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MEETING WITH AMBASSADOR WILLIAMS ON REHABILITATION OF ENIWETOK ATOLL

On March 16, 1972, Dr. Martin B. Biles, Mr. Roger Ray of NV, and I met with Ambassador Franklin Williams, the President's personal representative for Micronesia Status Negotiations, and members of his staff to discuss the rehabilitation of Eniwetok Atoll. Also attending were representatives of the Defense Nuclear Agency (DNA).

Ambassador Williams stated that he and his staff are preparing for the next session of status negotiations for the Trust Territory on April 2, 1972, and are studying the position to be taken on Eniwetok Atoll. They most desire to avoid any confrontation with the Eniwetok people at this time.

Considering that military requirements for use of the Atoll will be ended with completion of the PACE experiments, a series of high explosives tests on islands near former nuclear test sites, Williams was considering the possibility of an immediate return of a portion of the islands in the Atoll that had not been used by DOD and which were largely unaffected by past nuclear tests. In any event, Williams would like to announce that Eniwetok Atoll was to be returned to the former residents at the April 2 meeting.

The AEC representatives reviewed past experience with Bikini Atoll and the considerations, decisions, and actions that lie behind the judgment that the Bikini people could be safely returned to their homeland. The potential problems with radioactive scrap material and contaminated soil in and around craters on certain islands at Eniwetok was discussed. Roger Ray who had recently visited Eniwetok reported on the large quantities of scrap metal some of it containing induced radioactivity, seen in that Atoll. Compared to Bikini, the job of cleanup was estimated to be much bigger and more costly. We also discussed the lack of current monitoring data for all of Eniwetok Atoll and the time and expense required to obtain this information. AEC representatives stated that possibly the dollars required for the radiological survey of Eniwetok, about \$150,000 to \$200,000, could be provided within current budget limitations by reprogramming projects, but funds for the large cost of cleanup, which may run from two to five million dollars depending on actions needed, are not available. Representatives of DNA stated they could be the lead agency for cleanup operations as was DASA (JTF-8) for Bikini, but they could not provide the money from

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current funding. Ambassador Williams stated they would be looking to AEC and DOD for the same kind of support in cleanup of Eniwetok as was provided for Bikini (AEC supported radiological aspects of cleanup and is providing followup periodic monitoring and DOD supported cleanup with removal of metal scrap and other debris and physical hazards such as rusted towers and sunken vessels in shallow water and on beaches). Williams stated that he understood the problems of finding funds for such a large cleanup effort and stated he would go as high as needed to get the necessary support and funds for this project.

Ambassador Williams stated he could see the difficulties that would arise if some of the Eniwetok people were allowed to return to a portion of the islands before cleanup was accomplished. AEC staff stated that after a survey of the Atoll is completed, there will probably be some islands where replanting of coconuts could begin.

Williams feels that the chance for a confrontation with the Eniwetok people is heightened by their lack of information on what is being considered. He favors a visit by United States representative to Ujelang to inform the people of actions to be taken and to obtain their assistance in planning for their return to their homeland. As with the visit to Kili to talk to the Bikini people and answer questions about their return to their atoll in 1968, an AEC representative should go along on the visit to Ujelang. Williams is considering taking representatives of the Eniwetok people to Bikini to see how it has been cleaned up and to see the new houses being built there and to Eniwetok to see what must be done before they can return.

Ambassador Williams said he hoped that the necessary steps to perform the radiological survey and cleanup of Eniwetok could be compressed in time compared to Bikini and that both AEC and DOD can expect a request for assistance in these areas.

After the April 2 meetings Ambassador Williams would like to meet again to discuss agreements reached on Eniwetok.

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