



DEFENSE ATOMIC SUPPORT AGENCY  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20305

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ADDRESS REPLY TO:  
PIO

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MEMORANDUM FOR: ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE (PUBLIC AFFAIRS)

SUBJECT: Public Affairs Guidance Regarding Bikini Atoll (U)

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

1. Reference is made to the following:

a. OASD (ISA) Memorandum to Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS), dated 28 January 1969, subject: "Bikini Atoll, DOD Support for Clearing Operation (U)," (CONF).

b. Memorandum of Understanding Between the Division of Military Application, Atomic Energy Commission, and the Defense Atomic Support Agency, Department of Defense, on Cleanup of Bikini Atoll, dated 11 February 1969 (Encl 1), (CONF).

c. OASD (PA) Memorandum to Director, Defense Atomic Support Agency (DASA), dated 28 January 1969, subject as above, (FOUO).

d. Department of the Interior news release dated 18 January 1969, subject: "Bikini Resettlement Program Released."

2. In carrying out the Bikini Atoll clearance tasks assigned by reference 1.a. and agreed to by the Atomic Energy Commission (AEC) in reference 1.b., Director, DASA, expects to encounter significant press interest in certain quarters, for reasons indicated below. Some of this was already been evinced. It appears desirable to examine the pertinent public affairs guidance (reference 1.c), to the end of establishing procedures which can best support legitimate public and world interests, while avoiding stimulation of undue speculation (for example, such as on maintenance of test readiness) and protecting any potentially sensitive subjects (such as certain sources of funding). These procedures should include constructive guidance to those officials in the Pacific area to whom the press habitually turns for news on activities of the sort that will be involved initially (CINCPAC, AEC Honolulu Office, JTF-8, Holmes and Narver), and should assure compatibility with the ultimate responsibilities of the Department of the Interior for the completion of the project and for any public information related to those phases which follow the DASA operations.

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*Robert A. Carpenter*  
DATE: 12/18/94

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3. Public Affairs Situation: A Department of the Interior news release (reference l.d.) describes the general nature, history, responsibilities and intentions of the project to rehabilitate Bikini and return the natives to the atoll. The October 18 issue of Life magazine carried an illustrated article on the subject, U. S. television had feature coverage in December 1968, and the two major Honolulu newspapers have had stories on the project, the most recent being in the 29 January Honolulu Star-Bulletin under a Saipan dateline, moved by the Micronesian News Service, which stated that the project had begun. NBC has expressed interest in making a documentary of the project, and BBC has approached Department of the Interior on the subject. Commencement of work appears likely to arouse further press interest. Holmes and Narver, the engineering contractors, have begun hiring in Honolulu and on the U. S. West Coast. Equipment from the West Coast commenced movement on 31 January in USS BELLE GROVE, and additional personnel and equipment from Hawaii and Johnston Island sailed on 12 February. The advance party of about 39 men with their equipment will land on Bikini about February 18. (There will be no air access until this party can prepare the airstrip.)

4. Discussion:

a. With the above background emerging, discussions of means of handling public affairs matters have taken place in Washington and Honolulu. Mr. Charles Boatner, Director of Public Affairs for the Department of the Interior, is understood informally to favor open public access to the project, subject, of course, to limitations imposed by the remoteness of the atoll and the austere conditions under which the work will be done, and also subject to necessary protection of any aspects which might be considered sensitive. CINCPAC PAO, in conference with DASA PIO in Honolulu February 4, expressed support for a Bikini public affairs program that would inform Micronesia and the world of U. S. actions in behalf of Bikinians. In the latter connection the general plans for a Micronesian plebescite are pertinent, as are JCS Memorandum to Secretary of Defense (JCSM 441-68 of 11 July 68) and Deputy Secretary of Defense Memorandum dated 31 July 68, in reply, which concern the importance of DOD support of measures to generate favorable Micronesian response when such a plebescite occurs.

b. Additional factors will bear upon the public affairs situation once the advance party has landed. Permission to visit the project during the AEC/DOD phase will be retained by Commander Joint Task Force 8, subject further to CINCPAC area clearance. Access to Bikini will continue to be difficult at best. Capability to support visitors will

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be closely limited and austere, and capability to protect them against miscellaneous incidental hazards will be equally limited. The nature of the project is such that no classified subjects are expected to be exposed to undesired view. DASA contemplates establishing field outlets approximately as follows: DASA PIO in Washington; Information Office at Headquarters JTF-8, Sandia Base, N. M.; Information Officer on staff of Commander JTG-8.8 (Bikini cleanup task group), but normally stationed in Hawaii (collocated with JTG-8.5); and a service journalist and a photographer on Bikini for documentation. Subject to operational requirements, Bikini communications facilities will be available for press traffic. Photographic still and mopix products will be flown out weekly, monitored by DASA information specialists, and made available as appropriate for release.

5. Director, DASA, accordingly recommends that OASD (PA):

a. Establish additional public affairs guidance for the Bikini cleanup task by:

(1) Announcing the start of DOD participation (draft proposal provided as Enclosure 2), and appropriate subsequent significant developments and policy-level modifications in the participation.

(2) Providing Q's and A's (draft proposal provided as Enclosure 3), to be augmented later as necessary, for further guidance in addition to that otherwise defined.

b. Authorize Director, DASA:

(1) To conduct a public affairs program consistent with his other responsibilities for the Bikini cleanup, to be guided by, and limited to the substantive framework of information released in, the Department of the Interior release (reference l.d.) and any subsequent releases by that Department, AEC releases if occurring, and the DOD releases and additional guidance indicated in subparagraph a. above. The program will not address itself to the national capability to resume unlimited nuclear testing or to the details of funding for the Bikini cleanup task, both of which will be treated as separate subjects within the competence of OASD (PA). The program will include still and motion picture, news feature and hometown news story releases. All phases of the program will be conveyed, in advance when feasible, to CINCPAC PAO.

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(2) To assist, within the capabilities of the cleanup task group, world press representatives asking to visit the site. Each such proposed visit will be coordinated in advance with OASD (PA) and CINCPAC, to include CINCPAC area clearance.

6. This Memorandum has been informally coordinated with representatives of the Department of the Interior and the Atomic Energy Commission.

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L. M. MUSTIN  
VADM USN  
Director

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