



DEFENSE NUCLEAR AGENCY  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20305

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Dr. James L. Liverman  
Assistant Administrator for Environment and Safety  
Energy Research and Development Administration  
Washington, D.C. 20545

Dear Dr. Liverman:

During a recent visit to Field Command, I was briefed on the current status of planning for initiation of the Enewetak Cleanup next summer. I learned that one of the matters requiring resolution was the type of statement to be provided by ERDA when radiological cleanup had been accomplished satisfactorily. Previous correspondence had advised me that the ERDA/NVO representatives who are participating in the preparation of the Enewetak Radiological Cleanup Plan were unwilling to accept a provision in the plan that ERDA will furnish a statement when cleanup has been accomplished to the standard established in the AEC (ERDA) Guidelines. I find this position inconsistent with our previous understanding on this highly important component of the project.

ERDA is widely recognized as having the outstanding authorities on radiation hazards. The selection of ERDA by the Director, Office of Management and Budget on 18 October 1973 to furnish radiological support to the cleanup project is undoubtedly based on the belief that it is the most appropriate Federal Agency to determine that the standards established for the cleanup have been met. It was my understanding that ERDA had firmly accepted this responsibility in consideration of the statement in Senate Armed Services Committee Report 94-157, dated 22 May 1975 that the Committee "... insists that radiation standards established by ERDA be met before any resettlement can be accomplished." (Extract at Enclosure 1). Mr. L. J. Deal of your Agency apparently recognized this requirement in his response to Congressman Ichord during a hearing of the House Subcommittee on Military Installations and Facilities on May 7, 1975. Mr. Deal said, in effect, that once DoD has accomplished cleanup to our (ERDA) standards, and recommendations for resettling the people followed, ERDA is willing to certify as to their safety (House Armed Services Report 94-11, pages 167-168, Extract at Enclosure 2).

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Dr. James L. Liverman

The nature of the guidelines established by the AEC (ERDA) Task Group for the cleanup and rehabilitation of Enewetak Atoll is such that it would appear only proper that ERDA issue a formal statement when the cleanup standards established have been achieved. For ERDA to renounce responsibility to provide such a statement now could have the effect of committing the Department of Defense to an open-ended obligation. Such a commitment was never contemplated by DNA nor the DoD and I am unable to accept it now.

In order that we may continue toward the early initiation of this project based on a sound radiological plan for the cleanup, I urge that ERDA/NVO representatives be directed to include a provision in the plan that ERDA will give a formal clearance on an island-by-island basis when radiological cleanup meeting the guidelines established by the ERDA in its Task Group Report has been accomplished.

Sincerely,



WARREN D. JOHNSON  
Lieutenant General, USAF  
Director

2 Enclosures  
as stated

must be "cleaned up" before the displaced tribes can return. Some of this debris is radioactive and it is planned to dump this debris in a crater left from the tests and cap it with concrete. The remaining debris is in the form of buildings, piers and ships left over from World War II as well as the testing period, and constitutes a safety hazard and is an obstruction to orderly resettlement. The Fiscal Year 1976 request was for \$14.1 million as the first increment of a \$40 million cleanup program. In addition to cleanup costs it is estimated that the Department of the Interior will require over \$10 million to resettle the tribes on Enewetak.

The Committee debated this question at length. The Department was asked to develop the most austere cost estimate possible which envisioned the use of U.S. troops (Army engineers or Navy Seabees) who are trained in nuclear decontamination and whose use should provide substantial cost savings. The least cost estimate provided by the Department which would accomplish the minimum required cleanup was \$25 million.

The Committee agreed to a one time authorization of \$20 million to accomplish the cleanup. The Department is charged to accomplish the cleanup within that amount using every possible economy measure. The Committee insists that radiation standards established by the Energy Research and Development Agency be met before any resettlement is accomplished. Although the moral obligation to permit the Enewetak people to return to their atoll was a major consideration, the Committee's decision was based primarily on the premise that the United States cannot walk away from a testing program that cost several billion dollars without making a responsible effort to restore the atoll to the degree that it can be made habitable.

#### *Trident*

The Fiscal Year 1976 request contains \$187 million for the continued construction of the Trident support facility at Bangor, Washington. The Congress has authorized over \$200 million since FY 73 for the construction of this facility and the Committee is pleased to note that progress at the site is good. The total cost of the facility is now reported to be \$657 million, an increase of \$27 million over the total estimate provided by the Navy last year, which results primarily from the additional requirement to furnish community assistance funds as provided for in the Fiscal year 1975 Act. The Department once again assured the Committee that the single site at Bangor would service the entire Trident requirement for the foreseeable future.

#### *Relocatable Construction—Korea*

The committee indorses the Army program of constructing relocatable quarters from prefabricated buildings in Korea. This approach should prove to be cost effective if U.S. units are relocated within Korea or returned to the U.S. The committee expects that the concept of relocatable facilities be considered at all overseas locations as part of the normal planning process.

