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BIKINI ATOLL ADDED TO ATOMIC
PROVING GROUND IN PACIFIC

Washington, April 2 -- To accommodate the rapidly expanding program of developing and testing new and improved nuclear weapons the United States Atomic Energy Commission is enlarging the Pacific Proving Ground in the Marshall Islands to include Bikini as well as Eniwetok Atoll. Bikini is 180 miles to the eastward of Eniwetok. Construction of technical facilities there will begin shortly.

Use of Bikini is necessary because of the limited size of Eniwetok, where tests were conducted last November. Eniwetok will be the headquarters and main operating base for the Proving Ground. Bikini and Eniwetok will remain under the civil jurisdiction of the Department of Interior. AEC uses the area under agreement with Interior.

Bikini was last used in 1946 for testing military effects of conventional atomic bombs. At that time its inhabitants were evacuated from the Atoll. After study of suitable alternative sites and consultations with the people, they were relocated on the island of Kili in the southern Marshall Islands. Since the 1946 tests, the Nevada Proving Ground of the Atomic Energy Commission has been established and is continuing in use for frequent tests, one series of which is now underway.

The United Nations is being notified by the Department of State that Bikini Atoll and its territorial waters have been declared closed for security reasons in accordance with the provisions of the Trusteeship Agreement between the United States and the Security Council of the United Nations.

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