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DOE/OFFICE OF DECLASSIFICATION
P. GROVES, A.D.C. DATE:

By Groves 08-29-97
July 23, 1954

Dear Mr. Secretary:

From the point of view of the United States the most important item on the agenda of the recently concluded Fourteenth Session of the Trusteeship Council was the petition of the Marshallese people protesting the use of their islands, which are among the Pacific islands administered by the United States under a Trusteeship Agreement with the United Nations, as a proving ground for nuclear weapons. In the Council the United States secured the adoption by a vote of 9-3 (USSR, Syria, India) of a resolution tacitly approving our continuing such tests in the Territory. A Soviet resolution which would have recommended that we discontinue the tests, as well as an Indian resolution which would have sought an advisory opinion from the International Court of Justice on the legality of conducting such tests in the Trust Territory, were both decisively defeated.

However, the Trusteeship Council's action in no sense concludes the matter. The Indian Delegation has stated that it will place an item on the agenda of the Ninth General Assembly whereby the Assembly would seek the Court's opinion on the legality of our using the Trust Territory for these tests. Furthermore, information on the consequences of the radioactive fall-out after the test of March 1, 1954, which caused damage to the health and property of certain inhabitants of the Trust Territory outside the closed area, will have to be included in the United States report to the United Nations on its administration of the Trust Territory for the period July 1, 1953 - June 30, 1954.

It is important, therefore, that the appropriate branches of the Government realize that this problem is a continuing one which will require careful consideration both immediately and in the future. I should like to emphasize two aspects of the problem which must be followed up promptly and dealt with satisfactorily if we are to minimize possible future repercussions of this issue that could be damaging to United States interests.

First of all, we cannot afford a recurrence of the accident which caused injury to a number of Marshallese as well as Americans and Japanese. We have formally and publicly undertaken to take every precaution against recurrence of this type of disaster. Should there be a repetition of the accident, we might have difficulty in obtaining the support of even our closest Allies in the United Nations in our attempt to justify the continuation of nuclear experiments in the Trust Territory and in allaying criticisms of this Government for the additional harm which they would have caused. Moreover, there would probably be considerable criticism in this country as well.

The second important matter relates to our undertakings to compensate adequately the peoples of the Trust Territory who as a result of nuclear tests have suffered ill effects as regards their

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health, property or capacity to gain a livelihood. One aspect of this question relates to compensation due the Bikini people, who were removed from their home island in 1946. The slowness in making a settlement of the compensation promised these people is causing increasing criticism in the Trusteeship Council. This criticism is heightened by the fact that conditions on Kili Island where they have been resettled are not satisfactory to the Bikinians. Moreover, this is the second resettlement scheme that has proved unsatisfactory to them.

Finally, as a result of the injuries, damage and displacements caused by the hydrogen bomb tests, just compensation has been promised to the Rongelap and Uterik peoples affected. There is no doubt that attention will be focused in the Trusteeship Council next year on the question of whether just and prompt settlements have been made to these people. I urge that these settlements be worked out and made forthwith.

It is my duty to place on record the above problems and to suggest that all agencies of the Government concerned be made fully aware of the need for dealing with them promptly and effectively so that the United States will not be placed at a disadvantage in the United Nations on a matter vital to our security.

Sincerely yours,

Mason Sears
U. S. Representative in the
Trusteeship Council

The Honorable
John Foster Dulles,
Secretary of State.

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