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Office of Special Projects

April 30, 1954

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Division of Biology and Medicine

ESTIMATE OF PRESENT MEDICAL STATUS OF THE 23 JAPANESE FISHERMEN  
FROM THE FUKUKYU MARU

SYMBOL: EMM:CLD

I understand you are interested in having a statement summarizing the medical situation of the Japanese fishermen. Briefly, as you are aware, our Embassy in Tokyo has made repeated offers of United States medical assistance to the Japanese. There have been frequent assurances by the Japanese authorities that these offers would be accepted, and that the patients could accordingly be carefully examined and studied. Dr. Morton and members of his staff have visited the patients on several occasions, but they have not been permitted to conduct thorough clinical examinations.

At the request of the Japanese, samples of urine of the patients have been examined by the Health and Safety Laboratory of the Commission's New York Operations Office. The results of the analyses indicate that the patients from whom the specimens were obtained have ingested radioactive material. These analyses, however, do not give answers as to the condition of the patients, nor could they indicate the total dose of radiation originally received.

Except for the urine samples referred to above, the only other data of which we are aware, including the blood counts, have been provided by the Japanese themselves. Complete data essential to the diagnosis and prognosis have been specifically requested by this office through our Embassy in Tokyo, but have not been received.

It has been made clear in our communications to the Japanese through the Ambassador that we are primarily interested in the welfare of the patients, that the cooperation of the Japanese in permitting medical examinations and in accepting or at least acknowledging offers of facilities, equipment, and medicines is vital to the health interests of both nations. Lacking this cooperation we cannot venture to predict the outcome of the patients. Nevertheless, based on the attached summary of blood counts on the five most severely affected patients, and other fragmentary data available to us, it would be unwise to assume at this point that all will recover. People have been known to live many months and even a year or more with the white blood count as low as 2,000, but the longer the count remains this low the worse is the ultimate prognosis. As recently as April 27 one count was still in the vicinity of 2,000, while five were between 2,500 and 3,000.

OFFICE ▶	Medical: DUNHAM:rmk
SURNAME ▶	
DATE ▶	Encl. 3/30/54
Summary of counts	

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