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(BIKINIANS TO BE MOVED AGAIN)

SAIPAN, MAR. 21 (MNS)---NINE YEARS AGO, THE U.S. GOVERNMENT TOLD THE BIKINI ISLANDERS IN THE MARSHALLS ISLANDS IT WAS SAFE TO RETURN TO THEIR ATOLL, ONCE THE SITE OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS TESTS IN THE PACIFIC, AND SOME OF THE ISLANDERS WENT HOME.

NOW THE GOVERNMENT HAS FOUND THAT IT WAS WRONG, ACCORDING TO A WASHINGTON POST ARTICLE. TESTS CONDUCTED LAST YEAR REVEALED THAT THE GROUNDWATER IN BIKINI IS STILL TOO RADIOACTIVE FOR HUMAN CONSUMPTION, SO ARE COCONUTS AND FRUITS AND VEGETABLES GROWN IN THE STILL CONTAMINATED SOIL, THE WASHINGTON POST ARTICLE STATED.

SO THE INTERIOR DEPARTMENT HAS QUIETLY ASKED CONGRESS FOR \$15 MILLION (FIFTEEN MILLION DOLLARS) TO MOVE THE ISLANDERS TO ANOTHER HOME.

"IT IS NOW CLEAR", AN INTERIOR SPOKESMAN TOLD A HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE LAST WEEK, "THAT FOR THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE THE ISLAND OF BIKINI IN THE ATOLL SHOULD NOT BE USED FOR AGRICULTURAL PURPOSE, PARTICULARLY FOR LOCAL CONSUMPTION, AND SHOULD NOT BE CONSIDERED A RESIDENTIAL AREA."

THE APPROXIMATELY 100 BIKINIANS NOW LIVING ON THE ISLAND "ARE BEING CAREFULLY MONITORED," INTERIOR SAID, "A FEEDING PROGRAM HAS

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BEEN PROVIDED FOR THEM AND THEY ARE NOT CONSUMING LOCALLY GROWN FOOD."

THE WASHINGTON POST ARTICLE SAID NONE OF THE PRESENT BIKINI RESIDENTS APPEARS YET TO HAVE BECOME ILL FROM LIVING ON THE ISLAND.

INTERIOR OFFICIALS ARE ASKING THE U.S. CONGRESS FOR \$6 MILLION (SIX MILLION DOLLARS) IN FISCAL 1979 TO BEGIN A PROPOSED NEW \$15 MILLION (FIFTEEN MILLION DOLLAR) PROGRAM TO TRY AGAIN TO RELOCATE THE BIKINIANS WHO WERE MOVED OFF THEIR ATOLL TO MAKE WAY FOR THE NUCLEAR WEAPONS TESTS.

SOME THREE MILLION DOLLARS HAS ALREADY BEEN SPENT ON BRINGING THEM BACK TO BIKINI. THE ENTIRE ISLAND WAS PLOWED UP, TOPSOIL REMOVED, 50 THOUSAND NEW COCONUT TREES PLANTED AND 40 NEW HOMES BUILT.

"ALL THAT WILL BE ABANDONED," RUTH VAN CLEVE, INTERIOR'S DIRECTOR OF TERRITORIAL AFFAIRS, WAS QUOTED BY THE WASHINGTON POST AS SAYING,

THE LATEST STUDY WAS CONDUCTED IN 1977 BY THE GOVERNMENT-RUN LAWRENCE LIVERMORE LABORATORY IN CALIFORNIA. THEIR REPORT STATED THAT THE RADIATION LEVEL IN THE WELL WATER EXCEEDED U.S. STANDARDS,

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THE RADIATION LEVEL IN COCONUTS WAS SO HIGH THAT THE BIKINIANS WERE TOLD THEY COULD EAT ONLY ONE A DAY, THE WASHINGTON POST REPORTED. EVENTUALLY THE COCONUTS, THE MAINSTAY OF THE ISLANDERS, WERE PLACED ON THE RESTRICTED LIST.

