

March 28

United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20240

Mr. J. J. Kaufmann
Regional Vice President
Fellowship of Christian
Ministries
3136 Kaimuki Avenue
Honolulu, Hawaii 96816

MAR 29 1979

Dear Mr. Kaufmann:

Under Secretary Joseph has asked me to thank you for your letter of March 18, 1979, which expressed concern that only American doctors employed by the Brookhaven National Laboratory provide medical followup and care to the people of Rongelap and Utirik who were subject to accidental radiation fallout in 1954.

The concern of your organization is appreciated. There is, though, considerable misunderstanding about the medical followup program which has been in effect for many years. The Department of Energy and its predecessors (ERDA, AEC) contracted with Brookhaven National Laboratory, Associated Universities, Inc., to carry out the medical followup work. In actuality, the medical staff which accompanies the Brookhaven Medical surveys usually is made up of outstanding experts from universities and hospitals from all over the United States. Other experts are drawn from the National Institutes of Health and the U.S. Public Health Service.

From time to time, leading medical radiation experts from abroad have participated in the medical surveys. Amongst these experts have been Dr. Haruo Ezaki, M.D., Hiroshima University, School of Medicine, Hiroshima, Japan; Dr. Toshiyuki Kumatori, M.D., National Institutes of Radiological Sciences, Chiba-Shi, Japan; and Dr. C. Hayakawa, M.D., of Tokyo, Japan. Dr. E. Eric Pochin, M.D., University College Hospital Medical School, London, England, also has participated in the program. There also has been close contact with organizations such as the Radiation Effects Research Foundation in Japan and direct relationships with staff members such as Dr. G. Darling, Dr. H. Maki, and Dr. I. Nagai.

Several years ago, in order to provide followup between the quarterly and annual surveys, a resident medical officer for the Rongelap and Utirik people was stationed at Kwajalein. There have been several incumbents in that post. Not all incumbents may have the type of personality that meshed well with the Marshallese way of life. This, at times may have resulted in minor complaints, but these all appear to have been settled satisfactorily.

cc: Dr. Walter Weyzen, DOE

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I can assure you that the dozens of medical participants from private and public institutions, both in the United States and from abroad, who have participated in these medical surveys not only are internationally recognized experts in their special fields but they have been objective in their outlook.

Again, may I thank you for your interest in this matter.

Sincerely yours,

MRS. RUTH G. VAN CLEVE

Mrs. Ruth G. Van Cleve
Director
Office of Territorial Affairs