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to allow residents of Bikini to Return

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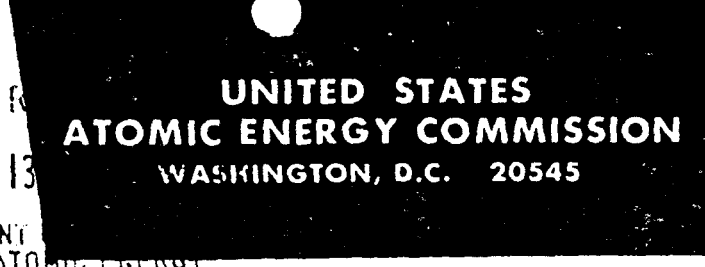
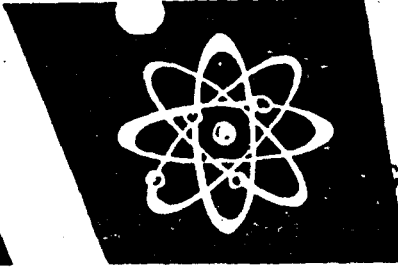
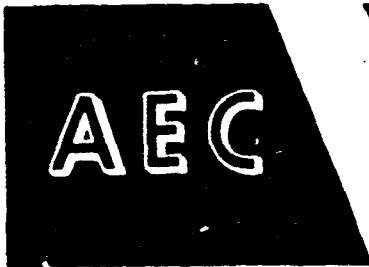
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
(Monday, August 12, 1968)

(NOTE TO EDITORS AND CORRESPONDENTS:  
Dr. Glenn T. Seaborg, Chairman of the  
U. S. Atomic Energy Commission, today  
issued the following statement on AEC's  
role in the decision to allow the former  
residents of Bikini to return to their  
atoll.)

It has been greatly satisfying to my fellow Commission-  
ers and me to take part in the decision, announced today by  
President Johnson, to return the Bikinians to their atoll.  
The attached AEC report on the radiation survey of Bikini  
was a cornerstone of that decision.

The report, which declares the atoll once again safe  
for human habitation, represents the work of many highly  
qualified men, including the scientific team which surveyed  
the islands in 1967 and the special consultant committee of  
experts who produced the report.

It has been just over 10 years since the last nuclear  
test took place at Bikini on July 22, 1958. The intervening  
years have brought a remarkable recovery on the islands, as  
AEC sponsored research teams noted in both 1964 and 1967.

The 1967 survey was made at the request of the Secretary  
of the Interior whose department is responsible for the wel-  
fare of the Bikini natives. The Bikinians were moved from  
their atoll in 1946 before the first nuclear test took place.

The team which visited the atoll in 1967 included radio-  
logical and health physicists, marine biologists, a tropical  
agriculturalist, an anthropologist and representatives of  
the Pacific Islands Trust Territories, Department of the  
Interior.

(more)

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Eight of the most highly qualified experts available were asked to review the survey material. After meeting with members of the survey team and examining their reports, these consultants reached the unanimous conclusion that it would be radiologically safe to allow the Bikini people to return to their home atoll.

While Bikini is best known as a weapons testing site, it has also contributed significantly to man's knowledge of the long term effects of radiation on an environment.

During the years when radiation levels were too high for people to live there permanently, the AEC sponsored several scientific studies on the atoll. In fact, Bikini truly served as a living ecological laboratory.

Before it was either a proving ground or laboratory, though, Bikini was a home land. Having been closely associated with nuclear energy, and Bikini, for all these years, I find it particularly gratifying now to take part in the atoll's return to usefulness as a home for the Bikinian people.

Copies of the technical data from the survey are available for examination at the Public Document Room in AEC's Washington office at 1717 H Street.

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REPORT OF THE AD HOC COMMITTEE TO EVALUATE  
THE RADIOLOGICAL HAZARDS OF RESETTLEMENT OF THE BIKINI ATOLL

The Committee was convened to consider the question of whether the Bikini Atoll is safe for human habitation with respect to the radiological hazard. The detailed history of the various relocations of the Bikini natives is described in the appended material provided by Mr. Tobin (Appendix I)\*.

We have examined the documents listed in Appendix II. In addition, we spent one and one-half days in detailed discussions with members of the 1967 Bikini Survey Team and other experts as shown in Appendix III. On the basis of the information provided, we have reached the following conclusions and recommendations:

1. The exposures to radiation that would result from the repatriation of the Bikini people do not offer a significant threat to their health and safety.
2. Such exposure may and should be further reduced by the following simple measures:
  - a. Restrict rehabilitation for the present to the islands of the Bikini-Eneu complex. (Appendix IV)
  - b. Establish the first village and immediate food crops on Eneu. No radiological precautions will be needed on Eneu because of its very low contamination level. (Appendix V)
  - c. Any village construction on Bikini Island should involve the covering of the site with coral rock as is the local custom.
  - d. Radioactive scrap metal should be removed from the islands adjacent to former shot sites.
  - e. The population of land crabs should be sharply reduced because of their high content of strontium 90.
  - f. If pandanus trees which produce edible fruit are planted on Bikini Island, two inches of topsoil should be removed from the planting sites. The area of removal from each site should be equal to the area covered by the crown of mature trees.

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\*A limited number of copies of the appendices to the Committee report are available on request. They are:

- Appendix I - "Preliminary Anthropologist's Report - Bikini Atoll Survey 1967," by Jack A. Tobin
- Appendix II - "List of Documents Examined" by Committee
- Appendix III - "List of Members and Associates of the Survey Team"
- Appendix IV - "Map of Bikini Atoll"
- Appendix V - "Brief Summary of the Radiological Status of Bikini Atoll," by Philip F. Gustafson

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