



DEFENSE NUCLEAR AGENCY  
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Dr. Dixy Lee Ray  
Chairman, US Atomic Energy Commission  
Washington, D. C. 20545

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Dear Dr. Ray,

Soon the AEC staff will present to the Commission recommendations for cleanup and rehabilitation of Enewetak. DoD has charged the Defense Nuclear Agency with the responsibility for the cleanup phase. How we go about the cleanup will depend on the radiological standards established by the AEC.

I am concerned with several aspects of this project. Of course, our primary concern must be the health and welfare of the Enewetak people. If this were not so there would be no reason for the entire effort and the United States could simply maintain the status quo. However, this major concern is complicated by diverse objectives:

- a. assurance that no Enewetakese receives radiation doses which will adversely affect him or future generations,
- b. accommodation of the strong desire of the Enewetakese to return to Enjebi, one of the islands with a level of radioactivity which some say cannot be reduced to acceptable levels for residence and agriculture.

There is some controversy over what constitutes an acceptable level. Indeed, the people themselves might well prefer a small risk to denial of their cherished home. Important in this respect is a doubt (at least in my mind) that we can keep the Enewetakese from living on Enjebi once they are resettled on the other nearby islands.

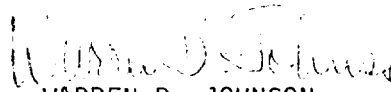
I understand your staff will present to the Commission some arguments we have raised; thus, the Commission should receive the advantage of different viewpoints. I want to assure you that I will not contest the standards recommended by the Commission. However, I hope they will consider the entire problem: biological - political - and fiscal, as well as the social and economic effects on the Enewetakese people if the standards are such that we cannot resettle them on one of their major home islands. Finally, I am sure that the Commission will want to assure itself that marginal health benefits do not override the substantial benefits the Enewetakese would enjoy from more complete use of their land.

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Once these decisions are reached they must be explained to the Enewetakese. They must understand any constraints as well as the fact the project is subject to Congressional approbation. Perhaps that might prompt the trip I previously suggested we make jointly to Enewetak. Of course, we would also want to invite the appropriate official from the Department of the Interior.

I will look forward to discussion of this matter after the Commission has considered it. Meanwhile, the staff and resources of DNA are available if further information is required in the decision-making process.

Regards,

  
WARREN D. JOHNSON  
Lieutenant General, USAF  
Director