



UNITED STATES
 ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION
 NEVADA OPERATIONS OFFICE
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FILE:
 PACIFIC
 ENIWETOK

Memo to File

ENIWETOK VISIT

On March 9, 1972, accompanied by Frank Cluff, I visited Eniwetok Atoll. Our purpose was twofold:

- a. to see firsthand the progress of the PACE activities; and
- b. to gain some firsthand appreciation of the scope and nature of the cleanup which would be required if and when that Atoll is released for re-population.

We first overflew the North and East sides of the Atoll at low altitude and made some photographs from the air. Then after landing at Eniwetok, we travelled by boat for a visit to Runit, Aomon, Biihiri and Rojoa. We also cruised past, but did not land upon, Parry Island and Japtan. Our selection of the particular islands on which we went ashore was dictated by the presence of active project work on all of them thus satisfying our interest in PACE and assuring that there would be usable boat landings and land transportation. Fortuitously, they also provided an opportunity to view and examine representative debris, contaminated structures and a radiological burial site.

Combining the impressions from this visit with information derived from a brief NV survey visit in July 1971, we have the following partial summary of the Eniwetok problems:

General:

Although Eniwetok represents an excellent logistic base compared with Bikini, the cleanup task to be performed there is expected to be far more extensive and difficult. There is a great deal more debris on land, both surface and buried, and in the water

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close to shore on both sides of many of the islands. There are a number of known burial sites and possibly some additional which are neither recorded nor marked. Furthermore, in view of the increased public and political sensitivity to ecological and environmental matters and an increasingly vocal "anti" element, we may expect that all of our efforts will be closely scrutinized.

Eniwetok Island:

The base headquarters island. Facilities appear to be in excellent condition. Sufficient for quartering a large cleanup crew and for maintenance shops, laboratory support, etc. A superb air terminal, good small boat docks and an anchorage for larger vessels. Eniwetok is not believed to have any radiological problem.

Parry Island:

Not now in use, but has many buildings in good condition and could probably be restored as a logistic base at reasonable cost. The deepwater pier is at Parry, but is in disuse and disrepair. The site manager indicates that some time ago an estimate of \$200 K was made for repair of this pier. Visual inspection from a mile out suggests that it might be put back in use for something less than this amount, but to preserve it as a permanent asset (as should be done to truly exploit the Atoll's potential) would probably cost a quarter million, plus. Parry is believed to have no radiological problem.

Japtan Island:

Still in very close to its natural state (palm trees, lizards and dense underbrush), with a few buildings and an antenna farm. Probably of no consequence in the cleanup, as it has no radiological problem and would not be particularly useful for cleanup support.

Runit:

Clearly one of the bigger problems. Has much buried debris, numerous beached derelict vessels (LCU's, LCM's), a difficult plutonium problem and a large quantity of iron, probably activated, in the shallow water on the seaward side. Scrap metal readings range from 100 μ /hr to 35 mr/hr, with surface readings generally in this range also. Both Scripps (artificial upwelling) and the

Air Force (PACE) are active on Runit but their activities to date and anticipated should not seriously affect the cleanup job.

Aomon-Bijiri-Rojoa:

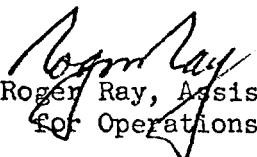
Bijiri and Rojoa are relatively clean with surface gamma levels of 10 μ /hr or less and some metal scrap reading as high as 40 μ /hr. Aomon also is fairly clean with the exception of one burial site in the northern sector and two ground zeroes also in the north. One of the latter reads about 3 mr/hr. There are also two monuments on this island on concrete slabs upon which a protective 3" layer of concrete has been poured. Although the marker plate from one of these has been removed, it is assumed to indicate the presence of α contamination. The protective concrete is being eroded and cracked. The contaminated slabs themselves are too large to move and will probably have to be broken up if removal is required. In addition, there is a large quantity of iron scrap on Aomon (probably activated).

Engeki:

Potentially one of the most useful islands for agriculture, Engeki presents a substantial cleanup job. There is a large amount of metal scrap, both buried and on the surface with readings ranging as high as 12 mr/hr. The PACE project will attempt to avoid using Engeki, but if its use becomes necessary will attempt to minimize the impact.

Bogon and Bogairikk:

Small islands, a moderate amount of scrap, with gamma readings relatively high on Bogon (up to 300 μ /hr).


Roger Ray, Assistant Manager
for Operations