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RONGELAP ATOLL LOCAL GOVERNMENT
Republic of the Marshall Islands

DEC 28, 1989

DAO

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STATEMENT OF SENATOR JETON ANJAIN
ON BEHALF OF
THE RONGELAP ATOLL LOCAL GOVERNMENT

BEFORE THE

SECRETARIAL PANEL
FOR THE EVALUATION OF EPIDEMIOLOGIC RESEARCH ACTIVITIES
FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

ALBUQUERQUE, NEW MEXICO
DECEMBER 28, 1989

John Rudolph's Files
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Letters - Marshall Islands 1989

STATEMENT OF SENATOR JETON ANJAIN

ON BEHALF OF THE RONGELAP ATOLL LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND THE RONGELAP PEOPLE LIVING IN EXILE AT MEJATO

Chairperson Gebbie and Members of the Panel:

I am Senator Jeton Anjain. I represent the people of Rongelap in the Marshall Islands. On behalf of the Rongelap people, I thank you for the opportunity to appear before this Panel to submit this statement.

I am a dentist, having received my degree from the Medical School at the University of Fiji. In addition, for two years, 1981-1982, I served as Minister of Health for the Marshall Islands.

Three members of the Rongelap Community are with me today. Please let me introduce:

- * Mayor Edison Anjain
- * Council Member Norio Kebenli
- * Council Member Aisen Tima

Let me commend Secretary Watkins for having the courage to establish this panel and for the willingness to confront these difficult issues.

The Rongelap people have participated in the medical and research programs of DOE and Brookhaven National Laboratory for 35 years. We do not confuse program participation with an understanding of the program in which we have participated. Our knowledge of these programs is based upon our observations and our experiences. We fully understand that this somewhat limits our views. As you listen to our story, we ask for your understanding.

Rongelap Atoll is located approximately 100 miles from Bikini Atoll where many of the United States atmospheric nuclear weapons were tested between 1946 and 1958.

On March 1, 1954, the AEC detonated its most famous nuclear device, code-named "Bravo." It was a 17-megaton thermonuclear bomb 1000 times more powerful

than the bombs that destroyed Hiroshima and Nagasaki. That pre-dawn explosion profoundly and overwhelmingly changed our lives.

According to Dr. Henry Kohn, Director of the Rongelap Reassessment Project, in testimony before Congress last year, "the 83 Rongelap people who were exposed to fallout in 1954 constituted one of the most heavily exposed groups in the world." More than four decades after the testing began, the resulting radiation continues to dominate our very existence.

On that March 1, 35 years ago, the Rongelap people received a near-lethal radiation dose -- approximately 190 rems (average) in 50 hours from Bravo. The AEC came and evacuated the people on the third day after detonation. Three years later, the AEC determined that Rongelap was safe and we were returned to the Atoll in 1957. We remained at Rongelap until May 1985.

The Rongelap people do not live at Rongelap Atoll today. The Rongelap people live in exile -- self-imposed exile -- at Mejato, a small island at the far end of Kwajelein Atoll, many miles from our historical homeland. We fled in fear. A few days ago, the world celebrated Christmas. For the Rongelap people, it was our fifth holiday celebration in exile.

One of the most radiotoxic elements known to man, plutonium, saturates our environment, yet the Department of Energy concludes it is safe to live on our atoll. Moreover, DOE Program Managers believe the Rongelap people should return from exile and resume life at Rongelap Atoll despite the fact that the Rongelap environment today remains contaminated.

One of DOE's leading contractors, Holmes and Narver, last year, concluded in a published study, "*unfortunately, existing physical and radiological conditions at Rongelap Atoll do not offer the Rongelapese a safe place to live.*" The study went on to conclude that "*their islands [Rongelap Atoll] have been contaminated for several future generations yet to come.*" While DOE concludes Rongelap is safe, DOE contractors provide Rongelap with completely different conclusion.

Secretary of Energy Watkins last June publicly stated that, within DOE, he found a "culture" of mismanagement and ineptitude regarding health, safety and the environment. The Secretary fully and candidly recognized that DOE was insensitive to and frequently not in compliance with environmental and health laws. Rongelap is a 35-year case study of that "culture."

