103

STANDARD FORM NO. 64

400040

Office Memorandum UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

TO : Those Listed Below

DATE: June 1, 1954

FROM : Rodney Southwick, Acting Chief
Public Information Service

SUBJECT: A.P. STORY ON MARSHALLESE NATIVES

SYMBOL: ISP:RLS

The attached material has been submitted by the Associated Press for AEC review prior to publication. The stories were written by Bill Waugh, AP's Honolulu correspondent, after visits to Kwajalein and Majuro and discussions with Trust Territory officials, natives of Rongelap and Utirik, General Clarkson, and members of medical units at Kwajalein.

Request you telephone your comments by close of business today, if possible so we may get the material cleared through the General Manager's office and returned to Associated Press.

Attachment:
4 articles by Bill Waugh

CONFIRMED TO BE UNCLASSIFIED
AUTHORITY: DOE-DPC
BY ED SULLIVAN, DATE: 12/20/84

Addressees:
Dr. J. C. Bugher, Dir., Div. of Biology and Medicine
Brig. Gen. K. E. Fields, Dir., Div. of Military Application
John Hall, Chief, Office of Special Projects (3 copies)

and I, p-3 - middle - last para is a false statement. Trust territory personnel advised Ambr. C was guided entirely by Trust territory personnel. Radio-activity /vs FL could not have caused the yellow-orange.

SPECIAL SERVICE

5000773

MILITARY RESEARCH & APPL.

[redacted]

Kwajalein May 28 (AP). Shrewd Marshall Island leaders believe their protest to the United Nations against American hydrogen bomb experiements put a whip in their hand and they don't intend to lay it down. Their people are scared. The natives of Rongelap and Utirik Atolls were endangered by the March 1 hydrogen bomb blast and many were injured. Natives of Bikini and Eniwetok were uprooted from their home Atolls in 1946-47 and have little hopes of regaining them. I talked to the Marshallese who drafted the protest which went direct to the United Nations. They recognize that it might give Russia some political ammunition in the June session of the United Nations, that it might hurt close American friends in the Trust Territory, Civil Administration of the Island chain. They say they will not budge from their stand as stated in their petition. Overtures already have been made through High Commissioner Frank Midkiff to the Marshallese. In a quick trip here last week Midkiff suggested that they send word to United Nations delegate Henry Cabot Lodge Junior that "we are sure everything is being done that is necessary for our welfare."

"Fluent, English speaking Dwight Heine, Superintendent of Marshall Island intermediary schools and leader of the petition, told me: 'some people think we are naive children of the tropics. We are not as naive as they think. We will send Ambassador Lodge a reply. It will be polite but we will not send anything like has been suggested to us.' There is no doubt — among Marshallese or Americans on the scene — that the United States Government has gone allout to help the 82 natives from Rongelap and the 154 from Utirik. They have had the finest medical care. They have been adequately fed and sheltered. They have been compensated for lost ~~fmrs~~ Copra crops. Utiriks 154 inhabitants left

CLASSIFICATION CANCELLED
AUTHORITY DOE/DPC
BY 335 12/28/74

5000774 more [redacted]

66

today for their home Atoll. They took with them from Kwajalein 100 tons of bounty. Rongelap people will not be able to return to their homes for a year. Nearly every one in this village suffered injury from the fallout from the Hydrogen bomb cloud. Almost all have recovered. They will be removed in early June to Ejit in the Majuro Atoll.

Ejit is a 14 acre lush Island. On it the AEC is building a complete village. The United States will provide for them throughout their stay there.

But John Anjun, 30 year old Magistrate and leader of Rongelap, said in an interview:

'My people don't feel good about not going home. We fear we may have fate of Bikini."

The Bikinians, Heine said, "were given a raw deal."

A lagoon people, the 200 Bikinians were bounced from island to island until finally put on isolated Kili—an island which many months of the year is inaccessible because of heavy surf.

Heine and several Americans in the trust territory said the Bikinians are not happy as they feel like they have been put in jail.

The petition was signed by the Holdover Committee of the Marshall Island Congress. The 11 man committee is empowered to act for the Congress in between sessions. It is made up of 6 from the Assembly and 5 from the House of Irouj (Lords).

