiological survey of EPG and to advise the Navy of radsafe problems in these areas so as to protect the Government of the United States. Costs for surveys specifically requested by DOD will be borne by DOD."

A complete copy of this agreement is attached.

Subsequent to this, the Navy transferred Eniwetok to the Air Force effective July 1, 1965. Air Force records show that they returned it to Interior on November 29, 1969.

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