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NUCLEAR ACCIDENTS AT PALOMARES, SPAIN IN 1966 AND THULE,
GREENLAND IN 1968

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NUCLEAR ACCIDENTS AT PALOMARES, SPAIN IN 1966 AND THULE,
GREENLAND IN 1968

FOREWARD

(U) This brief account of the diplomatic history of the Palomares, Spain and Thule, Greenland nuclear weapon accidents was commissioned for the purpose of providing some insight into the demands which could be made on United States' ambassadors and their staffs should such an accident happen again.

(U) We have been fortunate that we have not had a major overseas accident of the scale of Palomares or Thule since 1968. One of the unfortunate by-products of this excellent nuclear safety record has been the atrophy of expertise and consciousness of the lessons learned from those accidents.

(U) In a number of important respects today's environment overseas is different from that of the late 1960's. A small but vocal opposition to Intermediate Nuclear Force deployments--quiescent now--is lurking just below the surface lacking a cause celebre. A potentially widening "nuclear allergy" exists, brought about through emerging, left of center-nuclear-free minded second generation leaderships in the post-World War II international system. These adverse "trends" are fueled by a concerted effort by the Soviet Union to undermine allied support for U.S. nuclear deployments.

(S) U.S. nuclear weapon deployments will remain a feature of deterrence in our alliance system for the foreseeable future. Deployed weapons are subject to accidents and incidents. It is simply a fact of life. Although every effort is made to reduce the risk of an accident with the deployed stockpile, the simple fact that deployed weapons must be maintained, modernized, trained with, and exercised means that some accident risk remains.

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(S) In addition to reducing accident risk to a minimum, we must be prepared to deal with the consequences of an accident should one happen. The Washington interagency group is convinced that the degree of damage to U.S. national security from any future nuclear accident or incident would depend in large measure on the quality of U.S. Government and host

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government management of the emergency. In short, if handled smoothly and effectively, the political costs could be minimized. If managed poorly, negative effects will be magnified.

(S)The United States' ambassador and his staff will play a key role in effective management of the U.S. Government response to an accident. As noted herein, embassies are generally ill-equipped to deal with such exigencies. The Department of State recently transmitted guidance to [redacted] key posts in the form of a model plan each ambassador will adapt to local conditions and install as part of his emergency action plan. [redacted] Although modest, the plan constitutes a first step

toward the goal of embassy preparedness--in partnership with the Departments of Defense and Energy, and host nation officials--to minimize any adverse impact on Alliance solidarity resulting from a nuclear accident or incident.

(U)Dr. James E. Miller of the Office of the Historian, Department of State, has done an outstanding job of surfacing the diplomatic problems of Palomares and Thule in a paper which is interesting reading. I hope this contribution to our understanding of the kinds of demands which could be made on our embassies is useful but continues to be unused.

Colonel Michael Barrett Seaton
Bureau of Political-Military Affairs
April 1985

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SUMMARY

(S)The January 17, 1966 and January 21, 1968 crashes of nuclear-weapons-equipped SAC B-52 bombers on the territory of two U.S. allies thrust the Embassies in Spain and Denmark into complex and ultimately unsuccessful negotiations to retain rights for SAC overflights and for the storage of nuclear

weapons. Other important and interrelated responsibilities assumed by the Embassies included managing a public relations effort designed to influence the citizens of the host state, assisting in efforts to clean up the contaminated crash sites, and settling the damage claims filed by the nationals of the host nation. All of these functions were carried out in cooperation with the Department of Defense. A clear division of responsibility emerged: the military concentrated on clean-up and claims settlement while the Embassy or Department of State assumed primary responsibility for retaining U.S. nuclear weapons rights. In Spain public relations matters constituted the major cause of conflict between the Embassy and military, while geographic separation gave the Department of Defense primary control of public relations in Greenland. The role of the American Ambassador and the depth of Embassy involvement during these crises varied in accordance with the circumstances of the accidents, the form of government of the host nation, and the character of the U.S. chief of mission.

(U)Certain clear lessons emerge from the two accidents. Within the limits imposed by atomic weapons information security, the United States should seek to provide the press with with all available information as quickly as possible. Expert technical assistance should be provided both at the crash site and at the Embassy as soon as possible after an accident. The United States should be ready to provide quick service for claims arising from an accident. The U.S. Ambassador must be in a position to assert his responsibility for all political activities in the host nation.