Heine, Member and spokesman for the Committee, steadfastly denies that any American knew or took part in drafting the petition to the United Nations. He said: "We spent a ~~month~~ month working on it. We purposely did not let

more

[redacted]

5000775

Mister Neas (Acting District Administrator Maynard Neas) or others (in the Trust Territory) know about it. We were afraid they would get in trouble."

The petition was finished and ready for mailing April 20 but Heine said he waited until April 22, the day xxx a plane was due, to drop it in the mailbox. He said he planned to register it but arrived at the Post Office too late.

Postmistress Irene Records did not recall the letter but said she remembered that Heine had been in and inquired about registering a letter.

Heine said he also sent a copy of the petition with a letter to the "editor of the Washington Post." The letter said in part: "You may be interested to know that yours is the only publication to which we are sending such a copy. We have chosen you simply because we understand your paper to be a fair and reliable one of national standing."

There was 1 other Marshallese petition leave the Island. It was circulated by school children and sent to Midkiff. The language was much milder than the one sent to the United Nations. Students and all Marshallese and American teachers signed it.

The latter part of March a doctor arrived at Majuro and told Neas they would have to get about 100 blood samples from Marshallese to use as a yard-stick in treatment of the injured natives.

Neas said the official had no intention of giving the natives an explanation. He protested to the official.

The medical group arrived April 5, met with the natives to give them an explanation NEAS requested and the next day the samples were obtained.

5000776

more [redacted]

 [redacted]

Three days before the medical group arrived, Neas held a weekly staff meeting with department heads and Marshallese leaders. The question arose about sending a petition to the high commissioner signed by both Trust Territory employees and Marshallese.

Neas said he thought this was improper, but told the Americans if they wanted they should write individual letters to Midkiff. He continued:

"I, for one, did. I wrote to the high commissioner and noted the feeling of the people (about the H-bomb). For instance 1 Marshallese said at the meeting 'What are you Americans trying to do. Open up the gates of Hell'. I could tell that there was resentment and fear."

Heine was on a Trust Territory ship at Kwajalein the day of the hydrogen explosion. He said:

"We saw the flash first. It shook the ship. Water around the ship seemed to shake. There were several explosions that went wham wham."

The same day the ship pulled out and arrived the next day at Uterik.

"We were met by many canoes," Heine added. "The first question they asked was 'Is there war on.'

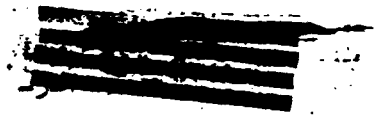
"The people said they saw something like flames or shooting stars but too low to be shooting stars. They said children cried and hid in the brush."

Hein said that on the way back to Majuro he began working on the idea of a protest. He did not learn until his arrival at Majuro that the 2 atolls had been contaminated.

Heine and other members of the Holdover Committee began work immediately. On April 5 Neas met with the Marshallese to discuss a copra tax. After he had left, Heine said, he told the Marshallese to remain and they finalized plans for the petition.

5000777

(more) [redacted]



"We are a small people -- only 11,000 of us," he said. "and the only way to get people to pay attention is when we call loud."

"We felt the American people were bound to hear about it (the petition). We have faith they (Americans) will do something about it."

Last year the United States sent 2 Marshallese to the United Nations. This year, Heine said, the State Department said there were no funds for such a trip.

He commented:

"It is our desire to have a representative there. It would be advantageous to the United States especially if Russia accuses America of using our people like guinea pigs for experiments. Who could say it isn't so. After all we are an ally and not an enemy. But apparently they think these naive people might cause embarrassment."

Last year Mrs. Dorothy Kabua, a queen in the Majuro Atoll, and her son, Amata Kabua, went to the United Nations. The son presently is attending Mauna Loa College on Maui Territory Hawaii.

Mrs. Kabua was present with Heine during the interview. Others were Atlan Anien, speaker of the Assembly, and Kabua Kabua, president of the House of Irouj (Lords).

The Marshallese are practical people. They recognize that the nuclear tests might have to continue. If this is the case, said Heine, "our petition outlines satisfactory alternatives."

