Paradise Gone Nuclear: The Long Term Effects of Nuclear Testing in French Polynesia

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Introduction
The sociopolitical and environmental effects of French colonization of French Polynesia with a focus on 20th century nuclear testing. Remote islands in French Polynesia were used for French nuclear tests in the 1960s and again in the 1990s. Tangible outcomes of the French nuclear testing program include an array of devastating health issues such as cancer, that the French have acknowledged only recently.

Abstract
The relationship between France and its overseas collectivity is a modern colony, marked by the legacy of nuclear testing. Those most affected by the tests have taken direct action to challenge the current political state.

Methodology
Completed interviews with military veterans who conducted nuclear tests and have gone on to form Moruroa e tatou, Tamarrii Moruroa, and Association 193.

Learning Outcomes
Veterans in these groups have different objectives: reparations, acknowledgement of the effects of the testing, or information on veterans’ rights. Each group actualizes these objectives through community outreach, but each group is unique in its approach to political change.

Conclusions
By not acknowledging the effects of nuclear testing, France has strained its relationship with French Polynesia, resulting in the islands being placed on the UN Decolonization Recommendation list, with little consequences on the tourism industry.

References
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