

File Bikini

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REQUEST FOR COMMENTS FROM LT. COL. ANTHONY A. GOMES

The attached memo, George R. Milner, Asst. Dir., Pacific Div. to Lt Col. A. A. Gomes, was sent to us by Lt. Col. Gomes along with a request for comments on this and on the Department of Interior plan for resettlement of Bikini. Because of a pressure of time we responded just with comments on the latter which has since been finalized and I understand released. The Milner memo raises two questions, one new and one old.

The first, namely consideration of the possibility of a small nuclear power plant for Bikini, at first sounds ludicrous, but it does have a certain emotional appeal. Namely, the atom has made significant changes in the Bikini environment and its potential for destruction is nowhere better displayed, yet its peaceful application contributes to rebuilding and restoring the atoll. Considering that this question is outside NEES Branch responsibilities it is suggested, with your concurrence, that other interested divisions be contacted who could explore the question of feasibility, cost, logistics, benefits, liabilities, etc.

Further, with your concurrence, we would propose to reply to Lt. Col. Gomes request for comments on the ship salvage question right away using the position previously taken that more information than is known to exist must be obtained on the radiation status of the vessels on the bottom of Bikini Lagoon before a judgement can be made on salvage and use of these materials. An interim reply would be given that AEC staff have been asked to consider the question of a nuclear power plant for Bikini and an answer will be given later.

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