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3. Medical Follow-Up of Marshallese* (Contact: AGMR)

Since the accidental exposure of the people of Rongelap and Utirik to radioactive fallout in 1954, the AEC, through the Brookhaven National Laboratory, has conducted annual medical surveys of the exposed individuals. The survey team is composed of physicians from BNL, The Public Health Service, and certain specialists from universities. These surveys have resulted in the detection of thyroid abnormalities in a high percentage of the Rongelap people exposed below age ten. Therapy has been provided when indicated.

In the past year, considerable antagonism was generated by political figures in the Marshall Islands against the AEC and U.S., resulting in major interference with the medical survey in March 1972. AEC and BNL personnel have met with Mr. Stanley Carpenter, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Territorial Affairs of the Department of Interior and several of his staff to review the situation. Commissioner Larson has also contacted the Surgeon General (DHEW), Dr. Steinfeld, who subsequently discussed this matter with a three-man committee of the Micronesian Congress. AEC and BNL staffs will meet with Mr. Carpenter and the Surgeon General to further assess this situation and determine what course of action can be taken to assure the continuing medical follow-up of the exposed Marshallese. A BNL account of the event that took place during the medical survey is available.

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