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Colloquy concerning the transport of chemical weapons to Johnston Atoll in the fiscal year 1992 DOD Appropriations bill

Senator Daniel K. Akaka Papers
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Daniel K. Akaka

COLLOQUY CONCERNING THE TRANSPORT OF
CHEMICAL WEAPONS TO JOHNSTON ATOLL
IN THE FISCAL YEAR 1992 DOD APPROPRIATIONS BILL
Senator Daniel K. Akaka
Senator Daniel K. Inouye

SENATOR AKAKA: Mr. President, I would like to commend my colleague, Senator Inouye, for his leadership in bringing forth this legislation we are considering today.

If I may, I would like to direct a question to the distinguished floor manager on an issue which is of utmost importance to the State of Hawaii and the Pacific.

As the senior Senator from Hawaii knows, the transport of chemical weapons to Johnston Atoll has raised great concerns in the Pacific. Last year, we worked together to protect the Pacific people and our environment by including a provision in the fiscal year 1991 DOD Appropriations bill which prohibited future shipment of chemical munitions to Johnston Atoll. In addition, the bill restricted further studies on the transport and destruction of chemical weapons stored in the continental United States.

Mr. President, as the Senator is well aware, this concern is raised each time there is a decision to destroy additional chemical weapons. When the United Nations Security Council issued its cease-fire agreement calling for the destruction of all Iraqi chemical and biological weapons, the people of the Pacific held their breath in fearful anticipation that their home would become the world's chemical weapons incinerator. However, we were protected by the provisions which we passed last year.

Unfortunately, the House has included a provision in the Defense Authorization bill which seeks to once again require the Army to reconsider its decision where to destroy U.S. chemical munitions.

Mr. President, I would ask my dear friend and colleague whether provisions to ensure the safety of the Pacific have been included in the Committee bill.

SENATOR INOUYE: Mr. President, I am fully aware of the concerns raised by my friend from Hawaii. I want to assure him that the Committee has included provisions which protect the Pacific from future shipments of chemical weapons and prohibits further studies regarding the transport and destruction of chemical munitions stored in the continental United States.

The Committee provisions reaffirm the intent of the Department of Defense to destroy our chemical munitions in the safest manner possible and will block any effort to derail the Army's chemical demilitarization program.

SENATOR AKAKA: I appreciate the concern expressed by the distinguished Senator and am pleased by his reply. I wish to express my heartfelt mahalo to him for his efforts in this matter.

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