

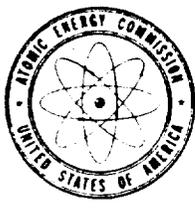
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September 6, 1972



SECY-2686



INFORMATION REPORT

REACTIVATION OF THE MEDICAL SURVEY TEAM FOR THE
MARSHALLESE EXPOSED TO FALLOUT FROM THE "BRAVO"
TEST ON MARCH 1, 1954

Note by the Secretary

The General Manager has requested the attached report from the Director of Biomedical and Environmental Research be circulated for the information of the Commission and has provided the following digest:

It was previously reported to the Commission in SECY-2304, February 8, 1972 and SECY-2471, May 8, 1972 that considerable antagonism generated by political figures in the Marshall Islands against the AEC and U.S. resulted in major interference with the medical survey in March 1972, making it impossible to carry out the regular annual examinations of the Marshallese. However, an accommodation has now been reached with the Special Investigating Committee of the Micronesian Congress whereby the Medical Survey team led by Dr. Robert Conard, Medical Department, Brookhaven National Laboratory will be able to resume the examinations of exposed and control Marshallese. The accommodation is based on the addition to the team of three or four independent physician-observers who will report to the Special Investigating Committee their views of the quality and value of the medical examinations carried out by the Medical Survey team on its annual examinations. A staff report is attached.

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W. B. McCool
Secretary of the Commission

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STAFF REPORT

by the Staff of the
Division of Biomedical and Environmental Research

Reactivation of the Medical Survey Team for the Marshallese Exposed to Fallout from the "Bravo" Test on March 1, 1954

The medical survey team which annually has examined the Marshallese exposed to fallout from the March 1, 1954 "Bravo" test, only partially accomplished its objectives this Spring. Dr. Robert A. Conard, Medical Department, Brookhaven National Laboratory, organizer and leader of the team, reports that the team was able to examine only 40 of 192 exposed and 15 of 60 control Marshallese selected for examination this year. Many of the Marshallese this year did not volunteer for physical examinations and the routine clinical tests. However, three of the five Marshallese who have previously undergone surgery for removal of neoplastic thyroid tissue were reexamined at Tripler General Hospital in Honolulu during April. Two of these three were escorted to Cleveland in June for surgical exploration of the neck region for recurrence or metastases. No abnormalities were found and both people have returned to the Islands in excellent spirits and health. Aside from these data Dr. Conard has observed nothing which changes the status as of the 1971 Medical Survey.

* The exposed Marshallese as well as all the Marshallese on Rongelap and Utirik Atolls have repeatedly expressed discontent with the day by

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day medical care and treatment provided by the Medical Service of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands (TTPI). They do not distinguish between the annual diagnostic-epidemiologic purposes of the Medical Survey team and the TTPI medical support which is limited by unusually severe logistic problems. This and other complaints (see below) should be viewed in the context of the uncertain political situation presently existing in the Trust Territory. It is the policy of the U.S. Government to assist the Micronesians in developing a democratic self-government. A two-house Congressional system has been operative since 1964 and beginning in October 1969 there have been six rounds of talks aiming at further political autonomy vis-a-vis the United States. The people of the Trust Territory have aligned themselves into six island (atoll) groups and are competing for leadership. The Marshall Island group believes it has extraordinary claims on the United States because only they have suffered the dislocations due to tests and other military purposes.

In August 1971, Mr. Ataji Balos, Representative of the Marshall Islands to the Micronesian Congress, went to Hiroshima, Japan, to attend the Anti A-and H-Bomb Ceremonies on August 6 to 10. Acting apparently as a Congressman in behalf of his Marshallese constituents, he invited the Gensuiken, the radical left Socialist party, to send a team of physicians expert in radiation effects to the Marshall Islands

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to examine and treat the exposed people. The team arrived unannounced at Majuro on December 8, 1971 and declared they were ready to begin examining the exposed Marshallese. Since only two of the 10 were physicians, the rest being newspaper men or persons associated with political parties, the TTPI decided to intervene. The Attorney General of the TTPI ruled that since the Japanese team had entered the Trust Territory on visitor visas they would have to conduct themselves as visitors. They left 9 days later after having superficially examined eight exposed Marshallese who chanced to be on Majuro. One of the physicians, Dr. Yoshima Hondo, is not well known in medical circles in Japan, but is an activist. The other, Dr. Haruo Ezaki is a clinical professor in the School of Medicine, Hiroshima University, and a consultant on thyroid disease to the Atomic Bomb Casualty Commission (ABCC). He has recently been offered the Chair of Surgery at Hiroshima University. He returned to Japan 2 days before the rest of the team exited.