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PALOMARES, SPAIN, JANUARY 1966

The Incident

(U)At approximately 10:22 a.m., January 17, 1966, a KC 135 refueling aircraft operating from Moron AFB collided with a B-52 bomber of the Strategic Air Command in the skies over the southern Spanish village of Palomares. Seven U.S. airmen were killed. The four unarmed nuclear devices which the aircraft was carrying apparently broke loose from their moorings during the disintegration of the B-52. One bomb fell with other wreckage into the sea off Palomares; the other three bombs landed around the village. The non-nuclear charges on two of these devices exploded releasing quantities of plutonium into the air and onto the ground. Wreckage of the two aircraft was strewn over a wide area around the village, but, fortunately no townspeople were injured by the falling debris or by plutonium contamination.

(S)The U.S. Air Force took full control of on-site efforts to recover the wreckage and nuclear armament and to decontaminate the crash site. The Department of Defense also took charge of the settlement of claims arising from the accident. The U.S. Embassy in Spain initially had an exclusively political role: dealing with the impact of the accident on U.S.-Spanish relations. Subsequently, it moved into areas which initially had been under exclusive control of the Department of Defense: the settlement of claims arising from the accident, and the clean-up operations. The objective of American diplomacy was to retain Spanish defense cooperation even at the cost of modifying existing arrangements for nuclear overflights and accepting damaging restrictions on the release of information concerning Palomares imposed by the Spanish Government.

(S)The U.S. Embassy at Madrid was informed of the accident at Palomares by phone by its military liaison group within an hour of the crash. In turn it notified the Department of State of the available details of the crash and initial Spanish Government and public reaction. Ambassador Angier Biddle Duke had been attending a meeting of a major business association when an aide arrived to verbally inform him of the accident. He immediately left the meeting and drove to the Spanish Foreign Office to seek a meeting with Foreign Minister Ferdinando Maria Castiella. However, the Foreign Minister was not in his office and Duke reported the available details of the accident to the Under Secretary for Political Affairs,

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Adolfo Cortina. In his meetings with Cortina and other senior officials of the Spanish Foreign Office Duke attempted to coordinate a response to the accident and expressed U.S. apologies for the incident. Despite the fact that many of the details of the accident were known to both the Spanish and foreign press, Spanish officials requested that the "nuclear aspect" be "played down . . . in any public releases" and that Spain be "disassociated from any nuclear implications." Ambassador Duke instructed all U.S. agencies in Spain to follow the press guidance set out in a March 1964 "USAFE nuclear accident information plan" and withheld authorization for any public reference to the B-52's nuclear armament.¹ An initial press statement which did not mention the nuclear aspects of the accident was cleared with the Government of Spain and released at Torrejon AFB at 9:45 p.m. local time on January 17.

Initial Public Relations

(U) From the start of the Palomares recovery operation, the Embassy faced two interconnected public relations problems: 1) insuring accurate reporting in the media and 2) winning the agreement of Spanish authorities to provide as complete information on the operation as security considerations permitted. Without access to more information, the tendency of the press toward misrepresentation and sensationalism increased. The Franco regime, however, in spite of a certain mellowing of its authoritarian nature after a quarter century in power, saw the press as an adversary to be fended off rather than placated.

(S) From the beginning, Department of State officials wanted to deal publicly with the nuclear issue. The Spanish Government, however, strenuously objected to providing any details to the press, an attitude initially shared by U.S. military representatives on the scene at Palomares.² U.S. officials recognized that holding on to the trust and cooperation of the Franco regime was critical to the successful conclusion of the recovery of the bombs and to maintaining its basing and overflight rights. Thus, the Spanish Government held a veto power over the release of information. In order to maintain Spanish confidence, the Embassy and recovery teams at Palomares made conscious efforts to assure that the Spanish Government was kept fully informed of all aspects of the recovery operation. Ambassador Duke met frequently with Spanish officials, JUSMG kept the High General Staff informed of the Defense Department's actions at Palomares, while Secretary of State Rusk and General Earl Wheeler, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, sent personal messages to their Spanish counterparts thanking them for their cooperation and

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assuring them that the recovery operation was receiving constant attention at the highest levels of the U.S. Government.³

(S) The Franco regime's efforts to avoid mention of the B-52's nuclear armament collapsed on January 19 when United Press International reported not only that the B-52 was carrying nuclear bombs but that one was missing and hundreds of geiger counter equipped U.S. troops were combing the countryside around Palomares searching for signs of radioactivity. On January 20, the Spanish Government authorized release of a statement which admitted the B-52 carried nuclear armament but insisted that initial radiological surveys had established that no public health danger existed in the Palomares area. The statement represented a Spanish redrafting of an Embassy-proposed press release which provided fuller details of the nuclear aspects of the accident.⁴ By January 21 the nuclear contamination issue was receiving full play in the Spanish press. The failure of the U.S. and Spanish Governments to provide accurate information on the crash combined with the problem of the missing nuclear weapon created serious public relations problems for the Embassy for months afterwards.