5000778

[redacted]

Rongelap May 29 (AP) The 82 Rongelap natives showered by radioactive ash from the March 1 hydrogen bomb explosion call themselves "the poisoned people." John Anjin, 30 year old leader of the Rongelap people, said the radioactive ash rained down on his people for 24 hours. "It looked like salt," he said in an interview. "It came down like a light rain. You could feel it strike your skin. It burned when it touched" unlike the people of Utirik who thought a war had started, Anjin said his people knew what had taken place. He explained "I have seen (explosions) many times before." The March 1 explosion he said was the biggest he had ever witnessed. Asked to describe what he saw he said through a native interpreter: "First saw light then the smoke. Smoke went up up and right through clouds. Later heard and felt blast. Wind so strong some people fell down. It banged doors," I talked to Anjin and other Rongelap natives in the Mess Hall they are using here on Ebenjelein until they are taken to Ejit in the Majuro Atoll. They will remain at Ejit for 1 year until their home Atoll is safe. The Atomic Energy Commission is building a completely new village for them at Ejit. The Marshalloese are very friendly people. When I arrived at the Mess Hall everyone there—from preschool age children to old women—came over and shook hands.

Sitting across the table from me was 12 year old Keiko Taptali who giggled and talked throughout the interview. The Marshalloese people are movie fans. Taptali said her favorite actor was Joe Louis. "He knows lot of boxing. I like fight." Hillbilly and Hawaiian music, they said, were their favorites. Western movies also are top with them. One old timer said of movies: "Like boom boom burrr kiss kiss." In talking to the Rongelap people you really could not help but feel a certain amount of sadness among them. Asked how the people

5000779

[redacted]

felt about being moved to another Atoll, Anjin said: "They do not feel good about it. Fear may have fate of Bikini." The Bikini people have been moved from island to island are are now on isolated Ebii. Everyone I have talked to say the Bikinians are extremely unhappy about their loss. All but 18 of the Rongelap people suffered some injury from the radioactive ash. Many of the burns were only slight. That more serious injury did not occur was largely due to the work of 29 year old Jabro, the Rongelap medical aide. Jabro said the next morning he noticed that "the fresh water in containers outside turned yellow-bright yellow. I told people not to use."

[redacted]

5000780

[redacted]

A seaplane landed at the atoll the second day after the blast and the next day a destroyer arrived at the scene to evacuate the people. "We started taking showers then," Jabwe said. Jabwe said there was no panic although "Some were frightened. By night children were crying. Many (adults) were sick." It was about 7 days after the exposure that some natives began losing their hair. I saw several who had. Nearly all of them were getting their hair back. One fellow wore a red and white baseball cap continuously. Kathleen Enit, a Marshallese nurse from Majuro who was acting as interpreter, confided: "He lost all his hair." Asked how his people felt about their experience, Anjin paused and then very solemnly replied: "There is anger among some people. I think it will disappear if we get back home. They trust the American people. I like American people." The Rongelap leader said that his people had been well taken care of since their arrival. They have had all the food, clothing, medical care and entertainment they need. Jabwe at this point said "I want to thank the Americans for the immediate care they gave us."

Nurse Enit said "Almost all the people are cured." I did see one man 39 year old Tima Maril who still had a bad radioactive burn on the [illegible] of his right ear. It was a livid red. He said it "burned and itched" continuously. Tima was fishing in a canoe when the fallout occurred. Thirteen Rongelap men left yesterday aboard an LST with the Utirik people. They will go to Rongelap to recover some possessions left behind. The first will return to Majaleim and then the LST will return to Majaleim and then take the entire group to Ejit. I asked the Anjin and his group if there was any message he or any of his people would like to send to the American people. Anjin thought for a long time and said no. But 30-year old Paul Kaijiman spoke up in Marshallese and said: "Please tell them not to do

5000781

(more) [redacted]

the same thing again — throw the bomb. We didn't do anything wrong. We didn't hurt them." As I got up to leave, each of the natives present came over and shook hands.

