

~~SECURITY INFORMATION~~
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TRUST TERRITORY OF THE PACIFIC ISLANDS
OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER

In reply refer to:

See HQD

April 1, 1952

Mr. James P. Davis, Director
Office of Territories
Department of the Interior
Washington 25, D. C.

Dear Mr. Davis:

Certain recent developments have once again brought to our attention the plight of the ex-Bikini people who now reside on Kili. When the field trip ship called at Kili in February on its regular quarterly tour of the southern section of the Marshallese District, the captain found it impossible either to load any coconuts or to land any food or medical supplies to satisfy the needs of the population. Inquiries concerning conditions on the island were made of two Kili men who were able to reach the ship by outrigger canoe. Their account made it appear necessary to land some supplies by any means possible. Accordingly, a food drop was organized in conjunction with the next logistic plane flight out of Majuro, and on February 28th approximately 1800 pounds of food were safely dropped on the Kili beach.

4 The resort to this means of supplying the needs of the Kili people highlights a problem which has long demanded attention and one which must be resolved by more realistic means. The ex-Bikini people have not adapted themselves to Kili very successfully. Although we have not been able to take steps to improve their lot, it has become increasingly evident to us that we cannot continue to treat them as a special group requiring special treatment on an emergency basis. Such treatment tends to generate in their minds an attitude of helplessness. In addition, we must admit that it is not a mark of good administrative procedure. We are therefore resolved, in their interests and ours, to find a more stable solution to the problem that these people present.

Our plan is to move the Kili people to an atoll somewhere in the Marshalls. They are accustomed to atoll life and not to the very different environment of their present location. They still have a very strong desire to return to Bikini, having never eliminated that possibility in their thinking. Any atoll, however, would be preferable to Kili, which has no lagoon and is wave-swept on all sides for three to four months of each year.

From NWRB-N

1159

DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY DECLASSIFICATION REVIEW	
SINGLE REVIEW AUTHORIZED BY: ASingelli 3-31-94	DETERMINATION (CIRCLE NUMBER(S))
REVIEWER (ADD): DC Little	1. CLASSIFICATION RETAINED
NAME: DATE: 3-31-94	2. CLASSIFICATION CHANGED TO:
	3. CONTAINS NO DOE CLASSIFIED INFO
	4. COORDINATE WITH:
	5. CLASSIFICATION CANCELLED
	6. CLASSIFIED INFO BRACKETED

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The purpose of the foregoing statements is to provide background for a request that your office discuss the problem of the Kili people with representatives of the Atomic Energy Commission. It is suggested that such a discussion might well proceed if necessary by two steps. First, it is desirable to know whether the Kili people can ever return to Bikini. It would help us to know the answer to this question so that we can give a prompt reply to the Kili people and plan for the future in a more confident manner ourselves. If the people know that they can some day return to Bikini, they will be willing to endure their present situation and we can plan an interim schedule of assistance for them. On the other hand, if the Atomic Energy Commission holds out no hope of a return, we hope to move them to another atoll if rights can be purchased from a Marshallese group with a surplus of land. If this is the alternative which we must adopt, we urge that you appeal to the Atomic Energy Commission for a sum of money to be used for this purpose, the basis for the request being that the Kili people have never been compensated for their land on Bikini. They have been provided certain materials and other assistance connected with their removal but no payment has been given them for their land. It would therefore seem appropriate for the Atomic Energy Commission to consider making some restitution for the land which it has taken.

We are attempting to settle upon some formula for estimating land values in the Marshalls, but as yet have not arrived at a reasonable basis for doing so. Consequently, we are not at the moment prepared to offer a monetary evaluation of the worth of Bikini to its former owners.

It is hoped that you concur with our thinking on this matter and will find it appropriate to discuss it with the Atomic Energy Commission. If further information is needed, we shall be glad to forward it.

Sincerely yours,

(Sgd.) J. A. MCCONNELL
Deputy High Commissioner

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