(S) The concern of Spanish officials with the public relations aspects increased as the size of the foreign press corps covering the accident grew. In an effort to impose censorship on the Spanish public, the Franco Government banned the sale of foreign newspapers and news magazines. On January 21, the Spanish Foreign Office called in Duke to complain about an alarmist American wireservice story which attributed its sources to the U.S. Embassy. Franco had read the article and was upset. The Spanish Government threatened to take unspecified "independent action," in retaliation for the leak. Duke was able to refute that story's attribution to U.S. sources by contacting the UPI bureau chief in Madrid and thus to preserve close intergovernmental cooperation.⁵

(S) The key motivations for the Franco Government's sensitivity were its concern about the impact which stories about nuclear contamination would have on southern Spain's lucrative tourist industry and its fears that the underground and semi-legal opposition forces, including the outlawed Communist Party, would effectively exploit the incident in their campaign to topple the regime. Ironically, the sensationalism of the Communist-controlled and clandestine "Independent Spanish Radio" would have considerable effect on the populace of Palomares precisely because the information provided by their own government was both sketchy and believed unreliable. U.S. officials also suspected that the Government of Spain intended to use the bomb accident as a bargaining chip

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in the next round of base negotiations scheduled for 1968.⁶

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(S) For U.S. officials, the critical issue was limiting adverse publicity which could trigger a formal Spanish demand for the cessation of overflights of its territory by nuclear armed aircraft. The threat that such permission would be withdrawn first surfaced on January 19 when Spanish Vice President Munoz Grandes suggested that in future the United States conduct its refueling operations over international waters. Officials at the Spanish Foreign Office also complained to Embassy officials about holding refueling operations over their territory. Duke warned Washington that the speedy recovery of the missing fourth nuclear device was the key to reducing press coverage which could force the Spanish Government to suspend overflight permission. Continued intense press coverage would force the Spanish Government to take dramatic action to reassure restive domestic public opinion.⁷

(S) Duke's warning proved instantly prophetic. On January 22 Munoz Grandes met with the Chief of the U.S. JUSMG, Major General Stanley J. Donovan, to request the suspension of the overflight of Spanish territory by nuclear-armed U.S. aircraft. The Spanish Foreign Office initially told reporters that any changes in the flight paths of its aircraft were unilaterally made by U.S. authorities. However, in the face of continued intense press coverage of Palomares and rising discontent among influential segments of the Spanish intelligentsia and bureaucracy, Spanish Information Minister M. Fraga Iribarne told a January 29 press conference that U.S. nuclear armed overflights of Spain had been "permanently" suspended, adding that all U.S. medium bombers were being withdrawn from Torrejon AFB and that no nuclear armaments were stored on that base. Fraga did not hold any consultations with U.S. officials prior to making this statement.⁸

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The Question of a Joint Statement

(S) The United States, following its established policy, refrained from public comment on issues relating to its nuclear defense operations. The Embassy, however, was actively attempting to counter misinformation originating from the recovery site. Because of the isolated location of the recovery operation, security measures enforced by the government, and the limited value of news relating to the land clean-up operation, the majority of the foreign press covering the Palomares story stayed in Madrid, awaiting fresh developments in the recovery operations. All of these conditions produced misinformation and sensationalism.

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The Embassy was also concerned about the lack of information being provided by the Department of Defense's on site press-spokesman. The paucity of factual information provided correspondents visiting the scene tended to exacerbate already unfavorable reporting. In an effort to counter these factors, Ambassador Duke toured the recovery site on February 3 and upon his return to Madrid held a news conference at which he explained the progress of the clean-up operation as well as the technical difficulties facing the Navy in its search for the missing bomb. Duke's continued concern over accurate press coverage of the clean-up and salvage operations led him to strongly endorse a suggestion by the DOD press representative at the crash site for a press conference, jointly sponsored by the Embassy and Spanish government, and preferably held at Palomares, which would dispell rumors about contamination. The Spanish Government did not act upon this suggestion due to internal disagreements. After State Department-DOD consultations the idea was vetoed as "undesirable" by the U.S. Government.⁹

(c) Inaccurate reporting dogged U.S. officials. The day after Duke's February 3 press conference, the New York Times erroneously quoted him as identifying the missing bomb as an hydrogen device. In view of Spanish sensitivity to any discussion of the bomb's characteristics (particularly its killing power and radius); Duke obtained a retraction from the Times' Spanish correspondent, Tad Szulc.¹⁰

