

Officials Cite More U.S. Tests With Radiation

WASHINGTON, Feb. 9 (AP) — About 9,000 Americans, including children and newborns, were used in 154 human radiation tests sponsored by the Atomic Energy Commission, the Energy Department's cold war predecessor, Government officials said today.

The figures released by the Office of Human Radiation Experiments at the department indicate that the scope of the experimentation was greater than had been previously known. It does not include tests done by the Pentagon and other Federal agencies.

An assessment of the ethical implications of the Governmentwide human radiation experiments from the cold war years is being done by an outside advisory panel appointed by President Clinton.

A coalition of organizations representing radiation test survivors, called the Task Force on Radiation and Human Rights, today urged people who think they may have been a subject of an Energy Department test to come forward.

The experiments began in the 1940's. Some involved the deliberate release of radioactive materials into the environment. One used healthy Peruvian students; another used British subjects.

Some participated with little or no knowledge of the risks they faced, but Government investigators said they did not know for sure how many subjects were informed or to what degree.

In the 1950's, the commission had a policy of requiring informed consent from the human subjects, as well as other ethical guidelines, but the Energy Department's investigators said it was unclear whether any effort was made to insure that researchers knew the policy or to enforce it.