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Mr. Gerard C. Smith
Special Assistant to the
Secretary of State

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Dear Mr. Smith:

The Atomic Energy Commission has considered the problem of returning the Rongelap people to their home atoll in the Trust Territory, and has carefully weighed the data from radiological surveys made during the past two and one-half years, including that of the latest survey made in July 1956.

These data indicate a presence of a residual contamination on the Island of Rongelap, but at a level that is acceptable from a health point of view, both for the potential external gamma radiation exposure and the strontium-90 content in the food supply, with the possible exception of land crabs.

The Commission's position is that the Rongelapese could be returned to their home island as soon as rehabilitation procedures on the Island of Rongelap are completed, with the advice that land crabs not be eaten at this time.

In accordance with previous views of the Department of State, the Atomic Energy Commission is proceeding with implementation of the program for the reconstruction and rehabilitation of the homes and facilities on Rongelap. It is expected that these preparations will require approximately five months. Since the AEC has made a determination that it will be safe from a health standpoint to return the Rongelapese to their home island upon completion of these preparations, your concurrence in this plan to return these people to their home island is requested.

Sincerely yours,

cc: General Mgr. (1)
Secretariat (1)
Cong. Com. Section (2)

Signed - *[Signature]*
Special Assistant to the Secretary of State

General Manager

HMEP Director GEN. MGR.
GMDunnington CLDunham