On November 16, 1989, at a congressional *Oversight Hearing on the Safety and Habitability of Rongelap Atoll*, the Secretary directed, over the vigorous objections of the DOE program managers, that the Department of Energy take a "fresh look" at

Rongelap. Rongelap welcomes the Secretary's action and has publicly pledged to cooperatively work with his review.

Rongelap appears before the SPEERA Panel today to express its current concerns - both with respect to the activities of U.S. Department of Energy and the programs of Brookhaven National Laboratory.

THE CONFLICT TODAY DOE OPPOSES THE LEGALLY-MANDATED INDEPENDENT REVIEW OF RONGELAP

The conflict today regarding the habitability of Rongelap Atoll involves the following five primary issues:

(1) Radiation Contamination Never Comprehensively Studied At Rongelap Atoll. DOE irradiated Rongelap Atoll and the Rongelap people when the nuclear test Bravo was detonated 35-years ago. Today, more than three decades later, the DOE has yet to reveal the true nature or full extent of radiation contamination at their atoll.

(2) DOE Determination That Rongelap "Safe" Lacks Integrity. No comprehensive survey has ever been undertaken for Rongelap Atoll. No cleanup program has ever been implemented. Despite the obvious lack of quality data and reliable information, DOE nonetheless declares Rongelap habitable. DOE's declaration, plainly stated, simply lacks integrity.

(3) DOE Opposes The Independent Survey of Rongelap. DOE Program Managers want to block the law from being implemented. The Compact of Free Association of 1985, [Public Law 99-239, Section 103(i)], provides for an "independent" (non-DOE conducted) and comprehensive survey of "radiation and other effects...resulting from the thermonuclear test." These program managers vigorously oppose any independent review of its 35-year health and environmental work. If Rongelap Atoll is to ever to be resettled, the first step in an orderly process is to conduct a comprehensive study - of our land and of our people.

(4) DOE Has Violated Standards of Medical Ethics. DOE has violated standards of medical ethics. DOE's Brookhaven National Laboratory obtained urine samples from individual Rongelap patients for what the Rongelapese believed were exclusively to be used for clinical analysis and medical purposes. Recent disclosures by Dr. Henry Kohn in

the Rongelap Reassessment Project reveal that results routinely and regularly obtained from DOE's long-term plutonium urine testing program were withheld from Rongelap citizens and Rongelap "patients." Consent to participate in DOE research with the Rongelap people was never obtained.

(5) DOE Has A Conflict-of-Interest Overseeing Medical, Health, Safety and Environmental Studies At Rongelap. DOE today lives with a conflict-of-interest. DOE's Defense Weapons Program and the Office of Defense Weapons Research should not be in charge of Rongelap's health, safety, and environmental determinations. DOE detonated the bomb. DOE irradiated Rongelap. DOE should not be the exclusive judge of its own past actions. DOE should not study itself.

THE RONGELAP DISTINCTION RADIATION AT RONGELAP ACKNOWLEDGED

Rongelap Different From Weapons Production Plants and DOE Facilities.

Rongelap is different from DOE facilities in one very unique way. That is, there was no question that Rongelap was contaminated. Within days of the "incident," the entire world knew of "Bravo." There was no way to hide it. President Eisenhower was briefed by AEC Chairman Strauss and highly attended White House press briefings were held. While the AEC significantly understated the radiation, environmental and health problems at the time, the event was nonetheless acknowledged. The Rongelap people knew and the world did too.

At Rongelap, there was immediate acknowledgement of the contamination. At many of the DOE facilities, until very recently, similar problems were not even acknowledged.

A careful examination of the AEC/ERDA/DOE-Rongelap record, therefore, provides this Panel, Secretary Watkins, the Administration, the Congress, and affected citizens with a roadmap for how DOE addressed and confronted the varied radiation, environmental, cleanup and individual health problems. This is, therefore, a significant chapter in DOE's institutional history that will influence, if not guide, future DOE health care, environmental assessment and cleanup actions.

Rongelap is necessarily part of the institutional baseline.

BRAVO +50 HOURS AEC MEDICAL RESEARCH PROGRAM FOR RONGELAP

AEC Medical Research Program for Rongelap Initiated, Bravo + 50 hours.

