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HIGHLIGHTS

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



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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.

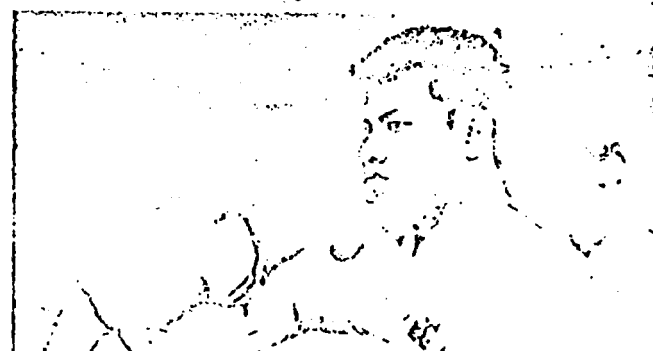
The HiCom said that at some future date the leaders of Eniwetok will be invited to Bikini to observe the rehabilitation program there in action. He said further that the people of Eniwetok will be consulted at every step along the way in the rehabilitation program.

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

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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.

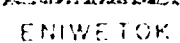
Eleven male nursing students received badges during the "Promotion Ceremonies." Shown in the picture is Mrs. Coleman pinning a badge on Caleb Caleb (Marshalls). This particular ceremony makes these students full-fledged member of the TT Nursing School.



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Prior to the return of Eniwetok to Trust Territory jurisdiction by the end of 1973, the announcement said, "the United States is completing some research and development testing on the atoll which will not involve nuclear detonations of any 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."



The M/V Pacifica left Koror late last month for the Southwest Islands of Palau District, on the regular field trip. However this trip is a special one for the islanders of Sonsorol, Tobi, and Pulo Anna, and has been dubbed "Operation Southwest" by the district administration.

The reason is that the ship is carrying materials and men to construct long-awaited public buildings at those three locations. On board the ship are two prefabricated dispensary buildings, one for Sonsorol and the other for Tobi, and a municipal building for the island of Pulo Anna.

The construction operation is the largest of its kind ever staged in Palau District. The M/V Pacifica is carrying a team of ten men for each of the three islands. These teams will assist in unloading the supplies, and will then remain on the islands for about five to six weeks completing construction of the buildings. The teams are composed of men from the District Public Works Department, the Community Development Division, and the military Civic Action Team in Palau.

The residents of Kayengel Atoll, about sixty miles north of Koror, Palau, have seized another foreign fishing vessel. It is the second time in less than a year that the Kayengel Islanders have apprehended a ship for allegedly violating the waters around their islands.

The latest incident occurred when a boat flying a Nationalist Chinese flag was spotted within the three-mile limit, apparently fishing. The residents who saw the boat notified a Trust Territory Government boat which was doing channel blasting in the vicinity, and the government boat picked up the Magistrate and several men from the village. Together they boarded the Chinese ship, seized her for violation of territorial waters, and held her until district officials could arrive.

On September 16, 1971, the residents of Kayenzel seized an Okinawan ship within their territorial waters. That ship was later found guilty of illegal entry and fishing within the three-mile limit, and her owners had to pay a substantial fine before the ship was released.