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Against Eniwetok Tests

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PLANS FOR the Pacific Cratering Experiments (PACE) at Eniwetok Atoll should be halted because of the damage the tests would do to U.S.-Micronesian relations, in the opinion of an anthropologist long acquainted with the Marshallese people.

Leonard Mason, professor emeritus of anthropology at the University of Hawaii, is sending copies of his statement to congressmen and government officials.

"As an anthropologist I would be shocked and as an American citizen I would be shamed if the U.S. Air Force decides to go ahead with PACE," he says.

MASON FIRST began his studies of the Marshallese people in 1946, shortly after VJ Day, and has continued research in the years since.

He has been regarded as a principal champion and chronicler of the displaced population of Bikini and Eniwetok, islands in the Marshalls that have been sites of U.S. atomic tests beginning in 1946.

NO NUCLEAR tests have been held on Eniwetok in recent years and in April, 1972 the High Commissioner of the Trust Territory informed the displaced people of Eniwetok that they could return to their home island soon.

Since being suddenly moved from Eniwetok in 1947 because of plans to use the atoll for nuclear tests, they have been living on Ujilang, a small-

er atoll 200 miles from Eniwetok. The Air Force's PACE tests would culminate in 26 surface explosions, using from 5 tons to 500 tons of TNT.

The Air Force wants to compare craters made by the TNT blasts with craters formed by nuclear weapons during the 1947-58 nuclear tests. It claims the new tests are vital to U.S. security and that the tests will enable it to predict the effect of a nuclear blast with greater certainty.

PACE was halted last September by Federal Judge Samuel P. King when the Micronesian people went to court seeking an injunction.

A trial to determine if PACE should be allowed to go ahead will be held later this year. In the meantime, the Air Force has filed a draft environmental impact statement that lists Mason, among others, as "Specialist Consulted in Planning PACE."

Mason says he does not want his name associated with PACE planning in any way. He says the Air Force only had a telephone conversation with him.

"IN MY opinion PACE I and PACE 2 both go contrary to the best interest of the Eniwetok Marshallese," he says.

He says that a year or two ago, when PACE planning was already under way, the project might still have been judged on purely scientific grounds, but this is no longer true.

The situation changed overnight,

he says, when Ambassador Franklin Haydn Williams, the President's personal representative for the Micronesian Status Negotiations, and Edward E. Johnston, Trust Territory high commissioner, announced Eniwetok would be returned to the Trust Territory by the end of 1973.

MASON SAYS the Eniwetok people are strongly opposed to the PACE tests and that Ambassador Williams' participation in the announcement "is indicative of this greater significance of the Eniwetok issue."

He pointed to the current impasse in U.S.-Micronesian talks, with the idea of Micronesian independence in strong competition with a plan for free association with the United States.

"The U.S. military role is a principal issue in the present postponement of negotiations," he says. "The PACE program has assumed a symbolic significance in which good faith stands on trial."

He says that Micronesians in all six districts of the Trust Territory are watching to see what decision the Air Force takes in regard to PACE.

"IN THE PRESENT case, the U.S. government dare not 'shake a big stick' in the face of Micronesian opinion if it expects to win Micronesian cooperation for a Compact of Free Association," he says.

"To make such a unilateral deci-

sion about the PACE program will very likely provide exactly the support desired by Micronesians who are advocating independence, both complete and immediate."

Mason, in his statement, gives some of the history of Eniwetok, from the German predominance, to the Japanese occupation, and the Japanese fortifications and allied built in the late 1930s.

World War II came, the Eniwetok fortifications were heavily bombarded by American forces and many Eniwetokese were wounded or killed.

THE ENIWETOKESE were moved in 1947 to Ujilang because of the atomic tests, but "Ujilang has not been a happy home for them," Mason says.

Total land area on Ujilang is only .67 square miles, compared to 2.53 square miles on Eniwetok. The Ujilang lagoon is only 15.47 square miles; that of Eniwetok 367.93 square miles.

Mason mentions that the Micronesians of the Eniwetokese to return to their home island have been increasingly aggressive in recent years.

He says that Ruben Amadio, an Eniwetokese who was the high commissioner chosen for the PACE tests and that this selection does not completely rule out other possibilities for the resettling of Eniwetok.

However, the critical question is that of U.S.-Micronesian relations, he says.