



The fact that anyone was injured by the recent nuclear tests in the Pacific has caused the American people genuine and deep regret.

The U.S. Government considers the resulting petition of the Marshall Islanders to be both reasonable and helpful.

Why — it may be asked — should the homes of these people so far removed from international politics and the cold war become the site for such experiments?

The answer is that the Marshall Islands were selected only after the most careful examination of every possible alternative site.

The U.S. Government found that there is no other place in the world, over which the U.S. has jurisdiction, where experiments of this nature could be successfully conducted with less danger.

The question may also be asked whether the U.S. has the right to conduct such experiments in this area. The Trusteeship Agreement of 1947 which covers the Marshall Islands was predicated upon the fact that the UN clearly approved these islands as a strategic area in which atomic tests had already been held. Hence, from the very outset, it was clear that the right to close areas for security reasons anticipated closing them for atomic tests and the UN was so notified. Indeed such tests were conducted in 1948, 1951, 1952 as well as in 1954.

As to the question of continuing these experiments, which is also raised in the petition, the facts are unambiguously clear.

No one could reasonably contend that the Soviets should be the only nation to conduct nuclear experiments. At issue, therefore, is not the right to conduct these experiments. The question is whether the U.S. authorities in charge have exercised due precaution in looking after the safety and welfare of the islanders involved.

That is the essence of their petition and it is entirely justified.

To permit it to be continued would be to permit the people of the Marshall Islands to be subjected to the same risks that have already been suffered by the people of the Pacific Islands.

In reply, it can be categorically stated that no stone will be left unturned to safeguard the present and future well-being of the Islanders.

The U.S. Government is confident that future tests can be conducted without any untoward incidents.

And, finally, the U.S. Delegation is glad to report that all of the Marshall Islanders and the American military personnel who were exposed have now recovered.