

June 4, 1975

Senator Amata Kabua
Majuro, Marshall Islands 96960

Dear Amata:

I have just finished a meeting with Dr. Conard during which I told him of my visit with you at Majuro last month. I talked with him especially about your understanding, or belief, that some of the Rongelap people who were absent from Rongelap at the time of the Bravo test, but who subsequently returned to Rongelap had experienced some symptoms of illness from radiation exposure. I believe I see now how that misunderstanding may have arisen.

As you know, Dr. Conard and his team of doctors have identified what is referred to as a control group - unexposed people with the same general physical characteristics and the same life style for comparison with the exposed population. Thus, in studying such things as rate of growth of children and other indicators of health and well-being they have a "normal" population to measure against and can more readily identify abnormal trends.

The control group is examined regularly, of course, and occasionally some illness or abnormality appears in that group also - just as may happen in any population at any location. There have indeed been a few cases of thyroid abnormalities in the control group, and when found these have been promptly treated; but this in no way suggests that the cause of the abnormalities is fallout radiation. In fact, Dr. Conard has stated that he has found no evidence of radiation effects in any of the control group.

I hope that this explanation answers the question you raised. Should you wish to pursue it further I am sure that Dr. Conard would welcome a letter from you.

With best regards.

Sincerely,

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Roger Ray, Assistant Manager
for Operations

Senator Amata Kabua

-2-

cc: Dr. Conard, Brookhaven National
Laboratory, Upton, NY

bcc: Oscar DeBrum, Majuro, Marshall Islands
T. F. McCraw, DOS, HQ

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