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10 10 1954

Honorable Herbert B. Loper
Chairman, Military Liaison Committee
to the Atomic Energy Commission

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Dear General Loper:

The Atomic Energy Commission is considering the occupancy and use of Taongi Atoll for the conduct of nuclear experiments. The use of Taongi as a firing site in addition to Eniwetok and Bikini has certain very desirable features. From the standpoint of fallout, Taongi is a safer place to detonate high yield devices than either Bikini or Eniwetok. The greater distances from Taongi to the inhabited areas of the Marshall Islands and its superior position with respect to direction from these areas are distinct advantages and give increased assurance against the repetition of fallout incidents such as that which occurred in March 1954. At the same time the greater ease of firing large shots from Taongi will have advantages in reducing the length of a test operation. It is estimated that Operation HARDTACK as presently planned would probably be shortened by about three weeks if Taongi is used, and in addition Taongi may be the only place where it is feasible to test any of the very large yield weapons.

It is planned that all firings at Taongi would be barge shots and all diagnostic data normally taken from land would be secured from a ship. The use of Taongi Atoll as an additional test site during Operation HARDTACK would require some additional military support. The support requirements have been discussed with the JTF-7 staff.

If Taongi is to be used there must of necessity be coordination with the Departments of State and Interior. After concurrence by these agencies we would request the President to close Taongi Atoll for security reasons and notify the Security Council of the United Nations, as was done in the case of Eniwetok and Bikini.

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5-10-57

Honorable Herbert B. Loper

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We would appreciate as early as possible a Department of Defense opinion as to the desirability of such use of Taongi and a statement as to its ability to support, and concurrence with the arrangements for, this additional site.

Sincerely yours,

Herbert B. Loper

General Manager

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