



DEPARTMENT OF STATE INSTRUCTION

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NO. A-536 May 8, 1954

SUBJECT: Estimate of Present Medical Status of the Twenty-Three Crewmen of the FUKURYU MARU

TO: The American Embassy, TOKYO

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There follows for the Embassy's information, the text of a memorandum dated April 30 prepared in the Atomic Energy Commission's Division of Biology and Medicine, giving an estimate of the medical status of the twenty-three crewmen:

"I understand you are interested in having a statement summarizing the medical situation of the Japanese fishermen. Briefly, as you are aware, our Embassy in Tokyo has made repeated offers of United States medical assistance to the Japanese. There have been frequent assurances by the Japanese authorities that these offers would be accepted, and that the patients could accordingly be carefully examined and studied. Dr. Horton and members of his staff have visited the patients on several occasions, but they have not been permitted to conduct thorough clinical examinations.

"At the request of the Japanese, samples of urine of the patients have been examined by the Health and Safety Laboratory of the Commission's New York Operations Office. The results of the analyses indicate that the patients from whom the specimens were obtained have ingested radioactive material. These analyses, however, do not give answers as to the condition of the patients, nor could they indicate the total dose of radiation originally received.

"Except for the urine samples referred to above, the only other data of which we are aware, including the blood counts, have been provided by the Japanese themselves. Complete data essential to the diagnosis and prognosis have been specifically requested by this office through our Embassy in Tokyo, but have not been received.

"It has been made clear in our communications to the Japanese through the Ambassador that we are primarily interested in the welfare of the patients, that the cooperation of the Japanese in permitting medical examinations and in accepting or

DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY DECLASSIFICATION REVIEW

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at least acknowledging offers of facilities, equipment, and medicines is vital to the health interests of both nations. Lacking this cooperation we cannot venture to predict the outcome of the patients. Nevertheless, based on the attached summary of blood counts on the five most severely affected patients, and other fragmentary data available to us, it would be unwise to assume at this point that all will recover. People have been known to live many months and even a year or more with the white blood count as low as 2,000, but the longer the count remains this low the worse is the ultimate prognosis. As recently as April 27 one count was still in the vicinity of 2,000, while five were between 2,500 and 3,000."

In view of the information contained in the last paragraph of the AEC memorandum, a draft statement for use in the event of the death of one of the crewmen is being prepared in the Department. The suggested text of such a statement will be communicated to the Embassy in the very near future.

For the Embassy's information, the AEC memorandum is being made available to the JCAE. Although the memorandum is unclassified, the Committee is being requested not to publicize the information contained in it because of the unfavorable repercussions that would follow its public release.

BULLER

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