The AEC/ERDA/DOE medical monitoring and research program, dictated by circumstances, was effectively underway a only hours after Bravo. Within minutes of detonation, the AEC recognized that the winds carrying the radioactive fallout were headed in the "wrong" direction - towards Rongelap. However, the Rongelap people were not evacuated for approximately 50 hours after the test. Aboard ship, decontamination was initiated. That emergency evacuation, and the resulting emergency care, was the beginning of the Marshall Islands Medical program.

IS RONGELAP ATOLL SAFE? DOE REFUSES TO RESPOND TO KEY RONGELAP POLICY QUESTION

Is Rongelap Atoll Safe? - Rongelap Frames Its Primary Policy Questions. For over 30 years, the people of Rongelap have asked, "Is Rongelap Atoll Safe?" We have been preoccupied with two overriding questions: "Is our homeland safe, particularly for our children?" "Are we suffering now, or will we later suffer, radiation-caused health problems?"

For this same number of years Rongelap has, as a consequence, been concerned with obtaining proper health care and necessary medical treatment.

Initially, the Brookhaven doctors visited Rongelap once a year. This changed in the late 1970's, with the Congressional establishment of a separate health care program for the populations of the four atolls (Bikini, Enewetak, Rongelap and Utirik) most affected by the nuclear testing program. However, the quality and adequacy of that program remains a major concern of the Rongelap people.

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

Since the day in Rongelap's history when the "sun rose twice", the Rongelap people have lived their lives in a schizophrenic world of intense U.S. scientific scrutiny and often repeated "official" assurances that there is nothing related to the aftermath of the nuclear testing to worry about.

For the last 35 years, the U.S. Department of Energy, through Brookhaven National Laboratory (BNL), has conducted a medical surveillance and research program of the Rongelap people, similar in nature to that undertaken of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki A-Bomb Survivors.

The DOE/Brookhaven program has focused upon the 83 Rongelap individuals who were present – the so-called "exposed" population – in 1954. Today, "exposed" population consists of approximately 60 individuals. The goal of the DOE/Brookhaven research program, as originally conceived, was to identify all late radiation effects resulting to this exposed population. Over the years, however, the program appears to have narrowed its investigation to only those long term effects predicted by experts in the field of radiation medicine.

The 83 individuals, together with an additional group of former Rongelap citizens, were returned to their homeland in 1957. Within one year of their return, Brookhaven had discovered that those who were returned in '57 but who had not been exposed in '54 were experiencing radionuclide body burdens "indistinguishable" from the 1954 exposed. This BNL attributed to the "ingestion of food containing radionuclides."

Notwithstanding this knowledge, the Brookhaven program labeled the 1957 returnees as "unexposed", continued to focus its research (and occasional medical) activities on the 1954 group, and established a control group consisting of "unexposed" members of the Rongelap community for the study of the original 83.

Since 1957, the history of the relationship between Rongelap and Brookhaven has been tumultuous. Early on the relationship was one of friendship and cooperation, mixed with occasional questioning and uncertainty as the Rongelap people began to experience health problems relatively non-existent prior to the nuclear testing program. Over the years the concerns of the Rongelap people grew, particularly as the "unexposed" population began to suffer from some of the unusual health problems being experienced by the 1954 group. With this growing concern, the relationship between Brookhaven and Rongelap cooled. It occasionally turned fractious. The peoples' concerns hit a crescendo, and the relationship a low point, in the early '70's with the death from leukemia of a young man, my nephew, who had been among the 1954 exposed.

As a result, the occasional medical attention afforded by Brookhaven was expanded. In addition, the U.S. Congress mandated the Secretary of Interior to establish a health care program directed to the care of all Rongelap (and Utrik) people.

¹ Brookhaven also noted the apparent exposure of those who returned to Rongelap in 1957 to additional fallout from a series of atmospheric nuclear weapons tests conducted in 1958 or 1959. R.A. Conard, et al., *Medical Survey of Rongelap People Five and Six Years After Exposure to Fallout*, BNL 609 (T-179), September 1960.

Assurances that the Rongelap people were safe, that they had nothing to worry about with respect to the lands upon which they resided, nevertheless continued. BNL continued its medical surveillance. The DOE continued its environmental monitoring of Rongelap Atoll. The incidence of unusual health problems among the Rongelap population continued to increase - particularly thyroid cancers and thyroid abnormalities.

