

1 STATEMENT OF HON. ISMAEL JOHN, SENATOR, NITIJELA,
2 MARSHALL ISLANDS; ACCOMPANIED BY DAVOR Z. PEVEC, LEGAL
3 COUNSEL, PEOPLE OF ENEWETAK

4 Mr. John: Good morning. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If I
5 may give this opportunity to allow our attorney to elaborate
6 all the issues we have in Enewetak. Thank you.

7 [The prepared statement of Mr. John follows:]

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1 The Chairman: Fine. Please summarize your statement,
2 Mr. Pevec.

3 Mr. Pevec: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman and
4 distinguished members of this committee.

5 Senator John, Mayor Peter and the entire Enewetak local
6 government council, thank you for the opportunity to be here
7 today, and to share some of your concerns. One of the
8 concerns expressed by Senator Akaka had to do with a concern
9 about storage of nuclear waste. Well, the Enewetak people
10 have had to live with that concern for the last 20 years. The
11 United States cleaned up Enewetak Atoll and stored that waste
12 in a site that is now known as Runit Dome. It contains over
13 100,000 cubic yards of radioactive waste. It is a facility
14 that is about 400 feet in diameter, capped by a concrete dome
15 about 18 inches thick.

16 This dome itself and this nuclear storage structure,
17 along with radioactive material that remains in the sediment
18 of the lagoon, the remaining portions of Runit Island, and
19 many of the northern islands of Enewetak Atoll make these
20 amendments being proposed by this committee very important to
21 the people of Enewetak. And that is because the people of
22 Enewetak have concerns about their health and their ability to
23 produce efficient food to live on their atoll.

24 When the people came back to Enewetak in 1980, the atoll
25 was dramatically affected by 43 of the 66 nuclear tests that

1 were conducted by the United States in the Marshall Islands.
2 The land remains contaminated, as I said, and much of the land
3 on which the people live today cannot produce food because it
4 was used for facilities. And there were concrete pads,
5 asphalt was used for the construction of runways, and we have
6 been undergoing a very detailed and lengthy process in trying
7 to make the land more productive.

8 So the amendment that the committee here proposes has not
9 only to do with the USDA that was mentioned earlier by
10 Mr. Weisgall, on the Bikini delegation, but also has to do
11 with supplemental food and an agricultural rehabilitation
12 program for the Enewetak people. So the community thanks this
13 committee for proposing this amendment, and supports it
14 wholeheartedly.

15 In addition, the contamination that remains on Enewetak
16 also underscores the fact that the people of Enewetak remain
17 concerned about their health. And in this respect, the people
18 of Enewetak believe that a comprehensive medical care program
19 that is better than the program that is presently available to
20 them needs to be instituted. We recently found out that the
21 program that is now available to the people of Enewetak and
22 the other four atolls has insufficient funding to provide the
23 health care that is necessary.

24 The figure that we were given was that that program now
25 spends about \$11 per person per month. That is simply

1 inadequate for any sort of medical care, let alone the type of
2 medical care that is required for people who have resettled an
3 area that remains contaminated.

4 So, with respect to that provision of the bill, we also
5 thank the committee for proposing it, and hope that the
6 details can be worked out, so that the people of Enewetak have
7 the type of medical care that is required.

8 And one final note, getting back to the Enewetak
9 agriculture and food program, that has been level-funded for a
10 period of 10 years. The funding for that portion of the
11 program is about \$1.1 million. Over that 10-year span, the
12 population of Enewetak has increased from 1,400 to 1,800
13 people, and inflation itself has had a dramatic impact on the
14 purchasing power of that funding.

15 We ask that that funding be increased to \$1.5 million, to
16 take care of the impact of inflation. The administration has
17 proposed \$1.1 million in its fiscal year 1997 budget. The
18 House, as I understand it, has increased it by \$100,000, to
19 \$1.2 million, and we ask the help of this committee to get it
20 further increased to the \$1.5 million figure, which we feel
21 would be more adequate to address the needs of the food and
22 agriculture rehabilitation efforts that are now going on on
23 Enewetak.

24 Again, we thank this committee for proposing these
25 amendments, and we hope that the concerns of the Enewetak

1 people will be addressed by this committee. And on behalf of
2 Senator John, Mayor Peter and the entire Enewetak government
3 council, we thank you for this opportunity to be here today
4 and present these issues to you.

5 One final note. We also want to thank Senator Johnston
6 for all his years of support, and the contribution that he has
7 made, not only to the people of Enewetak, but to the people of
8 the Marshall Islands in general.

9 Thank you.

10 The Chairman: Thank you very much.

11 Mr. Seligman, please proceed.

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