

Central Office

December 21, 1978

Jonathan M. Weisgall  
Covington & Burling  
888 Sixteenth Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20006

Dear Jonathan:

I write to you in your capacity as attorney for the People of Bikini; my subject is the need of a long term radiological health program for the People of Enewetak, the People of Rongelap, and the People of Utirik, all of whom we represent, a need which I believe your clients share with mine.

I would like to meet with you within the next several months to discuss whether we can coordinate our separate efforts to mutual benefit. I will be on Saipan the first three weeks of January. If the next round of status talks are here and you will be participating, we could do it then. Otherwise, I expect to be in Washington the latter half of February. In anticipation of more detailed conversations with you, let me outline very briefly what I have in mind.

An appropriate radiological program for all of these islands is a fairly complicated and costly business and for it to be of real benefit it will almost certainly have to continue forever, although its exact content will vary over time. Its major elements should

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include periodic examinations of the people at their places of residence and periodic survey of the radiological conditions in the environment with emphasis upon the foodweb. Adequate laboratory and analytical support is essential and appropriate experimentation with radionuclide uptake by important food plants should be conducted on a continuing basis. All of the data based upon the surveys and the experiments must be related to that previously gathered and periodically reassessed.

All medical services and hospitalization indicated by the periodic medical examinations must be provided. Preventative radiological health measures would include both education about radiation in general and ways to minimize potential adverse effects.

Those scientific and medical personnel involved in the program should always be conversant with the latest developments in the growing body of knowledge of the biomedical and environmental aspects of radiation, so that the program can be modified and improved continually.

Finally, it seems to me that overall policy direction of the program must include representatives of the people affected and at least some respected authorities outside the government agencies which may be charged with carrying out the work of the program itself.

When I spoke recently with Ambassador Rosenblatt on this subject, in general terms, he said that he was awaiting a proposal from you to meet a similar need, whether for the People of Bikini as such or on behalf of the Marshall Island Political Status Commission, I am not certain. I told him I thought the government should develop such a plan. It seems to me that there are people in or funded by the Department of Energy who can best design a plan for such a program and you will see from this enclosed copy of my letters to Ambassador Rosenblatt and Senator Kabua, that I think the United States Government should be responsible for providing the necessary financial support, outside the context of financial support of the future government of the Marshall Islands.

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Please let me know the best time and place for us  
to meet.

Sincerely,

Theodore R. Mitchell

TRM/dl

xc: Amata Kabua, MIPSC  
Richard D. Copaken

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