In 1982 the Department of Energy released a report on the results of its 1978 aerial radiological survey of the northern Marshall Islands. This report showed the Rongelap people living on an island recorded as being as contaminated as that to which the Bikini people had in the late 1960's been returned, but from which they had later been removed due to new-found evidence of over-contamination.

The release of the DOE's '82 report precipitated a chain of events that resulted in the 1985 move by the Rongelap people into exile. The U.S. Congress, in response, included a provision within the Compact of Free Association (P.L. 99-239, Title I, Section 103(i)) mandating an independent review of the DOE's 1982 report with respect to Rongelap and, depending upon the results of that review, such further action as necessary to safely return the Rongelap people to their homeland.

The initial review mandated by the Compact was completed, and a report submitted to Congress in July of 1988.

In exile the Rongelap people now await the funding by the U.S. Congress of a complete and independent assessment of the radiological conditions of Rongelap Atoll, pursuant to the Compact of Free Association. They insist that an independent and comprehensive medical evaluation of all Rongelap people (including children) be undertaken and the independent re-evaluation of all DOE/Brookhaven (and Lawrence Livermore Lab) medical and environmental data gathered over the last 35 years be included.

RONGELAP AND EPIDEMIOLOGY NOT APPLIED

Brookhaven National Laboratory maintains a medical monitoring program of the Rongelap people. However, DOE/Brookhaven does not apply to its medical research work basic principles of epidemiology. There is no staff epidemiologist. To the best of our knowledge, epidemiologists have never been consulted.

**THE COMPACT OF FREE ASSOCIATION
UNRESOLVED RADIATION AND HEALTH ISSUES AT RONGELAP
ARE RECOGNIZED**

The Congress directed, in the Compact of Free Association of 1985, Public Law 99-239, a special review of the DOE Report, The Meaning of Radiation for Those Atolls in the Northern Part of the Marshall Islands That Were Surveyed in 1978, November 1982. This special DOE Report was prepared for the Rongelap people and others in the Marshall Islands to provide them with sufficient "radiation" information to enable these peoples to make decisions about their future. At the time, it was anticipated that the Trust relationship pursuant to the United Nations Charter, in existence since 1946, would expire and the Marshall Islands would enter a new political status, that of a Freely Associated State. The Compact of Free Association was ratified by the United States and the Government of the Marshall Islands in October, 1986.

Public Law 99-239 recognized that there were unresolved radiation and health issues at Rongelap. It ordered a two-step review process. First, a special study was to be undertaken of the 1982 DOE Report. If the data in the DOE Report was inadequate or the conclusions as to habitability were not supported by that DOE data, then a comprehensive study of Rongelap, was ordered to be undertaken.

The first study, the Rongelap Reassessment Project Report, was completed July 22, 1988. A CORRECTED EDITION, Rongelap Reassessment Project Report was published on March 1, 1989.

Both the Rongelap Atoll Local Government and the Government of the Marshall Islands has endorsed the "Phase 2" Comprehensive and Independent Study. Rongelap independently contracted for the preparation of a work plan for the Phase 2 study², a copy of which has been submitted to your Panel.

The DOE Program Managers have vigorously opposed the plan. They oppose any independent review of their work. Rongelap invited DOE comments regarding the Report, but none have been forthcoming. We have been told that the DOE Program Managers have reviewed this proposed work plan, but if accurate, then any comments on the work plan have been withheld.

² In November, 1988, the Rongelap Council contracted with P&D Technologies, of Phoenix, Arizona, for the preparation of Making Rongelap Habitable: PROPOSED WORKPLAN FOR A PHASE 2 COMPREHENSIVE STUDY, Prepared in Accordance with the COMPACT OF FREE ASSOCIATION OF 1985, Public Law 99-239. The Rongelap Council formally approved the plan, which has been forwarded to the Government of the Marshall Islands, submitted to Congress and the Department of Energy.

RONGELAP AND DOE/BROOKHAVEN PLUTONIUM RESEARCH WITHHELD FROM RONGELAP PEOPLE

When the Rongelap Reassessment Project Report was published in 1988, the Rongelap people learned, for the first time, that there was plutonium in their bodies. This had been known to DOE and the Brookhaven medical and research teams, but withheld from the Rongelap people.

