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II. SECY-75-81 - Radiological Criteria for Enewetak Atoll

A. Dr. Biles described the proposed radiological criteria for the cleanup and rehabilitation of Enewetak, noting in particular:

1. the island of Evonne would be quarantined until the plutonium contamination is reduced to safe levels;
2. the Enewetakese will be allowed to return to the southern islands and the growing of all food will be limited to the southern islands -- there are no restrictions on visits to the other islands or on the consumption of seafood from waters surrounding the other islands;
3. the Enewetakese will not be allowed to return to the island Janet* because its radiological conditions exceed the guidelines and that cleaning up the island would involve a major expenditure in money and might not be successful because the soil from the island would have to be stripped and new soil added;
4. the Enewetakese with the assistance of their U.S. attorneys may try to force the U.S. Government to clean up Janet;
5. the various agencies of the U.S. Government involved with the Enewetak cleanup differ as to whether the Enewetakese can be persuaded to remain on the southern islands, but that the Department of the Interior believes they will; and
6. that experience at Bikini suggests the radioactivity removal rate may be higher than that due to natural decay alone and that the activity on the northern islands will be monitored in order to permit the earliest possible return.

B. General Graves noted that the proposed plan has not been presented to the Enewetakese and that after it is discussed with them, they may wish to have the Government change its plan.

C. The Commission approved:

1. alternative 3 and the associated criteria in SECY-75-81; and (OS)
2. consultation with the Enewetakese on the clean up and rehabilitation plan. (OS)

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D. The Commission noted:

1. the responsibility for disposal of contaminated material, including plutonium, rests with DNA;
2. action on reducing the quantity of plutonium contaminated material requiring disposal has been deferred for further study and that the AEC should be prepared to take the lead in conducting a study to see if such reduction is feasible and practical; and
3. the follow-on radiological surveys and monitoring of the Atoll and people will be conducted by AEC to insure exposure criteria are not exceeded and to determine when Janet and other northern islands become habitable.

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