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AEC 730/10

November 18, 1954

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ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION

COMPENSATION TO JAPAN

Note by the Secretary

The Director of International Affairs has submitted the attached Memorandum of Conversation for the information of the Commission.

W. B. McCOOL
Secretary

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE
Memorandum of Conversation

October 23, 1954

SUBJECT: Bikini Compensation.

PARTICIPANTS: Foreign Minister Okazaki of Japan
Ambassador Sadao Iguchi, Embassy of Japan
Mr. Tanaka, First Secretary, Embassy of Japan
Walter S. Robertson, Assistant Secretary
Robert J. G. McClurkin, Acting Director, NA.

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Mr. Okazaki said that he had originally thought \$1 million would be enough to satisfy the various Japanese claims in connection with the damages suffered by Japan as a result of the explosion of the hydrogen bomb at Bikini. Then Kuboyama died and the Japanese are finding that even at this late date many tunafish have to be thrown out because of radioactivity. These facts have changed the situation. He himself had talked on the telephone to Tokyo the day before and he is now convinced that one million dollars will not achieve the purpose of a settlement which will be generally thought to be satisfactory. He pointed out that the Japanese Government has already put out 430 million yen in loans to people in the fishing industry who have suffered losses. Some of the people in Japan have proposed a partial settlement now, and then continuing discussion of the total amount. He himself would rather have it all handled at one time. His own personal belief, which had been confirmed with Tokyo, was that it might possibly be done for \$1-1/2 million but that a figure of \$2 million would certainly constitute a satisfactory final settlement.

Mr. Robertson said that we understand how difficult this problem is for the Japanese Government and people. We are deeply distressed and concerned that the tests should have produced such unfortunate and unexpected results. He wanted to emphasize that the expenditures of billions of dollars which we are making in our atomic program are not only for ourselves but to serve the dual purpose of protecting the human race from Communist enslavement, and also leading toward the peaceful uses of atomic energy

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with all their great potentialities. Mr. Okazaki commented that he had told the Diet the same thing and had been bitterly attacked for it. Nevertheless, he believes that it is true.

Returning to the question of the settlement, Mr. Okazaki said that he had tried to achieve a settlement of one million dollars but this effort had failed. To attempt to do so now would really end the Yoshida government even though the situation had changed somewhat after the Toya Maru accident, which the Japanese Government greatly regretted. With respect to the Bikini incident, Mr. Yoshida had clearly indicated that the Japanese Government does not want to make use of the case to squeeze money out and in fact he may still be against asking for more than one million dollars. However, Mr. Okazaki believes that this amount would not be enough to create a good public feeling about the settlement in Japan and that such a settlement would be damaging to good United States-Japanese relations.

Mr. Robertson said that we want to do what is fair and equitable but we do not want to set precedents which would be unfortunate. He agreed completely with Mr. Okazaki that it would be preferable to have a final settlement. If this proves impossible, perhaps a legal inquiry might be instituted but we hope this can be avoided. If we can agree on a definite figure which the Japanese Government can be sure of we would earnestly consider it. We think that \$2 million would be perhaps too high, but that something between \$1 and \$2 million might be satisfactory. Anything over a million dollars may possibly require Congressional action and the resulting discussions may possibly lead to bad reactions in United States public opinion. However, the important thing now is to see if we can reach agreement on some definite figure.

Mr. Okazaki said that he appreciated having Mr. Robertson's views and that he hoped that we could reach a settlement before the testing program is resumed. He asked whether we had any idea when the tests might be resumed, saying that he needed advance notice in order to prepare people in Japan. Mr. Robertson said he did not have this information but that Mr. Okazaki could be assured of our full cooperation in this respect.