According to the Rongelap Reassessment Project Report, with specific regard to urine being tested at Brookhaven for plutonium:

Some 270 samples of urine have been analyzed. Owing to a reorganization at Brookhaven, the work for this project was stopped (no funds), and the results were neither tabulated nor analyzed.

The House Interior Committee, as part of its on-going oversight investigation on the safety and habitability of Rongelap Atoll asked DOE when the Brookhaven reorganization occurred. DOE reported that it occurred in January, 1988. The urine samples, however, had been collected at various times beginning in 1973 – a decade and a half earlier!

Some of the individual results were high and even exceeded U.S. Radiation Guidelines. We are told today that DOE/Brookhaven lacked confidence in their findings and therefore withheld them.

At no time did DOE/Brookhaven advise the Rongelap citizens, or Rongelap "patients" of the finding. But for the Compact and the Rongelap Reassessment Project, this information would remain undisclosed even today. Indeed, it appears that this research was cloaked in secrecy and but for its "leak" as part of the Rongelap Reassessment Project (see discussion below), we would not be aware of this issue even today.

DOE/Brookhaven collected and tested our urine for plutonium for more than 15 years without telling the Rongelap people. Brookhaven's explanation is they didn't believe their own results.

The Rongelap people regularly see teams of doctors from Brookhaven. They give urine samples. The people believed they were giving urine for the doctors to conduct medical tests. They did not know or understand they were participating in plutonium research.

Last December, I met with Dr. Kohn in Berkeley, California to discuss his Report. At that time, Rongelap was told by Dr. Kohn that the only reason he included discussion of the "plutonium issue" was that someone "leaked" this information to the Rongelap people. He indicated that Rongelap should not have been told this information.

DOE takes the position that plutonium is not a problem, despite the fact that high levels of plutonium are scattered throughout the Atoll. Compared to the average soils of the United States or elsewhere in the Northern Hemisphere, there is, according to DOE studies, more than 400 times the amount of plutonium in the soils of Rongelap Island and more than 4000 times the amount in the Northern Part of the Rongelap Atoll.

There is more to this story. At the same time decisions were made by DOE/Brookhaven to not release this information, DOE/Brookhaven were actively preoccupied with the very same data and information. DOE/Brookhaven convened symposia to review the data, not once, but several times in the 1980's.

Meanwhile, throughout this past decade, more urine was collected, year after year, for this research. At no time did DOE/Brookhaven tell the Rongelap citizens, the Rongelap Council, or the Government of the Marshall Islands what it was doing or why.

It was important enough to test and retest the plutonium in urine of our citizens, but not sufficiently important to tell the Rongelap people.

It was significant enough to convene DOE/Brookhaven symposia, but not important enough to tell the Rongelap people.

This was wrong!

Finally, once general disclosure occurred, all relevant documents were requested from DOE. DOE program managers were exceedingly slow to respond to inquiries and requests for information. In one instance, the Director of the Weapons Research Division advised Rongelap that some of the relevant documents were destroyed and no longer available. These specific destroyed documents contained reviewer comments on the early plutonium studies.

DOE and Brookhaven have been reluctant or simply unwilling to respond to our concerns about this matter.

RONGELAP AND THE CONTAMINATED MEDICAL CONTROL GROUP

When the Rongelap people were returned to Rongelap in 1957, Brookhaven established as its comparison, or "control" group (in existence to this day), other Rongelap citizens who returned to Rongelap in 1957 (or thereafter) who were not present at Rongelap in 1954.

However, because this Rongelap "control" group lived in a radiation-contaminated environment, Brookhaven's conclusions are based upon the comparison of one radiation-exposed population with another radiation-exposed population. Consequently, BNL's conclusions about whether and to what extent the 1954 group (or for that matter the post-1957 population) has suffered radiation-related health problems are seriously flawed.

THE BROOKHAVEN MEDICAL RESEARCH PROGRAM BROOKHAVEN DOCTORS PUBLICLY CRITICIZE THE PROGRAM

Over the years, the DOE/Brookhaven programs have been the subject of considerable criticism. As noted, the relationship between Rongelap and DOE/Brookhaven has been severely strained over the years. The Rongelap people remain in exile because of the lack of belief in what DOE/Brookhaven tell them.

