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AMEMBASSY CANBERRA/COMTWELVE/HICOMRY OKINAWA NOT ADDEES

PASS INFO

CANBERRA FOR POL SECTION

COMTWELVE FOR AMBASSADOR WILLIAMS

USCAR FOR TTPI LNO

SECSTATE PASS TO DEPT INT/SEC INT/DASTA/OSN.

(ENIWETOK RETURN)

SAIPAN, APRIL 18, (MNS)---HIGH COMMISSIONER EDWARD E. JOHNSON 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 HAVE RECENTLY ANNOUNCED THEIR INTENTION TO RETURN TO THEIR HOME ISLANDS BY THE END OF THIS YEAR.

IN THE STATEMENT ISSUED TUESDAY (APRIL 18), HIGH COMMISSIONER JOHNSTON AND AMBASSADOR WILLIAMS SAID THAT FUTURE MICRONESIAN LAND NEEDS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE WERE SET FORTH IN THE THIRD ROUND

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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 OUT 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 KIKINI 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 AFTERNOON 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

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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 WILL ACCOMPANY AMBASSADOR WILLIAMS ON HIS TRIP THROUGH THE EASTERN DISTRICTS, ENDING IN MAJURO WHERE HE WILL BEGIN MEETINGS WITH ENIWETOKESE AT THE DISTRICT CENTER. COLEMAN ALSO PLANS 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 MEETING WITH DEPUTY HICOM COLEMAN LATER IN THE WEEK AND TO BEGINNING THE PLANNING FOR THE REVERSION OF ENIWETOK TO THE TRUST TERRITORY SO THAT THE REHABILITATION PROGRAM COULD GET UNDERWAY.

ACCORDING TO THE JOINT ANNOUNCEMENT RELEASED TUESDAY, IT WILL BE

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NECESSARY TO CARRY OUT THE SAME TYPE OF SURVEY, CLEANUP AND REHABILITATION PROCEDURES THAT HAVE BEEN USED AT BIKINI. "AS AN INITIAL STEP, THE ANNOUNCEMENT SAID, "THE U.S. PLANS TO COMMENCE THE SURVEY OF THE ATOLL PROBABLY LATE THIS SUMMER. THE CLEANUP AND REHABILITATION OF THE THREE ISLANDS---PARRY, JAPTAN AND ANIYAANII---IN THE SOUTHEASTERN PART OF THE ATOLL, WILL RECEIVE FIRST PRIORITY."

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."

(SPECIAL COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN APPOINTED)

SAIPAN, APRIL 18, (MNS)---MARIANAS SENATOR OLYMPIO T. BORJA HAS BEEN APPOINTED CHAIRMAN OF THE SPECIAL JOINT COMMITTEE CONCERNING RONGELAP AND UTIRIK ATOLLS. OTHER MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE ARE REPRESENTATIVE HANS WILLIANDER OF TRUK AND REPRESENTATIVE TIMOTHY OLKERIIL OF PALAU.

THE SPECIAL JOINT COMMITTEE CONCERNING RONGELAP AND UTIRIK WAS CREATED UNDER PUBLIC LAW 40-33, WHICH AUTOMATICALLY BECAME LAW MARCH

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Stewart will check
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