

DRAFT:RRAY:lmb 12/6/76

Dear Oscar:

Last week I attended a meeting at our Headquarters in Washington to discuss the ERDA medical program at Rongelap and Utirik. Of course Dr. Conard was there also.

We have recognized that there is some dissatisfaction among the people of both Atolls and there certainly have been some misunderstandings, especially recently. In our Washington discussions we have recognized that the people wish for an expansion of their medical care (to cover all people and all aspects of health) and that they look to ERDA for that improvement. We recognize also, though, that the responsibility for health services rests with you and your administration. If we move in to Utirik or Rongelap or anywhere else in the Marshalls with a medical care program, we foresee problems for you in explaining the absence of such a program in other areas. Thus, as you and I have discussed, any ERDA effort to help out with health services must be done in coordination with you.

The tentative solution which we have arrived at is for us to assist you in certain specific ways, using the resources which we have in the Marshalls, in order that you may be better able to handle the Utirik/Rongelap situation. We, of course, intend to continue to care for the exposed people of these atolls, but we think it is important that they understand that regular medical care is being provided by the TTPI.

We have now drawn up a statement, a copy of which is enclosed, setting forth ERDA's position in this matter. It includes a statement of what things we are prepared to do to help improve the present situation. We hope that the next step will be to work with you and your staff to decide upon

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specific changes which will respond to the concerns of the people. Following that, we hope that we jointly may meet with the people of Rongelap and Utirik, describe the changes we plan to make and answer their questions. At the same meetings we would plan to deliver our answers to recent letters from the two communities and answer questions regarding those also.

The letters to the people are still in preparation but will be ready shortly, and I shall be asking for your help in getting them translated.

The time schedule for meetings with you and for subsequent meetings with the people must be left up to you. We would like to do this as early as possible after the first of the year, subject, of course, to your availability and the availability of a field trip ship. I would suggest two days at either Majuro or Kwajalein, followed by a field trip, stopping at each atoll for perhaps half a day. Our (ERDA) party would include 6, or a maximum of 8, people.

I would appreciate a dispatch from you acknowledging this letter, indicating your agreement in principle and establishing at least an approximate set of dates which you would find acceptable. And by the way, I recognize that it would be more appropriate for DOTA to call the meeting we have requested. When we have agreed upon what we want to do and when, I'll ask John deYoung to formally arrange it with messages to the HiCom and others.

Meanwhile, my best regards to you and the rest of your "staff," and my very best Christmas wishes to you and your family.

Yokwe,

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