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R. L. Southwick, Acting Chief
Public Information Service

September 10, 1954

Charles L. Dunham, M. D., Deputy Director
Division of Biology and Medicine

YOUR MEMO DATED SEPTEMBER 8, 1954, RE JAP FISHERMAN'S CONDITION

SYMBOL: BM:QID

I am afraid we have no helpful comments, as I indicated over the phone, and that you have already answered the question in your next-to-last sentence. Fortunately, the individual seems temporarily at least to be getting along all right.

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TO : Those listed below
 Via ~~Shelby Thompson, Acting Director,~~
 Division of Information Services

FROM : R. L. Southwick, Acting Chief *RS*
 Public Information Service

SUBJECT: JAP FISHERMAN'S CONDITION

SYMBOL: ISP:RLS

DATE: September 3, 1954

U.S. news services are inquiring whether the crew member of the FORTUNATE DRAGON who suffered exposure after the March 1 test can be called the "first H-bomb fatality" in the event he dies. The attached news dispatch carried by UNITED PRESS, you will note, uses this expression.

We would appreciate guidance in this matter. It is my understanding from previous discussions with Dr. Bugher that the jaundice is due to blood transfusions given the patient, not to irradiation. However, correspondents undoubtedly will use the "first victim" expression on the grounds that the man would not have been subjected to transfusions if it had not been for his exposure so that he is a victim of the H-bomb.

If this man gets tagged as the first H-bomb victim (and I do not see how we can prevent it) the propaganda damage will be considerable, especially in view of the fact that the Japanese will now have the "credit" for being the first victims of the A-bomb (Hiroshima and Nagasaki) and the H-bomb.

Any suggestions you have for handling this situation will be most welcome.

Attachment:

UNITED PRESS story 9/3/54.

Addressees:

Dr. John C. Bugher, Director, Division of Biology & Medicine ✓
 Brig. Gen. K. E. Fields, Director, Division of Military Application
 John A. Hall, Chief, Office of Special Projects

cc: K. D. Nichols, General Manager



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