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Commentary: INTEGRITY OF HEAL

by Jeffrey Jefferson
marshall islands atomic litigation project

The August release of the "Guinea Pig" report, which documents the long history of lies and coverups by the Atomic Energy Commission as to health and environmental risks associated with low-level radiation, could not come at a more critical time for the people of the Marshall Islands. To an unparalleled degree, it is the people of the Marshall Islands who relied upon the false information disseminated by the AEC to their irreparable detriment. This reliance, combined with the extensiveness of the weapons testing program conducted within the Marshall Islands have created the most vivid example to date of not only the dangers of low-level radiation, but also raise fundamental questions concerning the very integrity of the AEC, and the standard of conduct by the United States as trustee under the United Nations Agreement.

To begin, it is important to recognize that the report has as its focus the nuclear weapons testing conducted at the Nevada test site. However, the conclusions are directly applicable to the situation in the Marshall Islands in that the report establishes, through government records, the AEC's level of understanding as to health and environmental risks as a time prior to the

Islands detonations. In a detailed discussion the report documents instances where the AEC cut off funding for scientific research projects which raised questions as to the health risks involved in nuclear testing, instructed scientists to falsify field reports, transferred scientists who would not participate in the coverups, and classified under the pretext of 'national security' any scientific results that did not support the AEC's thesis that nuclear testing was 'safe'.

It is here that the report reaches its most important conclusion, a conclusion which relates directly to questions now facing the people of the Marshall Islands. The report concludes that a conflict of interest exists between the AEC's role as the promoter of nuclear technology, and its role as the funding authority for radiation health research. The report finds the conflict continues to this day, and further notes that the AEC's successor agencies—the Department of Energy, the Department of Defense, and the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, are also subject to this conflict.

In light of these disclosures serious questions must be asked concerning the implementation of the Marshall Islands health care plan mandated by PUBLIC LAW 96-205.

AEC's successor agencies must be viewed with not only a great deal of suspicion but also with a degree of alarm. For only time will show if the medical monitoring program established pursuant to the new Federal Act will be one designed to meet the health needs of the Marshallese people, or if it will be one, the intent of which, will be to continue to down play health risks associated with nuclear exposure.

Recognizing the people from the various affected atolls have differing solutions to many of the nuclear related issues before them today, and further that the Marshall Islands Government is now also involved in these issues as the representative of an emerging independent nation, nevertheless all would seem to share a common goal insofar as any health monitoring program is concerned. That goal must be to insure the integrity of any health care program so established. Given the AEC's past record it is inconceivable that this agency's successors would even be considered for participation in this task. While some issues remain the subject of dispute among the involved parties, such as the scope of the health care program as evidenced by the positions taken at the recent Washington DC meeting on

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HEALTH CARE PLANNING

There be solidarity on this goal.

The medical program must be independent of the sort of bias that has marked the entire history to date of government medical studies examining the biological effects of ionizing radiation. Medical practitioners must be employed who will work with them openly and honestly, and who owe no allegiance to any part of the nuclear industry. History has instructed, and medical ethics require, that a treating physician owes a complete obligation of loyalty to his/her patient, and that the patient should be informed of all relevant medical information, a requirement that today remains unmet under current United States Government contracted medical services for the exposed atolls.

Thus the mandate of the Federal Act should be followed, and the affected Marshallese should participate in the selection process, and no selection should be made without the approval of the affected people. For all should understand, that the decision reached on this question will bind those yet unborn, accordingly, any error must be made in favor of caution in order to insure a fair and timely presentation of new medical information as it is developed. This, not only for

Islands, but for all people who live in this world which has not yet realized the insanity of nuclear contamination, whatever its source.

Speaker Emotok Jen Taiwan

by Richard Heine
JOURNAL Staff

MAJURO, Oct. 15

Speaker eo an Nitijela Atlan Anien, Senator Jiton Anajin, lawyer eo im clerk eo an Nitijela Donald Capelle, rar tokektok ilo Majuro Oct. 14 ran eo jen kar aer kwelok ilo juon kwelok rej nae etan Asian Parliamentary Association (APA).

Kwelok in ear komman ilo Taipei, Taiwan. Kwelok in ear enanin juon week aitokan, ekkar non kar interview eo ear komman iben Donald Capelle (Speaker eo ear ba in etal in bok melele ko jen Mr. Capelle ke iar kajitok ao konono ak interview iben).

Lol ko rej iuwan drolut in (APA) rej Japan, Republic of China ak Taiwan, Korea, Thailand, Philippines im kab Nauru.

Lol ak ailin jidrik ko jen Pacific im rar kir lok ir non kwelok in einwot ro im rej jab vote (non-voters) ak rej einwot observers ak ro im rej had ilo juon kwelok im rej

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REMARKS

Jeffrey Jefferson is a member of a new Majuro law firm, "The Marshall Islands Atomic Testing Litigation Project."

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