#### *Fort Polk—Mineral Rights*

The committee approved an Army request to purchase the mineral rights at Fort Polk, Louisiana. There is serious question that the

Mr. ICHORD. The gentleman from Texas, Mr. Deal, has suggested that we go vote, there is another vote.

The Chair will reluctantly declare another 10-minute recess while the Members vote.

[Recessed at 3:25 p.m.]

Mr. ICHORD. The meeting will again come to order.

Mr. Deal is recognized to proceed as he wishes.

**STATEMENT OF L. J. DEAL, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR FOR HEALTH PROTECTION, DIVISION OF OPERATIONAL SAFETY, ERDA**

Mr. DEAL. I thought I might say a word, Mr. Chairman, about the role that ERDA inherited from the AEC in providing the technical advice on radiological cleanup, the standards, and the recommendations on rehabilitation, and we began this by producing a very extensive radiological survey as Mr. Mitchell mentioned. We prepared a study by a task group study, which is available in the environmental impact statement, that General Johnson has prepared on the criteria for cleanup and on the recommendations for resettling the people.

We used conservative standards in this whole approach to the standards that Mr. Mitchell mentioned, and we believe the standards are such that if DNA cleans up to our criteria and if the restrictions on use of the atoll are adhered to, and the recommendations we made in our report observed, there would be no risks above those you would see in a normal population from the natural background radiation.

Mr. ICHORD. As to the entire island?

Mr. DEAL. If they follow our recommendation.

Mr. ICHORD. No risk under a certain limitation you have established.

Mr. DEAL. That is right, sir, following the recommendations we made in our report which do include restricting use of the northern islands.

Mr. ICHORD. Are there any questions of Mr. Deal?

If not, thank you very much.

The gentleman from Texas, were you seeking recognition?

Mr. KAZEN. No, sir.

I was just wondering, Mr. Chairman, how long would this cleanup job take?

General JOHNSON. About 30 months, sir.

Mr. KAZEN. About 30 months.

What is the condition of the waters around the land there? Are they contaminated, or have they since been washed off, or any contamination that might have existed has disappeared?

Mr. DEAL. The marine life, the fish can be used. Fortunately, there is no appreciable amount of containment in the fish, there is contamination in the water, but it doesn't get in the food, it is in the bottom sediment.

Mr. KAZEN. Any fish caught anywhere in those islands is edible?

Mr. DEAL. Yes, sir.

Mr. ICHORD. Of course, you see the question that was bothering me, it is not going to be possible to contract for future nonliability; we all know as lawyers that is impossible.

There will always be a question of fact.

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What ERDA is willing to certify is that once these islands—this action is taken—as is proposed by General Johnson—and that the islands are used under the conditions which you specify—you think they will be safe?

Mr. DEAL. Yes, sir.

Mr. ICHORD. There is no danger to the people?

Mr. DEAL. Not from radiation.

Mr. ICHORD. Returning to the island?

Mr. DEAL. No, sir.

Mr. ICHORD. Of course, if you are wrong, in that assessment, then we could have possible liability to these people.

Mr. DEAL. We plan to follow up monitoring just like we do now. As you know, there was a mishap during the test period in 1954 and the Island Rongelap was hit with fallout and there were natives exposed there.

We have a medical team that follows those people; they go in twice a year, and make studies on the people. They whole-body count them and they have done blood studies.

Of the 19 children exposed at that time who were less than 10 years of age, 17 have had some kind of thyroid difficulty.

One man died of leukemia a year or so ago. This was the cancer case. We have this followup program going.

We will include Bikini in the followup and in fact it has already started. The people have started moving back to Bikini, and our medical teams now go there. The same will be true for Enewetak; when resettlement starts at Enewetak, our medical teams will go there.

We also do a radiological survey at the same time. We collect samples of the food and fish, and check on the environmental movement of the radioactivity.

Mr. BEARD. On the followup, in other words, they are sent over there and then you follow up, but you found in the followup situations—

Mr. DEAL. No; that came from the fallout of a nuclear test. These people were taken off the island because of a fallout from a nuclear test. It was an accident.

Mr. BEARD. I see.

Mr. DEAL. They were exposed, everybody knew that.

Mr. BEARD. I see. OK.

Mr. MITCHELL. May I clarify that?

Mr. BEARD. Yes.

Mr. MITCHELL. In 1954, during the test at Bikini of the first hydrogen bomb, the wind went the wrong way, and fairly large amounts of radioactive fallout were deposited at Rongelap Atoll.

The problem we have there is the people were exposed from the beginning.

It is a matter of trying to treat them from that time down to this.

Our objective for the Enewetak program, of course, is to avoid any exposure, internal or external, from the outset.

Mr. ICHORD. The Chair recognizes Mr. Shumate to ask some questions for the record.

Mr. SHUMATE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Mitchell, as I understand the testimony up to now, are these the islands referred to as the northern islands?

Mr. MITCHELL. Yes, sir.