DOE/Brookhaven has been the subject of a highly critical comprehensive review by the Congress of Micronesia in 1973. It's introduction discusses the failure of DOE/Brookhaven to respond to inquiries about the program. Rongelap requests for information to Brookhaven, submitted in October 1988 regarding the 270 urine samples has never been answered.

A short time later, a Brookhaven physician, Konrad P. Kotrady, M.D., prepared a highly critical analysis³ of the Brookhaven program following more than a year in which he served as resident physician in the Marshall Islands. States Kotrady, "the medical surveillance program as conducted by Brookhaven is a research oriented program." Kotrady concludes that the Brookhaven medical program, "does not see the need for such a general health evaluation program [for the contaminated communities in the Marshall Islands]."

The people of Rongelap have not been the only critics.

³ THE BROOKHAVEN MEDICAL PROGRAM TO DETECT RADIATION EFFECTS IN MARSHALLESE PEOPLE: A comparison of the peoples' attitudes vs. the program's attitudes. Konrad P. Kotrady, M.D., 1 January 1977.

The Brookhaven Medical Program told the Rongelap Reassessment Project that it is restricted by law to clinical care only. This is accurate, but unfortunately misleading. Brookhaven also conducts, in other programs, its research such as that of plutonium in urine. The response to Kotrady was to compartmentalize its research.

Little has changed.

RONGELAP RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE SECRETARIAL PANEL ON EPIDEMIOLOGY

Rongelap recognizes that the Interim Report is subject to change and is necessarily incomplete. Based on the Interim Report, Rongelap endorses the "Principles Guiding the Panel" identified on Page 3 and the "Elements of an Epidemiology Program," set forth on Page 4. We would, however, make the following specific recommendation to the Principles: That, paragraph number 3, page 3, [*The Panel believes that an individual worker's right to confidentiality about medical information be protected and that the public's right to know about collective health experiences must also be protected.*] be modified to include "radiation victims," such as those at Rongelap, along with workers.

After reviewing the Interim Report, Rongelap submits, for your consideration, the following recommendations:

(1) Destruction of Records. Rongelap requests that the SPEERA Panel recommendation to the Secretary [Page 2 SPEERA Interim Report to the Secretary] regarding destruction of records be broadened to include all DOE, DOE contractors, and DOE laboratory records relating to Rongelap Atoll and/or the Rongelap people. This includes, in particular, all records contained, or in the possession or control of DOE, DOE Defense Programs, DOE Nevada Operations Office, DOE Pacific Area Support Office (Honolulu), Brookhaven National Laboratory, Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory and/or Battelle Memorial Institute (Pacific Northwest Division).

(2) Access to Medical/Radiation Records. Rongelap endorses the SPEERA Panel "maximum possible openness," recommendation regarding the release of data contained in the Interim Report and the policy of "maximum public access to information." Moreover, Rongelap requests that the SPEERA Panel recommend that the Secretary, regarding access by the Rongelap people to the Rongelap medical and related records, adopt an "access to records" policy at least as comprehensive as that recommended in the Interim Report for the Three Mile Island Fund.

(3) **Phase 2 Comprehensive and Independent Study of Rongelap Atoll.** Rongelap requests that SPEERA recommend to the Secretary that the Phase 2 comprehensive and Independent Study of Rongelap Atoll, as authorized in the Compact of Free Association, be initiated. Further, Rongelap requests that SPEERA recommend to the Secretary that DOE agencies, offices, contractors and others be directed to fully cooperate with the Phase 2 study by making all studies, documents, data and other historical materials available to the Phase 2 study team.

(4) **Epidemiology and Rongelap.** Rongelap requests that the SPEERA Panel recommend to the Secretary that a comprehensive and independent review and scientific evaluation of all Rongelap medical, exposure and research data accumulated by DOE, Brookhaven National Laboratory and any other DOE laboratories or contractors, be undertaken, and that appropriate standards of epidemiological science be applied. We urge the Panel to consider as the most appropriate vehicle for accomplishing this recommendation the Phase 2 Study process contemplated at Section 103(i) of the Compact of Free Association.

