

# France Builds

By JAMES BOYACK  
PAPEETE, Tahiti (UPI)—  
France is perhaps a year  
away from the first South  
Pacific testing of its nuclear  
weaponry, but already plans  
are being laid for the future  
of the romantic Tahitian  
Isles.

The concern for the future,  
while at the same time  
steaming full speed ahead  
on atomic test plans, was  
emphasized by French Min-  
ister of Defense Pierre

Messmer during his recent  
week-long visit to Papeete  
and neighboring atolls.

Although it had been ex-  
pected Messmer would  
choose the occasion of his  
visit to disclose the dates of  
the tests and their exact lo-  
cation, Messmer took another  
tack.

"WE PROMISE all safety  
to the Polynesians," said  
Messmer. He returned to the  
theme time after time,  
stressing that modern

## ★ *for N-Tests but Guards*

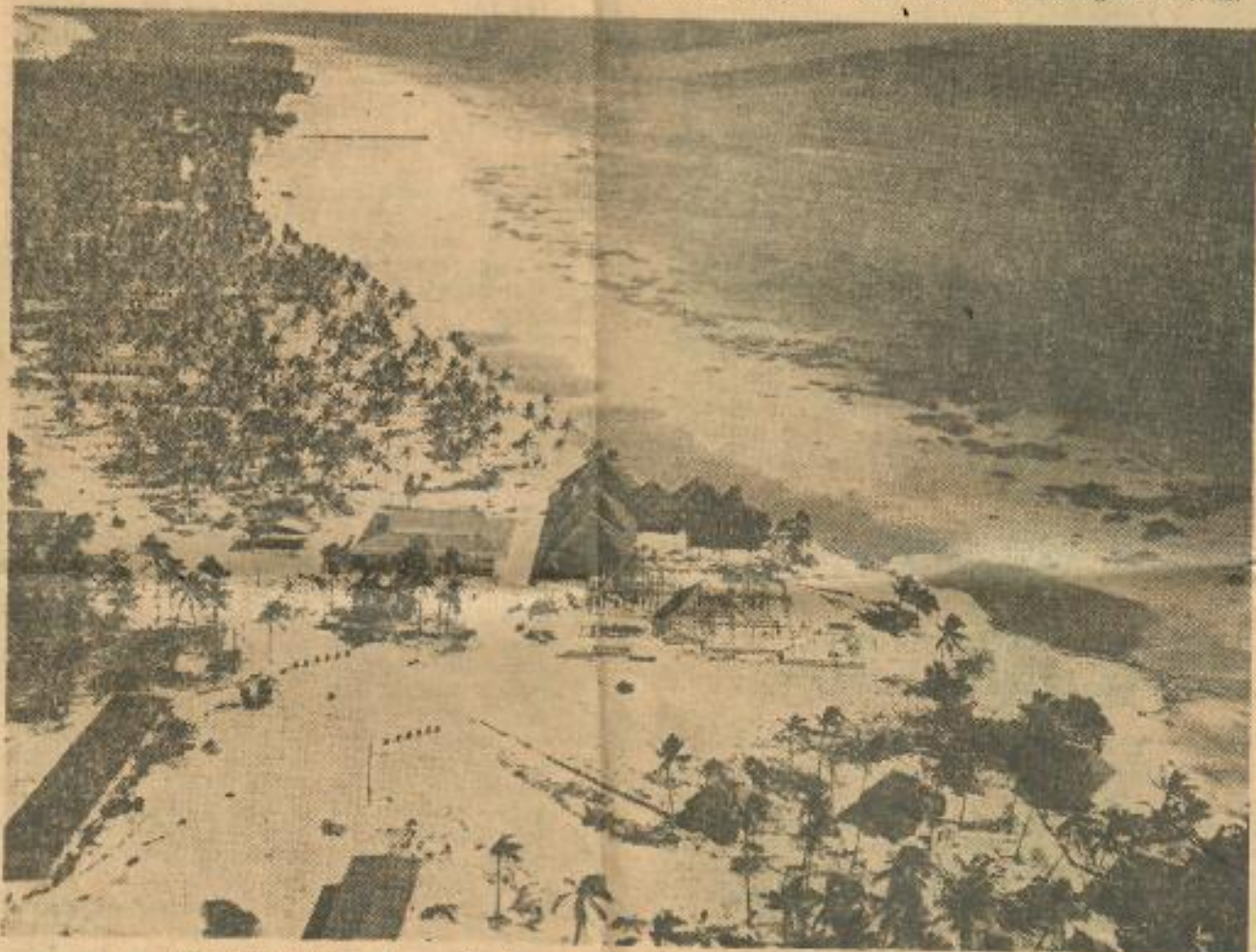
science has made it possible  
to predict "the exact fallout  
zone."

