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SURVEY OF ENIAETOK ISLAND

SYMBOL: DBM:REWB

This is in reference to our telephone conversation of Friday, September 27, 1957.

Recently, it has come to my attention that about 10 of the people rehabilitated to Rongelap Atoll have established permanent living quarters on the Island Eniaetok. It was our understanding when developing the radiological and biological data, resulting in the recommendation by the Atomic Energy Commission that the Rongelapese could be returned to their home island, that the permanent abode for all would be on Rongelap Island.

From past data it could be inferred that Eniaetok Island has a greater contamination than Rongelap Island but good data are lacking for Eniaetok.

It is imperative that we obtain the pertinent data on contamination of Eniaetok Island at the earliest possible date. We need to assure ourselves and also to be in a defensible position if the question should arise in the United Nations or elsewhere. The collection of such information is a responsibility of our Division. However, those in charge of this program do not feel that a survey can be made before December 1957. The only other solution that I can think of is to request the Division of Military Application that they ask the Eniaetok Office to make a gamma dose rate survey similar to the one made on Rongelap Island in June 1957, just prior to the return of the Rongelapese. I recognize this is not an adequate survey, but it will give us some information.

As you recall, we were faced with a similar situation in June when we were surprised to learn that a resurvey was not planned until after the return to Rongelap Island. At that time, we asked the Division of Military Application to request the Eniaetok Office to

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perform a gamma dose rate survey on that Island before the return of the people. We were very appreciative of this cooperation and of the reassuring information it provided. I hope it will be possible to repeat this effort on Eniwetok Island.

cc: Dr. Dunham
Dr. Shilling
Dr. Western
Environmental Sciences Branch

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