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FILE No.
ACTION OFFICER P. RYAN
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BRITISH DEFENCE RESEARCH AND SUPPLY STAFF
ANZAC PARK WING 8, 9, 10, 11. -2, 3, 4, 5
CONSTITUTION AVENUE,
CANBERRA, A.C.T. 2600
Telephone 482721 477 241

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UK unclassified
BR 456.3 696. 17/7/81-

Mr P Ryan
First Assistant Secretary
Department of National Development
and Energy
South Tower
CAGA Centre
Akuna Street
CANBERRA ACT 2601

22 February 1983

Dear Mr Ryan

NUCLEAR TESTS IN AUSTRALIA: HEALTH SURVEYS BY,
RESPECTIVELY, AUSTRALIA AND UK

7/2. - F55

Reference: Your letter 82/3073 dated 9 February 1983.

1. Herewith a statement by MOD(UK), elaborating on the announcement on 12 January 1983 of an independent health survey of those British civilians and armed servicemen who took part in the atmospheric nuclear test programme:-

"It is the MOD's view that the radiological safety precautions taken during and after the tests were completely satisfactory and that test personnel were not subjected to any significant health risks. The survey is accordingly designed to test the validity of this assessment. The survey will be conducted by tracing, from records already accessible to government, the subsequent histories of test personnel and comparing them with those of men who did not participate in the test programme. The study will be a mortality and cancer morbidity study, the latter being based on information available from the UK Cancer Register. It should be stressed that the survey will not involve medical examinations nor contact with individual participants in the tests.

In view of the length of time which has passed since the tests and the number of UK participants - approximately 15,000 men - it is expected that the full survey will take a considerable time to complete. It is intended that the results will be made public."

2. There is therefore a major difference envisaged between the Australian and UK surveys, in that it is not proposed to contact individuals in the latter. Much seems to hinge on a cancer record being available in the UK, the quality of that record as it applies to nuclear veterans resident in the UK, and its coverage of



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those who have taken up residence outside UK since the tests. These are matters that might well be raised during the visit proposed at Reference, which I have referred to Assistant Chief Scientific Adviser (Nuclear), MOD(UK), Mr Dennis Fakley.

Yours sincerely

Peter Reich

P G REICH
Head of Staff

4. Release of Maralinga MOA documents

*UK unclassified
BR 456.2 1986. 17/7/85*

The question of whether to agree to release these documents (as requested in London by note 41/82) is being energetically considered in UK, but I cannot at the moment, usefully predict the outcome or when it will be known.

5. Draft AIRAC report of September 1982

I understand that there is pressure in Australia to expedite the final version of this report. I cannot offer further guidance on the sections (eg section 7) in the draft that refer to the MOA except to advise that they should be omitted if the report is to be finalized before the decision at para 4 above is taken. On other parts of the report the following additional amendments have now been proposed by MOD(UK):-

Para 1.4: rewrite second sentence to read:

"The Atomic Weapons Research Establishment (UK) has provided radiation dosimetry information, available to them in UK concerning people identifiable as Australian Nationals at the nuclear test and experimental sites, AIRAC has examined these data".

Para 8.7: rewrite second sentence to read:

"The AWRE has supplied information available to them in UK on total recorded penetrating radiation exposures, for each calendar year, of people identifiable as Australian Nationals who were present at the nuclear test and experimental sites in Australia or at Christmas Island in the Pacific".

Para 8.7: to avoid confusion and bring the position up to date the last sentence should read:

"AWRE make the point that although their listing does not constitute a definitive, formal record or summary record of radiation doses or exposures, they nevertheless consider that there is confidence that it contains inter alia the names of those persons, identifiable as Australian citizens, who may have received exposures to ionising radiations above the very low threshold recordable level, normally 200 micro sieverts, during activities, under UK radiological protection control, associated with the UK nuclear weapons and experimental sites in Australia and the Pacific area".