

MEMORANDUM

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

CONFIDENTIAL

INFORMATION

September 14, 1972

MEMORANDUM FOR: GENERAL HAIG

FROM: RICHARD T. KENNEDY *RTK*
JOHN H. HOLDRIDGE *JH*

SUBJECT: Potential Problems in Return of Certain
Areas of the Trust Territories to the
Micronesians

Some time ago Jim Schlesinger alerted me to a potential problem in the Trust Territories. As you know, we are publicly committed to return the islands to the Micronesians and their resettling presumably by the end of 1973. Certain of the islands in Eniwetok Atoll -- in particular, Runid -- may have a significant radiation problem. The extent of the problem is not wholly clear, but Schlesinger is concerned that it may be so great that to effect a full clean-up would be extraordinarily difficult, if not impossible, and in any event extremely costly. A radiological survey mission is to take a look at the situation over the next few weeks and report more fully.

The problem is to keep this under control so that we do not face a major public relations problem generated because of excessive vigor on the part of some elements of the bureaucracy which would convey unrealizable expectations to Micronesia. The delicacy of the problem for the next few weeks in particular is obvious.

Interior's man guiding the entire issue, Stanley S. Carpenter, Deputy Assistant Secretary, had convened a large meeting of all interested parties to see what steps needed to be taken to move toward the objective of turnover by the end of 1973. To be sure this did not get out of hand, John Holdridge and I met with him privately the day before his meeting to convey the bad news about Runid. As a result he carefully steered away from any discussion in his large meeting of the specifics, and is now well aware of the need to tread cautiously until we have a better feel of the situation.

I have kept Schlesinger advised of our steps to keep this in bounds and Holdridge and I will keep a careful eye on developments in the future to be sure we don't have a major blow on our hands.

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