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STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR ALLISON ON FUKURYU MARU ACCIDENT

Ambassador John M. Allison today issued the following statement in Tokyo:

On the occasion of the departure from Tokyo of Mr. Merrill Eisenbud, Director of the Health and Safety Laboratory of the Atomic Energy Commission, and of Dr. John Norton, Director of the Atomic Bomb Casualty Commission and his staff of associate physicians, I wish to express again in the name of the United States Government our deep regret for the unfortunate accident to the Fukuryu Maru and our continuing concern for the recovery and well-being of its hospitalized crewmen. I have already announced the intention of the United States Government both to reimburse the Japanese Government for interim financial assistance to the patients and their families and for the future, to take all possible measures to prevent any recurrence of this most regrettable accident.

I have thanked Dr. Norton and Mr. Eisenbud for their important contributions to the resolution of many of the problems which arose after this most regrettable accident and I should like to record my own appreciation of what, in cooperation with officials and scientists of the Japanese Government, they have been able to accomplish since their arrival here.

Mr. Eisenbud and Dr. Norton and his staff were directed to come to Tokyo by the United States Government, immediately on notification of the mishap to the Fukuryu Maru. Their primary purpose was to assist, as consultants to the Japanese doctors in charge of the case, in the recovery of the twenty-three patients. They were also to offer to the Japanese Government specialists in charge of the public health and fishing industry aspects of the case their long professional experience in the evaluation of radioactive hazards. Dr. Norton and his staff arrived in Tokyo on March 18, Mr. Eisenbud on March 22. Since that time, the following results have been accomplished:

(1) The examinations they have made in Japan have corroborated completely the results of longer and more detailed studies in the continental United States which

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At his arrival in Japan Mr. Eisenbud discussed the subject in detail with Japanese investigators and urged that the question be removed from the realm of speculation by radio-chemical analysis of the urine of the fishermen. This technique, facilities for which did not exist in Japan, permit a quantitative evaluation of the extent to which intra-tissue deposits of radio-chemicals have occurred. Mr. Eisenbud offered to undertake this analysis for all of the 23 patients. Two specimens of urine were submitted to Mr. Eisenbud who arranged for them to be flown to the United States for immediate analysis. Five subsequent samples have been received and are now being analyzed in the United States. Their results will be promptly communicated. The results of the analyses which have been completed have already been reported to Dr. Kobayashi. It has been determined that the excretion of the radio-chemicals is of such a low order as to assure that the deposits of radio-isotopes in the tissues of these two patients give no medical basis for concern.

This, of course, applies only to the possibility, originally raised, that radioactive materials in the fumes of the men would produce injury in the years to come. There remains the injury produced by external radiation from the ash. I understand that the fishermen are now convalescing from the effects of this initial injury. The American specialists have not been able to make appropriate suggestions for action including therapy with regard to the twenty-three patients, for the reason that it has not thus far been possible to afford them an opportunity to make the necessary prior examinations.

I have informed the Japanese Government that if the Japanese doctors in charge of the twenty-three patients would like to have Dr. Morton leave a physician from his staff in Tokyo to relay reports on the condition of the patients as may subsequently be communicated to him and to maintain an immediate channel to Dr. Morton and his staff, such arrangements will be made.

I wish to emphasize again, in behalf of the United States Government, our readiness to do anything within our power to promote the recovery of the twenty-three patients and to extend any assistance needed for the resolution of the problems that have arisen in the wake of this most unfortunate and regrettable accident.

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