- 30 -

[redacted]

5000782

Majuro, Marshall Islands, May 29 (AP) - Two Marshallese school teachers were the chief drafters of a petition to the UN complaining about hydrogen bomb experiments in their homeland. The pair, Dwight Heine and Atlan Anien, emphatically deny any American knowingly assisted them. "Some did help but they did not know it," Heine said in an interview. "We asked many questions of Americans. We asked who one would write to and how it would be addressed but we did not tell them what we were going to do. We also read UN pamphlets and saw how petitions appearing in them were worded." Heine said two Americans saw an early draft of the petition but it carried no heading. He said one, Keith Smith, American manager for Marshallese Trading Company, said "Who wrote it? It is beautifully written." "It taxed me and Atlan to write it," Heine continued. "We worked every day for nearly a month. We would meet with other Marshallese and put down their ideas. Then we would make a rough draft. "I thought we had too many dangers in it. So I looked through the dictionary and decided on lethal. I also found word circumvent as a substitute for prevent." Heine, whose grandfather was German, is bigger than most Marshallese. He is 35 years old, has dark skin and bushy hair. He is superintendent of the Marshall Island schools.

Heine probably is one of the best educated Marshallese. He is the spokesman between the people and Americans. Heine started school in 1928 at the Protestant Jesuit Mission School. In 1936 he went to a mission junior high at Kusaie. When the Americans moved into the Marshalls during World War II he worked for the U.S. Navy as a guide and interpreter. Between 1948 and 1950 he attended the University of Hawaii in Honolulu. Last year he travelled for 3 months in New Zealand, Samoa and Fiji on a UNESCO fellowship. Heine has a sense of humor and timing. He told this story of an American Congressman who visited Majuro and spoke to the people.

000783

(more)

[redacted]

He related: "I was interpreting. The Congressman threw his arms out and said we are a Christian people. You are a Christian people. We want to save the world from Communism. We do not want you people to slip behind the Iron Curtain." When I said Iron Curtain the Marshallese looked at each and whispered Iron Curtain. What is that I was really stuck for explaining it. The word Communism means nothing to the people. I now use the word Russia for Communism. "For instance during your Smith Act trials I'd say Russia explain that these people were trying to steal secrets from American and give them to Russia."

Present with Heine and Anien were Kabuakabua, district judge and president of the House of Irouj, and Doro Sykabua, Queen of the Majuro Atoll and member of the House of Irouj. They gave the impression that they were as concerned over the loss of land as they were about the hydrogen tests. Dorothy Kabua, 55-year-old mother of 4 sons, is a daughter-in-law of a late chief of the Bikini people. Heine said that the Bikini people had never been paid for the Lagoon. Asked how much she would estimate the Lagoon was worth, Dorothy Kabua replied in Marshallese. Heine tried to give a literal reply. She said, "Hard estimate. Islands grow coconuts, bread fruit. The reef has fish. The island home for birds. Money spent use up gone. Lagoon gives many, many years life." Dorothy Kabua went to the U.N. last year. She is a short stocky woman, wears glasses and at the time I was talking to her was wearing a light print dress. Asked of her trip to New York she said she went to a 3-D movie. "It was a picture of a boat. It looked like it was coming out on us. It bounced up and down so much I got seasick and had to leave," she related and then laughed heartily.

Heine, whose parents and grandparents were killed by the Japanese, said "We (Marshallese) like the Americans. We petitioned Congress with 2,000 names to have you (U.S.) stay here." If Heine or his fmati wordees

5000784

[redacted]

have my regret about the petition sent to the U.N. it is that it might boomerang and hurt the trust territory people. "There was a reason we did not have Americans in on the petition. They are very nice. We did not want them to get in trouble," he explained. Later Heine came to me and said: "We want Mr. (Maynard) Neas (Acting District Administrator) to be District Administrator. If in any way our petition implies lack of confidence in him or the Trust Territory Government say that it is not not so." Heine said that "Everyone (Americans in the Marshalls) sympathize with us. They felt a responsibility for what happened." That is the concensus of what I found in talking to the Americans on the island. Neas, in commenting on the accident, said: "I believe officials of the nuclear tests should have given adequate and timely information to the natives so they could protect themselves. To my knowledge this was not done."

