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REPUBLIC OF THE MARSHALL ISLANDS

MAJURO, MARSHALL ISLANDS 96960 CABLE: REPMAR

October 7, 1988

FACSIMILE NUMBER: (202)252-5051

Mr. John Rudolph
Office of Military Application, DP22.1
United States Department of Energy
Washington, D.C. 20545

Dear Mr. Rudolph:

I have the honor of responding to a proposal offered by the United States Department of Energy (DOE) for the provision of certain technical work during Fiscal Year 1990 to ameliorate the impact of the United States Nuclear Testing Program on the people of the Marshall Islands. The proposal was conveyed to the Government of the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI) in a meeting that took place in Honolulu on September 23, 1988. In the course of the meeting, DOE officials proposed that, for Fiscal Year 1990, RMI provide matching funding in the amount of \$1,975,000, which, when combined with equal funding from DOE, would pay for whole body counting and bioassay medical studies, environmental assessments establishing the long-range effectiveness of the preventative technologies that have been developed at Bikini Atoll, logistical support for DOE operations in the Marshall Islands, and a program of radiological education for the school children and public of the Marshall Islands. It was suggested that such funding might be derived from the annual proceeds of the RMI Nuclear Claims Fund made available pursuant to Section 1(a) of Article II of the Section 177 Agreement.

My government fully recognizes the importance of the proposed body of work. Such a program will serve to ensure the safety of citizens of RMI who, in the years ahead, choose to resettle Bikini Atoll, Rongelap Atoll, and Enjebi Island in the northern portion of Enewetak Atoll.

Nevertheless, my government is not in a position to provide the matching funding sought by the DOE. Whereas the "buy back" from DOE of technical assistance was contemplated when Section 1(a) of Article II of the Section 177 Agreement was originally negotiated, Section 103(j) of United States Public Law 99-239 subsequently required that the funding available under this section of the Section 177 Agreement be used for a health program

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started by the United States Congress for the benefit of the four communities of the Marshall Islands most directly impacted by the U.S. Nuclear Testing Program. All proceeds generated from the Section 177 Fund pursuant to Section 1(a) or Article II of the Section 177 Agreement have been devoted exclusively to this health care program. Hence, my government will not be able to provide significant financial support to the technical work that the DOE plans to perform in the Marshall Islands during Fiscal Year 1990. Out of concern for the well-being of the people of Bikini, Enewetak, and Rongelap, it is our sincere hope that the United States Government will find sufficient funding for these activities until such time as these atolls have been safely resettled and monitoring of radiological health conditions is no longer necessary.

I would ask that the views expressed in this letter be conveyed to the United States Congress in the report on the Honolulu meeting.

Sincerely yours,



Oscar de Brum
Chief Secretary