(5) **DOE, Brookhaven, the Marshall Islands Nuclear Claims Tribunal and Access to Information.** Rongelap requests that the SPEERA Panel recommend to the Secretary that all medical and related records be furnished, without cost, to the Marshall Islands Nuclear Claims Tribunal established by the Compact of Free Association. Further, Rongelap requests that the current DOE/Brookhaven policy of charging \$10 plus \$.50 per page for portions of the Rongelap medical, exposure and related records, to be submitted to the Marshall Islands Nuclear Tribunal, be overturned.

(6) **DOE and Its Conflict-of-Interest Overseeing Health, Safety and Environmental Studies at Rongelap.** Rongelap requests that the SPEERA Panel inform the Secretary that DOE's management (under the Assistant Secretary, Defense Programs) of the various health, safety and environmental programs effecting the Rongelap people is burdened by a serious conflict-of-interest. The Defense Programs should not be responsible for contemporary health, safety, and environmental decisions regarding Rongelap. Perhaps DOE should not be involved at all. In the eyes of the Rongelap radiation victims, there remains a serious question about whether the DOE should be studying itself under any circumstances.

(7) **DOE/Brookhaven Should Make Complete Rongelap Medical and Exposure Records Available In Marshall Islands.** DOE and Brookhaven National Laboratory continue to maintain control over the Rongelap medical records and exposure history. These records should be present and available to Brookhaven doctors during their twice-yearly visits to the Marshall Islands. More importantly, they should be immediately available to attending or treating Marshallese physicians and

other medical personnel throughout the year and on a regular basis. Some of this data may be located in other DOE Labs.

(8) DOE Evaluation Should Be Undertaken Regarding Cost Effectiveness of Transferring Medical Program to the Marshall Islands. Rongelap requests that the SPEERA Panel recommend that the Secretary undertake a comprehensive review of the DOE/Brookhaven Marshall Islands Medical Program. An evaluation should be undertaken to determine (a) if medical services could be improved by transferring the funds available for the current program to a hospital facility in the Marshalls; and, (2) whether such a programmatic change is feasible and cost effective.

(9) DOE Should Be Required to Disclose All Research and Medical Tests to the Rongelap Citizens. Secret Research Should Be Halted. DOE should be prohibited from conducting secret research of any kind. If DOE wants to undertake certain studies, or believes that they are justified, then DOE should formally ask permission and obtain consent for human participation. All research and or medical work undertaken to date should be fully disclosed.

(10) The Future Relationship Between DOE, DOE/Brookhaven and Rongelap. Rongelap does not take a position at this time with regard to whether, or to what extent, all Rongelap environmental, health and safety programs should be removed from the Department of Energy. It may be, given all the history and the contemporary problems, the most appropriate structural solution.

As noted, Secretary Watkins has agreed to take a fresh look at Rongelap. Pending the completion of the Secretarial review, Rongelap will not take such a position or make such a recommendation. Our reluctance, at this time to present a recommendation, should not be viewed as support for or against placing these programs in another agency of the U.S. Government.

CONCLUSION

I came to this hearing directly from Mejato, where the Rongelap community today lives in exile. I told my people about this meeting. The Rongelap people appreciate your concern and interest.

For 35 years, no one listened to us or our concerns. We have been a forgotten and ignored people. In the past year, that has begun to change. There have been hearings in Congress and a pledge from Secretary Watkins to take a fresh look at Rongelap. And, we complete this year with the SPEERA Panel's invitation to make this presentation. We are deeply honored.

The people of Rongelap want to return to their historical homeland at Rongelap Atoll, but we will do so only if it is safe and if it is habitable, or, if Rongelap can be rehabilitated to be made safe and habitable. We do not believe the DOE. Future determinations as to safety and habitability must be made independently of DOE. That is why the Phase 2 study, already authorized in law, is so important.

Rongelap asks that this Panel support the recommendations we have made. We believe them to be reasonable.

To this Panel, Secretary Watkins, Congress and others, we offer good faith and a public pledge of cooperation.

We stand before you seeking Justice. To achieve it, we ask for your help and assistance. As a People, especially a contaminated people, we demand dignity.

On behalf of all the Rongelap people, and especially the children, I thank you.