Bob L. Omis, missionary for the American Board of Commissioners of Foreign Mission, Boston, is on Majuro translating the Bible for the deeply religious Marshallese. He made this comment on the petition: "I think I approve it. Dwight (Heine) is smart. It was a sensible way to handle it as it did not involve (U.S.) Government people. It will help the people here get national consciousness." Doctor Dunham Kirkham of Avoca, New York, a former Army doctor and now the Trust Territory doctor for the Marshall Islands, said of the incident: "It's tough on these people. They seem a little distrustful of our promises. They are thinking of Bikini." Another Trust Territory official who asked that his name not be used said "They're taking a damn dim view of being yanked from one island to another." There seemed to be some concern among the Americans that they too had been kept in the dark about the explosions. One woman said that nearly every American received inquiries about their welfare after

[redacted]

announcement of the explosion. She said her son wrote: "What's going on out there? I don't want radio active parents."

[redacted]

Kwajalein May 30 (AP). The United States pulled all stops in giving aid to 236 Marshallese sprinkled by radioactive ash from the March 1 hydrogen test.

For nearly 10 days I have had a free hand at Kwajalein and Majuro in talking to injured Marshallese, their leaders, military men and Joint Task Force Seven personnel which ran the hydrogen tests this year.

There has been no pressure or coercion on myself or the people I interviewed. All spoke frankly. I came away with this opinion:

The AEC, the Joint Task Force, the Trust Territory and the Kwajalein Naval Air Station under command of Rear Admiral R. S. Clarke did a magnificent job in meeting this unforseen near tragedy.

The question arises why wasn't this possibility forseen. Actually it was, and was quickly detected. Two things contributed to the incident. First, As AEC Chairman Lewis L. Strauss announced the "detonation was larger than expected." It spread over a much wider area as result. Even this would have caused no trouble but a sudden unforeseen shift in high altitude winds carried it over three inhabited ~~it~~ islands.

Since the March 1 detonation, the AEC has announced two additional tests. The AEC and Department of Defense announced on May 13 that the 1954 tests were concluded.

(more)

5000787

[redacted]

~~(Note -- land paragraphs not received. They will be forwarded when received.)~~

On subsequent shots in the test series no significant fallout on inhabited areas occurred. The March 1 fallout necessitated the evacuation of eighty-two Rongelap natives, who had the most serious burns, 154 from Utirik and 28 U.S. personnel from Rongerik. There were no deaths and none of the people will die from the experience, one officer told me. Clarkson got his first tip that something had gone awry from weatherman on the night of March 1. The next day planes landed at Rongelap and Utirik and scientists decided that natives and military personnel should be evacuated immediately. High speed destroyer went into action and evacuated all the people. The evacuation was completed in two days and the affected people were on Kwajalein receiving medical assistance.

[redacted]

Top Naval Medical Research Institute Medical Teams were flown to Kwajalein from Bethesda, Maryland. They arrived here March 8. The medical unit returned to the US from Kwajalein early in May when it became evident that all exposed natives and US personnel would recover without serious consequences. The Americans were transferred to Tripler Army Hospital in Honolulu and since they have been returned to the U.S. to duty with their parent organization.

The decision to allow the Utirik people to return to their island immediately and the need to find a temporary home for the Rongelap people for one year was made in April. A survey party visited the two Atolls. It consisted of representatives from Joint Task Force Seven; Commander in Chief, Pacific Fleet; High Commissioner, Trust Territory of Pacific Islands; the Atomic Energy Commission Engineer Contractors (Holmes & Narver) and the native Magistrates of Rongelap and

(more)

[redacted]

5000788

QC

Utirik. The Utirik people will be furnished adequate water and food supplies by the U. S. For the next year the Rongelap people will live on Ejit in the Majuro Atoll. They will leave for their new homes the first week in June.

The AEC Contractors have constructed an entirely new village of 27 building There will be 16 homes with an overall measurement of 16 by 32. There will be a Mess Hall, Cook Shack, Boathouse, School and Dispensary, four latrines and two bath houses and a 10,000 gallon water storage system. Thomas A. Hardison, AEC resident Engineer and Personal Representative of Clarkson, visited Ejit with me. He said the natives will be permitted to divide the homes as they see fit. Materials and tools for setting up rooms will be left for this work.

