

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
Memorandum of Conversation

Marshall Islands
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DATE: April 22, 1955

SUBJECT: Return of Inhabitants to Rongelap

PARTICIPANTS: Dr. Dunham, Deputy Director, Division of Biology and Medicine,
Atomic Energy Commission

Mr. Dwight Cramer (ODA)

COPIES TO: Messrs. Gerig, Robbins and Mulcahy (ODA)
S/AE - Mr. George Spiegel

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Dr. Dunham, who has recently returned from a medical survey of the inhabitants of Rongelap, reported that these people were in excellent health and could return to their atoll any time now if they restricted themselves to the southern islands and did not eat too many shell fish. The residual radioactivity on the northern islands make it inadvisable for this particular group, which had already been exposed, to visit those islands for a period of probably another year. This information is being sent to the Deputy High Commissioner, Mr. Nucker, who will then take up the subject with his Chief Anthropologist in order to decide whether the inhabitants should be returned immediately.

Dr. Dunham said the Medical Team consisted of some 14 people, four of whom were M.D.'s. The team was on Majuro, where the Rongelap people are temporarily residing, for about ten days beginning on March 25. This was the first medical mission to examine the inhabitants since September and it would probably not be necessary to send another medical team for a year. However, a radiological survey of Rongelap would probably be taken next summer or fall.

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