This treatment of the Japanese team led to many newspaper editorials, speeches, and legal maneuvers developing the theme that the Trust Territory Government must be trying to suppress something; that this was an undemocratic action. In a speech made in connection with introduction of a Bill into the Micronesian Congress on January 27, 1972, Congressman Balos stated that the TTPI has been unresponsive to

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the plight of the exposed Rongelapese and Utirikese; that the U.S. allowed these people to be exposed to the 1954 fallout so as to use them for guinea pigs to develop its medical capabilities; that racism is evident; that they have never been adequately compensated, especially compared to the Japanese on the "Lucky Dragon"; and that the American doctors collect medical data but do nothing to restore health.

The Bill proposes establishment of a "Special Joint Committee of Congress Concerning Rongelap and Utirik Atolls" having three members who shall investigate the results of irradiation on the people of Rongelap and Utirik; shall attempt to secure any and all medical assistance and aid from any possible source; shall attempt to obtain compensation for the injuries due to radiation; shall conduct hearings with powers of subpoena and suit, etc. Funds in the amount of \$10,000 were provided together with staff. It became Public Law 4C-33 by unanimous vote on March 26, 1972.

Shortly after this speech the Micronesian Congress let it be known that they wished Dr. Ezaki to be added to Dr. Conard's Medical Survey team scheduled for March 1 through 30. This was arranged on very short notice with the help of ABCC. Dr. Conard also arranged for Dr. Toshiyuki Kumatori, Director of Clinical Medicine, Japanese Institute of Radiological Science, Chiba, and the physician who had attended

the seamen exposed to the "Bravo" fallout aboard the "Lucky Dragon" to join the team. Shortly before time to join the team Dr. Ezaki was visited by Franciso Ululong, a young nationalistic Marshallese. After two days discussion Dr. Ezaki was persuaded that Dr. Conard's team would not be accepted and that his, Dr. Ezaki's, presence would only create more problems. Because of this and an illness Dr. Ezaki decided against joining the team on Rongelap. Thereupon Dr. Kumatori was instructed not to proceed to Rongelap, although he was willing to disregard Ululong's arguments. By virtue of Dr. Ezaki's absence the Marshallese Congressmen felt that their conditions had not been met and they advised the people not to cooperate with Dr. Conard's team.

The Special Joint Committee created by Public Law 4C-33 has taken their responsibilities seriously and apparently without bias. The Committee or some of its members have visited Hiroshima, Nagasaki, Chiba and the United Nations Trusteeship Council; have held hearings on Utirik, Rongelap, Majuro and Saipan; and have collected an extensive number of documents on their subject.

The Committee has also developed an accommodation whereby Dr. Conard has been invited to reassemble the Medical Survey team and complete the survey of the Marshallese during September providing that the team include three or four independent observer-physicians expert in radiation effects. These men would report to the Committee their opinions of the importance of the Medical Survey and of the present health status of the exposed Marshallese.

It was suggested that one of the observer-physicians be a Japanese, preferably Dr. Ezaki, a second to be selected by the Surgeon General of the U.S. Public Health Service, and a third to be recommended by the World Health Organization. Thus the High Commissioner of the Trust Territory acting for the Chairman of the Committee has invited Drs. H. Ezaki and T. Kumatori, identified above; Dr. William Cole, Bureau of Radiological Health, Food and Drug Administration, was selected by Dr. Jesse Steinfeld, SG/USPHS; and Dr. E. E. Pochin, O.B.E., Director of the Medical Research Council's Clinical Research Unit, University College Medical School, London, recommended by Dr. M. G. Candau, Director General of the World Health Organization, Geneva. Dr. Pochin is probably the world's foremost authority on radiation effects on the thyroid of man.

The Special Joint Committee, the Marshallese Congressmen, and the President of the Micronesian Congress have severally and individually stated through the High Commissioner that there will be no interference with a complete medical survey of the exposed and control people; in fact, they will assist where possible. Thus, as of this point everything seems in order for a successful expedition which is scheduled for September 7 through 27, 1972, embarking from and returning to Kwajalein.

The Division of Biomedical and Environmental Research (DBER) has cooperated closely with the Territorial Offices of the Department of Interior on this matter, exchanging information and messages and is able to provide much more detailed information should it be desired.