The Rongelap natives will be returned to their homes as soon as possible and they will be furnished, as in the case of the Utirik natives, water and food supplies. Americans in the area felt a personal responsibility for the natives brought to Kwajalein. They showered them with kindness. Mrs. Clarke, wife of the commanding officer, rallied wives of Naval personnel in a clothing drive for the native women and children. Actually on a station like Kwajalein no one has surplus clothes, but Mrs. Clarke and the other wives gathered more than enough for the Marshallese. No one asked them to do it. The need was there and they tackled the job. All the natives I have talked to have been emphatic that their treatment has been the best. They all say there has been sufficient medical care, housing, clothing and food. The Marshallese medical aide on Rongelap volunteered this during an interview. I want to thank the American people for the quick medical care.

The grateful Rongelap group past week entertained Admiral and Mrs. Clarke.

(more)

5000789

 [redacted]

They did native dances, sang their native songs and showered Mrs. Clarke with native jewelry.

That the medical care was successful was demonstrated to me by the people who suffered burns. I talked to many who had been burned but there were no visible scars. I saw only one man who still had an open wound on the back side of his right ear. In all cases where people lost their hair it is now growing again. The people from Utirik, when it was determined there were no serious injuries among them, were moved to Ebeye, a small Island connected with Kwajalein by a roof. I t untoted them prepare to leave for their home. They had been living in a tent city. They were taking it back with them on the ~~2nd~~ LST 1157.

The natives and their personal belongings were brought to the LST by landing craft. As they were walking to it from the smaller max craft, a salty boatswain mate barked: "All right, let's get some sumbbdies out there to help these old folks." The sailors swarmed onto the smaller vessel and literally carried aboard some of the aged, feebler natives. Aboard already was nearly 100 tons of cargo for the Utirik natives to take home.

The natives were assigned living quarters in one portion of the ship.

Travelling with them were Jack Tobin, Marshallese speaking anthropologist for the Trust Territory," Dr. S. H. Riesenberg, staff anthropologist who is on leave from the University of Hawaii; and Marion Wilds, District Administrat Representative for the Trust Territory on Ebeye.

(more)

5000790

[redacted]

-4-

Lt. Comdr. Richard L. Scott, Jr., skipper of the LST had arranged for an ship cooks to feed the natives during their probable two or three day stay aboard ship. The natives, he said, would use the crew mess hall and would in addition to that the crew mess had have sufficient fish and rice, two main items in the Marshallese diet.

Unloading the 100 tons of cargo was going to present a problem. The Ulithi Lagoon is studded with coral heads, making it unsafe for a ship that size to enter. Lt. Comdr. Joseph W. Tilford, executive officer, said the cargo would be loaded in small boats and then taken on a seven mile run to their home island.

"From there, he said, we have problems. We can't get the boats any closer than about 35 yards of the beach. We will have to use block and tackle and winch the stuff out of the boats."

Before the natives will be put ashore the ship will send a team of sailors ashore to make sure it is safe.

When the natives pulled out they left behind dogs, pigs, and chickens. Trust Territory and military people who have visited the islands since say that the dogs have killed off the chickens and reverted to the wild.

They figure that starvation probably has caused a war between the hungry dogs and pigs. All will be destroyed as a safety precaution.

The livestock later will be replaced by the ASP.

Before it returns to Majuro the LST will go to Tongolap . There it will let 13 natives go ashore to recover some personal property. The LST also will

(more) [redacted]

5000791

23

[redacted]

pick up two schooners belonging to the Rongelap people and transport them to Ebit.

After talking to the Marshallese I feel that they are not as concerned with the explosions as they are that the tests might ~~and~~ force them to lose their home lagoons. The fate of the Bikinians, evicted in 1946 and now on isolated Kili, stands like a ghost over these people.

Find a solution to their lot and what dissension has risen here against the tests will disappear. The Marshallese like Americans, believe me.

-30-

[redacted]

5000792