

**STATEMENT OF SECRETARY MARIE MADDISON
ON BEHALF OF MINISTER GERALD M. ZACKIOS
TO THE ANNUAL RMI-DOE MEETING
HONOLULU, HI, JUNE 4-5, 2002**

Deputy Assistant Secretary Cary, Ambassador Senko, representatives of the U.S. departments of Energy and Interior, Senators, Mayors, and representatives of the 4 atolls and the Nuclear Claims Tribunal, ladies and gentlemen:

It is good to be here again. These meetings are an important opportunity to review progress that we have made over the previous year, and to articulate our objectives for the coming year. Last year, for example, we had a very productive meeting that produced clear goals. For the next two days, I hope we can build on our successes from last year.

Mr. Cary, it is a pleasure to meet you, and we look forward to working with you. The RMI Government recognizes, Mr. Cary, that there are limitations in the resources and authority for your program. Obviously you cannot solve all the problems in the RMI resulting from the testing program, but the RMI hopes to work with you to identify areas that you are able to address. We want the RMI program to be a success for your office.

I think it is important for us to begin by implementing the objectives we set last year as our agreed path forward. Last year's action plan called for the establishment of a working group to address a range of issues. For many reasons, including the vacancy of the post you recently filled, DOE could not devote its energies to the working group. The RMI believes these reasons are fully understandable.

On behalf of the entire RMI Government, I would appreciate it if you would renew our deepest condolences to Mr. Geoffrey Judge and let him know we will not forget his personal loss that was part of the national and international tragedy of September 11, 2001. As a strategic partner and long-term friend of the United States, the RMI condemns the terrorist attacks in the strongest terms possible, and has repeatedly communicated to the US Government that we stand with the United States in its war on terrorism.

Although Mr. Judge could not attend this year's meeting, the RMI hopes that he will remain active in RMI issues since matters of budget and planning are important to the success of our joint efforts. The RMI Government is also interested in working with DOE to examine the budget and see whether resources used for logistics could be better used by medical program.

Again, if we return to the discussion of last year's action plan, there are many areas of joint interest that we agreed to pursue as part of the working group, including:

- Agreement on 5-year strategic plans for DOE's medical and environmental programs,
- the establishment of clean-up and remediation strategies for various atolls,

- the continued transfer of documents related to the testing program, including information about fallout on Ujelang,
- amendment of the MOU with Enewetak,
- the release of the Brookhaven National Laboratory data on whole body counting and urinalysis,
- the establishment of short and long-term plans for environmental monitoring at Bikini,
- restructuring DOE's health care program,
- and the need for long-term stewardship plans for hazardous sites in the RMI, including the Runit Dome.

We need to leave here with a firm date and place for the first meeting of the working group. The RMI is prepared to nominate representatives from our side who will participate in the working group. We think the location of the working group should depend on the agenda of the group for any given meeting, but we would like to encourage the working group to visit the 4 atolls to gain a first-hand understanding of the issues communities are dealing with. The working group should also meet on a regular basis, perhaps 3-4 times a year, so that meaningful progress can be achieved.

Although we have many areas from last year's action plan that must be addressed, I would like to express my appreciation for the progress that was made between DOE and the Utrik community. I was pleased to learn that a whole-body counter will be available for the Utrik community.

In addition to the implementation of items identified in last year's action plan, there are a few new issues that the RMI would like to raise, even if you are not able to respond at this time. The first of these issues is the biological and chemical weapons testing off of Enewetak. As you know from recent reports by the Department of Defense and media coverage throughout the United States, the U.S. Government tested biological and chemical agents in the Pacific region, including Enewetak. The RMI Government believes that these tests are responsible for a nation-wide outbreak of the flu in 1968 that resulted in the deaths of some individuals, including a member of the "exposed" population from Ailinginae and an 8-year old boy from Rongelap. This outbreak was documented by Brookhaven National Laboratory as part of its medical mission for DOE.

In upcoming days I will provide you, Mr. Cary, with a letter to ^{Deputy}~~Assistant~~ Secretary Wolfowitz at the Department of Defense. In this letter I will request that the Department of Defense and the Department of Energy conduct a joint review of all hazardous materials tested or used in or around the Marshall Islands during the Trusteeship. For decades we have focused our bilateral discussions on the consequences of radiation exposure. While it is critically important to understand the consequences of radiation exposure, it has become clear to the RMI Government that we must broaden our discussion to include other hazardous materials. For example, we have learned in recent years about the presence of tracer chemicals used in the nuclear weapons tests, about residual PCBs that have contaminated our lagoons (from our ships that sunk during the

testing program), and about the use of chemical and biological agents. It is time for full disclosure about all materials that are of potential risk to human beings and the environment.

Full disclosure will also require the release of additional documents pertaining to the testing program. We appreciate all of the documents that have been declassified and provided to the RMI in the past, and we look forward to receiving additional materials in the future. As friends and allies of the United States, the RMI deserves to have all the facts -- facts about exposure to radiation and all hazardous materials -- so we can take steps to reduce public health threats to its citizens.

Another area where we need your help in disclosing information is with regard to the Marshallese workers who were part of U.S. Government clean-up operations, primarily on Enewetak and Bikini Atolls. As you are aware, Marshallese workers are eligible to participate in a Department of Labor compensation program for workers, but the Marshallese workers must provide proof of their employment. I would like to request cooperation from your office, Mr. Cary, in identifying Marshallese workers who worked as DOE contractors to clean-up the ground-zero sites in the RMI.

Finally, the National Academy of Sciences released a report last month demonstrating how genetic abnormalities resulting from radiation exposure are passed on to second and third generations. This report was endorsed by Dr. Richard Setlow of Brookhaven National Laboratory, the laboratory that was DOE's medical contractor in the RMI for more than 4 decades. I would like to discuss the implications of this NAS study on the health of the population in the RMI exposed to radiation from the U.S. nuclear weapons testing program. I also think it would be constructive if a lawyer from each of our sides could get together over the course of this meeting and examine the legal authority for the word "radiogenic," and how it applies to populations able to receive DOE medical services in the RMI. Perhaps Howard Hills and Diana Clark could meet and report back to us before the end of the day.

At the end of every annual meeting I have attended, DOE and the RMI sign a statement of our objectives for the upcoming year. If you prefer to call the document a "Record of Discussion," that is fine with me, but at the end of the meeting it is important for us to leave with a signed paper indicating our goals for the upcoming year. A signed document serves as an important yardstick for measuring our progress between meetings, and it is not a legally binding document.

Again, Mr Cary, it is a pleasure to meet you, and I look forward to working with you to address issues that are within DOE's capacity to address, and to identify areas that are beyond DOE's scope. I think we have the capability and talents in this room to make substantial progress on a variety of issues.

Thank you.