THE DEPARTMENT OF INTERIOR IS STUDYING WHETHER A NEW VILLAGE

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CAN BE CONSTRUCTED ON ENYU, A SMALLER ATOLL ABOUT 12 MILES FROM BIKINI WHICH WAS OUTSIDE THE 1954 FALLOUT PATTERN, ACCORDING TO THE STORY.

TRUST TERRITORY HIGH COMMISSIONER ADRIAN P. WINKEL SAID ON SAIPAN TODAY THAT THE STORY BY WASHINGTON POST IS "ACCURATE" BECAUSE IT WAS WRITTEN FROM REPORTS AND DATA SUBMITTED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF INTERIOR TO THE U.S. CONGRESS.

WINKEL SAID THE PROPOSAL TO FUND THE MOVE OF THE BIKINIANS ONCE AGAIN TO ANOTHER ISLAND WILL BE SUBMITTED TO THE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEES OF THE U.S. SENATE AND HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, (CRALEY ELECTED CHAIRMAN OF REFERENDUM BOARD)

SAIPAN, MAR, 21 (MNS)--N; CRALEY, JR., SPECIAL ASSISTANT FOR LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS, HAS BEEN ELECTED AS CHAIRMAN OF THE CONSTITUTIONAL REFERENDUM BOARD, SENATOR HIROSI ISMAEL OF KOSRAE WAS ELECTED VICE-CHARIMAN,

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THE BOARD, WHICH WAS CREATED WHEN THE HIGH COMMISSIONER SIGNED HOUSE BILL 7-444 LAST WEEK BEGAN ITS MEETING WEDNESDAY MORNING (MAR 21) AND WILL CONTINUE UNTIL THURSDAY, CRALEY SAID, THE BOARD WILL HAVE THE OVERALL RESPONSIBILITY OF SUPERVISING AND ADMINISTERING THE REFERENDUM, ALL MEMBERS, WITH THE EXCEPTION OF JOHNSON TORIBIONG FROM PALAU ATTENDED THE BOARD'S FIRST MEETING, TORIBIONG IS EXPECTED TO ARRIVE ON SAIPAN WEDNESDAY (MAR, 22).

CRALEY SAID THE BOARD BEGAN WORKING ON POLICIES AND GUIDELINES FOR THE JULY 12 TRUST TERRITORY-WIDE REFERENDUM ON THE CONSTITUTION FOR THE FEDERATED STATES OF MICRONESIA.

ON THURSDAY, THE BOARD WILL VOTE ON THE POLICIES, CRALEY ALSO SAID THE BOARD WILL TRY AND "OPERATE AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE IN AN INFORMAL MANNER" ADDING THAT IT HAS ALREADY BEEN AGREED THAT THE BOARD NEEDS FOUR MEMBERS FOR A QUORUM, ON FORMAL VOTES, FOUR VOTES IS NEEDED TO APPROVE OR DISAPPROVE PROPOSALS,

THE BOARD PLANS TO MEET AS OFTEN AS NECESSARY BETWEEN NOW AND JULY 12, THERE IS ALSO THE POSSIBILITY OF HIRING A STAFF DIRECTOR TO BE LOCATED ON SAIPAN, CRALEY SAID HE HOPES TO UTILIZE THE RESOURCES OF THE CONGRESS OF MICRONESIA OR THE COMMISSION ON FUTURE POLITICAL STATUS AND TRANSITION,

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THE ROLE OF SPECIAL ASSISTANT FOR DISTRICT AFFAIRS, J. BOYD MACKENZIE WAS DISCUSSED DURING TODAY'S MEETING, IT WAS DECIDED THAT MACKENZIE SHOULD NOT FUNCTION AS AN OFFICIAL OR STAFF PERSONNEL ON THE BOARD BUT RATHER, SERVE AS A BRIDGE ON MATTERS THAT NEED THE ATTENTION OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER,

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