Nuclear bomb blast site leaking radiation

A giant concrete dome filled with nuclear waste is leaking radiation. Built on a remote Pacific island in the late 1970s to contain the detritus from numerous U.S. nuclear bomb tests, it is succumbing to weathering

OPERATION HARDTACK

Seventh of eight Cold War operations in Pacific Proving Grounds comprising 35 nuclear bomb tests

PACIFIC PROVING GROUNDS

■ 1946-1962: Eight operations. totalling 105 nuclear bomb explosions. carried out in Pacific Ocean

MARSHALL ISLANDS

_ Bikini Atoll

Majuro 🔳 🦫

250km

150 miles

Cactus Dome

BUNIT ISLAND

Enewetak Atoll

May 5, 1958: 18-kiloton "Cactus" nuclear bomb detonated on Enewetak Atoll

CACTUS DOME

■ 1977-1979: U.S. military attempts to decontaminate radioactive islands

Enewetak Atoll MARSHALL ISLANDS

Pacific Ocean

Australia

2009: Major storm carves sea

- channel up to edge of dome
- 2013: U.S. government report says soil around dome more contaminated than its contents
- Today: Scientists fear typhoon or storm surge could crack dome open

73,000m3 of contaminated soil and debris collected, mixed with cement and buried under concrete dome in 9m-deep Cactus blast crater

Sources: Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, American Chemical Society, Atlas Obscura © GRAPHIC NEWS Pictures: National Nuclear Security Administration, Getty Images, Google Maps