DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY DECLASSIFICATION REVIEW
1ST REVIEWER-DATE: 6-16-94
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2ND REVIEWER-DATE: 9/14/94
AUTHORITY: ADD
NAME: H Schmidt
DETERMINATION [CIRCLE NUMBER(S)]
1. CLASSIFICATION RETAINED
2. CLASSIFICATION CHANGED TO:
3. CONTAINS NO DOE CLASSIFIED INFO
4. COORDINATE WITH: Interior
5. CLASSIFICATION CANCELLED
6. CLASSIFIED INFO BRACKETED

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July 29, 1953

[redacted]

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Classified Memo to President

Attached at Tab A is an unclassified memorandum on the return of the people of Bikini to their atoll together with a proposed public announcement and draft letters to the Secretary of Defense, the Chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission and the Director of the Budget, as well as to me, directing us to go on with the resettlement task forthwith.

In anticipation of a desire on the part of former Bikini residents to return to their atoll, I asked the Atomic Energy Commission in December 1953 to conduct a radiological survey to determine whether the islands were safe for habitation. I also asked the Interior Department to determine whether there would be any further military requirement for Bikini. As the results have turned out, considerable more interest began to build up in the future of Bikini. This interest was generated by a petition sent to the UN Trusteeship Council by a Peace Corps volunteer in the three atolls of the former Bikini people live. This was followed by articles on Bikini appearing in Time and Newsweek magazines. Interest in the question has also remained high in the Pacific Territory.

Nevertheless, the Atomic Energy Commission and the Defense Department [illegible] Bikini could be returned to the natives and we [illegible] leading on plans to effect their return. It is possible that [illegible] the Government's decision to return Bikini to its [illegible] the former Bikini people. Natives have expressed [illegible] their return to Bikini. [illegible], the top Government [illegible] as an equal site for the [illegible]

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nuclear devices which resulted in a high level of radioactivity making the atoll unhabitable for many years. Eniwetok has become an intercontinental ballistic missile re-entry vehicle impact and scoring area and the western terminus of the Pacific missile testing range. There are Defense installations on Eniwetok, and there is continuing hazard from missile impacts. These testing requirements with their inherent hazards will not accommodate the return of the former Eniwetok natives. Tab B is a fact sheet outlining current activities on Eniwetok.

We have not included reference to this situation in our proposed Bikini announcement lest it offset the positive features of the Bikini return. However, if questions on Eniwetok are asked, the brief answer at Tab C is recommended.

We have also cleared with the Departments of Defense and State a letter to the High Commissioner which he can pass to the former Eniwetok people advising them that security requirements with respect to Eniwetok are such that their return is not possible at this time.

Secretary of the Interior

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