

Office Memorandum • UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

TO : Dr. Charles L. Dunham, Director
Division of Biology and Medicine

FROM : Brig. General Alfred D. Starbird, USA
Director of Military Application

SUBJECT: RETURN OF RONGELAPESE

SYMBOL: MAT:RIS

DATE: AUG 6 1956

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OR CHANGED TO
BY AUTHORITY OF DOC
BY J. Fullbrook DATE 3/1/73

Enclosed is a copy of the Chief of Naval Operations reply to our letter dated May 24, 1956 (a copy of which was furnished you) which outlined a plan for returning the Rongelapese and proposed the assignment of some of the major responsibilities associated with the project.

The CINCPAC comments and recommendations should be noted; specifically:

1. In reference to paragraph 4 it is our understanding from the meeting on July 3, 1956, with Mr. Nucker and Mr. Yeomans that the medical care of inhabitants who cannot be returned to Rongelap because of the lack of medical facilities there is part of the normal responsibility of HICOMTERPACIS for the welfare and care of the Marshallese.
2. In reference to paragraph 6 we feel that the composition of the survey group should be changed to read "AEC representatives" instead of "the AEC contractor" since we desire to have our Albuquerque Operations Office, the Division of Biology and Medicine, and the Division of Military Application represented at the working level, in addition to the AEC contractor.

Your comments are requested.



Alfred D. Starbird
Brigadier General, USA
Director of Military Application

Enclosure:
Cy Ltr CNO to DMA w/Encl.

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HEADQUARTERS OF THE COMMANDER IN CHIEF

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From: Commander in Chief Pacific
To: Chief of Naval Operations
Subj: Return of Former inhabitants of Rongelap Atoll to their islands during November 1956
Ref: (a) CNO CONF ltr Op215/RLF Ser 025721 of 6 Jun 1956
Encl: (1) AEC CONF ltr MAT:PTB of 24 May 1956 to CNO with enclosures thereto

1. Reference (a) forwarded to CINCPAC for comment and recommendation, plans for the possible return of the Rongelap inhabitants to their home islands during November 1956.
2. CINCPAC concurs in the assignment of responsibilities indicated in enclosure (1) to reference (a), subject to the comments and recommendations contained herein. The responsibility of CINCPAC for the subject matter will be fulfilled by CINCPACFLT in accordance with previous instructions.
3. It is noted that, upon completion of Operation SEWING, FACFLT units will be withdrawn from the Marshall Islands area. In order that transportation facilities may be assured it is recommended that surface transportation in connection with the return of the Rongelap natives be provided by utilizing MSTB LSTs assigned to Joint Task Force Seven, or from other MSTB sources.
4. It is assumed that HICOMTERPACIS will designate which natives now at Majuro should be returned to Rongelap. It is recommended that HICOMTERPACIS with the assistance of the AEC (Division of Biology and Medicine) make arrangements for medical care of the former inhabitants of Rongelap who cannot be returned because of the lack of medical facilities there.
5. It is understood that no Navy funds other than for normal support should be expended for this operation without CNO approval. It is noted that Commander Joint Task Force Seven has been requested to budget for the return of the inhabitants and for the rehabilitation of their home island.
6. It is recommended that a survey group be formed composed of representatives of CINCPACFLT, CJTF 7, HICOMTERPACIS and the AEC contractor to investigate and make recommendations relative to the movement of inhabitants and materials to Rongelap and the rehabilitation of facilities there. The senior member of this group should be a representative of CINCPACFLT. The report of the

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should be submitted to CINCPACFLT. Specifically, the report should include recommendations on the following:

- a. Matters relating to the movement of the inhabitants by ship from Rongelap to Rongerik.
- b. The number of natives to be returned to Rongerik.
- c. The feasibility of utilizing existing construction at Rongerik as rehabilitating facilities at Rongelap.
- d. Details of construction and other rehabilitation measures required at Rongelap and recommendations as to the agency to accomplish them.
- e. Measures of support required during the period after the return of the inhabitants to Rongelap until complete adjustment to their former way of life can be accomplished.
- f. A breakdown of estimated costs involved in the rehabilitation measures required at Rongelap.
- g. The desirability and feasibility of utilizing former inhabitants of Rongelap as a labor force in reconstruction projects.

The desires of the inhabitants of Rongelap should be considered by the group in developing its recommendations.

7. By copy of this letter, CINCPACFLT is directed to take action to convene the above survey group upon approval by CNO and participating agencies of the recommendation contained in paragraph 6. above. The commencement of reconstruction projects on Rongelap will be contingent upon favorable results from the radiological survey to be conducted by the USG after the last REMBING shot and upon the approval of the necessary expenditure of funds by CJTF 7.

BIOLOGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL DIVISION

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- 3. The survey report to be submitted to CINCPACFLT should specifically include the following recommendations:
 - a. The number of natives to be returned to Rongelap.
 - b. The feasibility of utilizing former inhabitants by ship from Rongelap to Rongerik.
 - c. The number of natives to be returned to Rongerik.
 - d. The feasibility of utilizing former inhabitants at Rongerik as a labor force in reconstruction projects.
 - e. Details of construction and rehabilitation measures required at Rongelap and recommendations as to the way to accomplish them.
 - f. Measures of support required during the period after the return of the inhabitants to Rongelap until complete adjustment to their former way of life can be accomplished.
 - g. A breakdown of estimated costs involved in the rehabilitation measures required at Rongelap.
 - h. The desirability and feasibility of utilizing former inhabitants of Rongelap as a labor force in reconstruction projects.

The desires of the inhabitants of Rongelap should be considered by the group in developing its recommendations.

7. By copy of this letter, CINCPACFLT is directed to take action to convert the above survey group upon approval by CMO and participating agencies of the recommendations contained in paragraph 6. above. The commencement of reconstruction projects on Rongelap will be contingent upon favorable results from the radiological survey to be conducted by the AEC after the last REMWING shot and upon the approval of the necessary expenditure of funds by CJTF 7.

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