

UNITED STATES
ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

SEP 14 1954

Honorable W. Sterling Cole
Chairman, Joint Committee
on Atomic Energy
Congress of the United States

Dear Mr. Cole:

I have received your letter of August 18, 1954, to Chairman Strauss, wherein you request copies of written material furnished by the Atomic Energy Commission to the Department of State for transmittal to the United Nations relating to the March 1 incident in the Marshall Islands. Your letter suggests that previously unpublished information on radiation levels was furnished the United Nations. You also asked for a statement explaining why the Joint Committee "was not officially informed of the release of this information at the time the report was supplied the United Nations."

No information on radiation levels in the numerical sense was supplied the Department of State or the United Nations. The effects of fallout on the Marshallese and the Japanese fishermen were described, however, in order that recommendations made by the Department of State or actions taken by the United Nations could be based on information which was factually accurate.

As you know, a group of prominent citizens in the Marshall Islands addressed a petition to the United Nations on April 20, asking for the cessation of further tests in the Pacific but requesting, if further tests were found necessary, that all possible precautions be taken to protect the health and welfare of the islanders. In preparation for a meeting of the Trusteeship Council, the Department of State asked the Commission a series of questions pertinent to the Marshall Islanders' petition and the March 1 incident. I have attached a copy of the Commission's communication to the Department of State on this subject for your information.

cc - Dr. Bugher, B & M

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Honorable W. Sterling Cole

- 2 -

In addition to this communication, Dr. John C. Bugher, Director, Division of Biology and Medicine, who at the request of the U. S. delegation was present at the Trusteeship Council meetings on July 6 and 7 as a technical adviser, prepared a brief statement on the radiological problems arising from the incident for inclusion in an oral report to be made by Mr. Frank E. Midkiff, then High Commissioner of Trust Territories in the Pacific. A copy of this statement is also enclosed.

You will note that radiation levels are discussed in both documents in only very general terms and only to the extent believed necessary to allay unfounded fears.

Some of the information supplied the Department of State and United Nations was previously unpublished, partially because the test series had so recently ended, but was covered in the Commission's Sixteenth Semiannual Report. We felt it necessary, because of the question of the future availability of the Pacific test site, to supply promptly to the Department of State and the U. S. Delegation all pertinent unclassified information. It will be noted, however, that none of the material furnished involved "restricted data." Moreover, we believe that no information was supplied which was not already known to the JCAE.

Data on numerical radiation levels was included on pages 41, 42, 43, and 52 of the Commission's classified Program Status Report dated June 30, 1954, copies of which were, of course, provided your Committee.

If we can be of any further assistance in this matter, we trust that you will so advise us,

Sincerely yours,

K. D. Nichols
General Manager

Enclosures:
Answers to State Department
"List of Possible Questions"
Dr. Bugher's Statement on
Radiological Problems

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116