Messmer said the actual  
dates of the explosions, the

numbers and types of bombs  
that will be involved and the  
exact location of the blasts  
is still classified informa-  
tion.

He assured the local resi-  
dents that France would  
"program into Polynesia"  
economic stability once the  
military program was done.

Messmer, during his tour  
of French Polynesia, seemed  
intensely interested in the  
provisions his military men  
were making for the tests.



Hao Atoll, from here, said...



# Tahiti Future

He explored the central office building of the Centre Experimental de la Pacifique on his first day, tapping walls with his knuckles and making detailed investigations in the construction of modern tropical buildings.

On his second day in Tahiti, Messmer visited the military camp at Arue, where he joked with soldiers and civilians, then toured Taaoone and Mahina Technical Center, all new areas built to accommodate persons connected with the testing.

On Saturday the 19th, he flew to Moururoa, the most likely spot for the first bomb test. It is a tiny atoll 800 miles from Tahiti.

MESSMER spent the weekend at Moururoa, then flew to Hao, an atoll 300 miles away and the most populated island close to the first predicted testing place.

It is on Hao that those most immediately connected with the bomb's explosion have been living, and as the test date approaches the atoll will become even more crowded with nuclear experts.

The chief village on Hao, an S-shaped atoll with a few scattered coconut trees, is Otepa, where 190 persons lived at the end of 1963. It now has a population of more than 1,100. Three years ago, Hao had one delapidated car. Now it is abuzz with jeeps and heavy construction vehicles.

Messmer toured a new electrical center run by gas turbines and various military buildings, in one of which he held a briefing with military and government officials.

He also toured the new airstrip on Hao, which is used by planes gathering information on weather conditions in the vicinity of the test site to determine eventual fallout patterns.

Before leaving Tahiti, Messmer held a brief press conference at which he gave his assurances of safety to Polynesians, and then vacationed on Bora Bora for two days before returning to Paris to report to President Charles de Gaulle.

★ ★ ★

## The Bomb Has Changed Sleepy Isle

The London Observer

PAPEETE, Tahiti—The shadow of France's H-bomb lies heavy over Tahiti.

Only a few years ago, Papeete was a sleepy, down-at-heel port. Now it is going through an orgy of reconstruction and the girl watchers in waterfront cafes can hardly hear themselves compare vital statistics for the rumble of heavy military lorries.

French pop music blares from every jukebox. In the nightclubs sailors and legionnaires twist to modern jazz, while on the steps of the post office, on the hot, humid nights, whole families squat to watch television.

BUT NOT a single Tahitian talked to approves of President de Gaulle's bid to become the fourth member of the thermonuclear club.

Political leaders like John Teariki, who represents French Polynesia and its 85,000 people in the National Assembly in Paris, are profoundly resentful of the way De Gaulle has ridden roughshod over their protests.

Officials here won't say when the first hydrogen bomb will be exploded at the now evacuated atolls of Moururoa and Fangataufa, 775 miles southeast of Papeete, although the "coconut radio" says the first test will be in July.

DEFENSE Minister Pierre Messmer was here in late February to inspect the test sites and installations of the euphemistically named "Centre d'Experimentation du Pacifique."

No islander, he promised, would be exposed to danger, and fallout would be held to a safe level. He said the center opened a new "path to progress" for the people.