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PRIORITY

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Info:

Re: Marshallese Petition (URTEL 694)

799.021
5-5-54 - 11/10/54

If you perceive no objection, it is suggested that USUN issue a statement simultaneously with the release of the petition, based on the following text which has been drafted and approved by AEC and the Depts of Defense, Interior and State:

The United States Government greatly regrets the effects which the recent thermonuclear tests in the Pacific Proving Grounds appear to have had on certain of the inhabitants of the Marshall Islands, as described in the petition to the United Nations. That any of the inhabitants of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands should have suffered in the slightest from the effects of these tests is a matter of concern to the American people and Government. I can assure them, as well as the Members of the United Nations, that the authorities in charge are doing everything possible to prevent any recurrence. Specifically, the 236 inhabitants who, because of a windshift, were within the area affected by a fall-out, remain under observation and any of them who may need it will receive the best medical attention. They and the American personnel of the group taking part in the test who were also exposed to the fall-out from the March 1st test were immediately provided with identical medical

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UNA:UND:BGerig:mce
CC:Strong:wh 5/6/54

Telegraphic transmission and classification approved by:

UND - Benjamin Gerig

Clearances: in draft with:

- S/AE - Mr. Spiegel
- AEC - Mr. Donkin
- UNP - Mr. Meyers
- UNA - Mr. Fierst
- Mr. Deming
- FE - Miss Bacon
- Interior Mr. Yeomans
- Defense - Mr. Schooley
- U/OC - Mr. Radius

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medical treatment. As soon as it was apparent that these people were exposed to fall-out, they were evacuated to the U.S. Naval Station at Kwajalein, where care was immediately provided by the U.S. Navy. In addition, a team composed of medical experts from the Atomic Energy Commission, U.S. Navy and Army, was promptly formed and sent to the area, to assure that all available medical attention and care for the personal well-being of these people were provided. The services of the American Red Cross office at Kwajalein were supplied in furthering the comfort of all. I am informed that there is no medical reason to expect any permanent after-effects on their general health, due to the fall-out.

While it is impossible at this time to assure the petitioners that their first request will be met, namely, that "all experiments with lethal weapons within this area be immediately ceased," I can say that, as the petitioners rightly imply, the United States would not be conducting such tests if it had not been determined, after very careful study, that they were required in the interests of general peace and security.

The selection of testing sites in this particular area was made after careful examination of the alternative possibilities and in an effort to insure that the tests were carried out with least possible danger.

The United States Government considers the requests and the suggestions of the petitioners eminently reasonable and valuable. The restraint and moderation with which they have been put forward cannot but elicit the admiration and sympathy of all concerned.

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the United States

As suggested, ~~the~~ Government is taking and will continue to take "all possible precautionary measures . . . before such weapons are exploded". It also agrees that "all people in the area be instructed in safety measures." Further, it is reasonable and right, as the petitioners suggest, that any Marshallese citizens who are removed as a result of test activities, will be re-established in their original habitat in such a way that no financial loss would be involved to those so moved; also, that instruction be given to Marshallese medical practitioners and health aides which will be useful in detecting dangers and avoiding harm.

The United States

~~the~~ Government, and the officers immediately concerned with the administration of the territory, greatly appreciate the words of commendation of the petitioners with respect to the way the territory is being administered.

The welfare of the inhabitants has been the constant concern of the Government, and particularly of the High Commissioner, who will continue to spare no effort necessary to give effect to the trusteeship agreement.

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(D.S.)

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