(S) Meanwhile the Embassy continued to press the Spanish Government for the release of a joint statement which would clarify the details of the Palomares accident and clean-up. In mid-February 1966, the Embassy submitted to the Foreign Office, the Spanish Atomic Energy Commission (JEN), and Vice President Munoz Grandes a State Department draft of a joint U.S.-Spanish statement. While initial reaction to the U.S. proposal was generally favorable, all three forwarded suggestions for changes in the text. An internal Spanish Government debate on the text effectively blocked the issuance of any statement. Vice President Munoz Grandes, in particular, was opposed to any public statement on the accident at a time when the Soviet Union had initiated a major propaganda offensive. He feared that the Soviet Union would simply exploit additional information to keep the issue before world public opinion. Information Minister Fraga and the JEN favored release of the text, while the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was divided on the issue. Finally, Franco vetoed any further disclosures. On February 25, the Embassy suggested that the United States consider issuing a unilateral statement.¹¹

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(S) On March 1, the press impasse was finally broken by the action of the Chairman of the JEN, Jose Maria Otero. Without clearance from either the Foreign Office or High General Staff of the Spanish Army, he discussed the contamination issue, outlined clean up operations, and confirmed that one of the nuclear weapons was still missing in a press interview. U.S. officials speculated that Otero's actions were encouraged by Information Minister Fraga, a leading proponent of openness with the press.¹² The following day, the Department of State released a previously prepared statement stressing the safety features of U.S. nuclear weapons and confirming the details of Otero's interview.

(S) On March 8 Ambassador Duke, Information Minister Fraga, and members of their families went swimming in the sea off Palomares to demonstrate the safety of the area for tourists. The germ of this idea may have originated with Spanish Desk Officer Frank Ortiz who in January 1966 suggested that "newsworthy" visitors patronize hotels near the crash site. The Spanish Government had scheduled a new hotel for opening in March at Mojacar close by Palomares and was very concerned that the adverse publicity would destroy the tourist season in that area. Duke conceived the idea of attending the opening and taking a swim. Joined by most of his staff, he took the plunge into the icy waters in the morning. Later that afternoon, Fraga and Duke took a second swim. The impact on world public opinion was immediate and highly favorable. This vivid proof that the sea was not endangered by contamination probably saved the tourist season in Southern Spain.¹³

(S) As the clean-up operation progressed successfully and local claims procedures began operating effectively, the major public relations problem facing Embassy officials was providing information on the effort to recover the missing nuclear weapon. In view of security considerations and the difficulties of securing Spanish agreement to the release of information, the Embassy secured the concurrence of the Air Force command in Spain for its recommendation that the United States inform the Franco Government that it intended to make appropriate information on recovery operations available to the press without prior consultations.¹⁴

Location of the Missing Bomb

(S) After an exhausting search, the missing bomb was finally located and tentatively identified on March 15, 1966. However, the reluctance of the commander on the scene, Rear Admiral William Guest, to release information without definite confirmation that the object was in fact the missing bomb ;

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forced the Embassy to cancel precipitously an early morning press conference on March 16. At the same time, leaks within the military chain of command outside Spain put increasing pressure on the Embassy and military recovery operation to provide some sort of information. Finally, on March 17 after confirmation that the bomb had been located, the Embassy issued a statement which had previously been prepared through consultations with the Department of State. Equipment problems and the loss of contact with the bomb for 9 days delayed final recovery.¹⁵

(S)The long search and subsequent recovery problems combined with the scarcity of information available reinforced press tendencies toward sensationalism. At the urging of U.S. representatives in Spain, including Ambassador Duke, the Department of Defense approved a plan to permit representatives of the press to view the bomb shortly after it was hauled aboard a U.S. Navy recovery vessel. The Embassy had apparently initially wanted the press to be present during the recovery operation to establish U.S. credibility but accepted military objections to this plan. As an alternative it suggested that Spanish officials and press pool representatives view the recovered bomb and that the press then receive a formal briefing on the recovery operation.¹⁶

(S)During the recovery operation, leaks from the Spanish representative at Palomares created additional press problems and Ambassador Duke sent an Embassy representative to the recovery site to "insure . . . press treatment . . . recovery operations protects and advances U.S. interests," through strict control of the information released. In a largely unsuccessful effort to minimize speculation, the United States had established a daily Navy-Air Force joint briefing at Palomares. However, the long delay in recovery of the missing bomb, the limited information being provided by military officials, isolation of the site, and the attendant growth of rumors defeated this aspect of the public relations effort and spawned sensationalistic accounts, particularly in the Western European press. In addition, the long simmering differences between the Embassy staff and the DOD press representatives at Palomares surfaced when Embassy officers made their unhappiness known to members of the press, complaining that the military treated them as "nuisances."¹⁷

(U)The Navy's inability to retrieve quickly the lost nuclear weapon after its discovery created additional problems for the Embassy. On the international level the Soviet Union was exploiting U.S. difficulties to attack the stationing of nuclear weapons outside U.S. national territory and demanding international verification of the recovery. Meanwhile a large and growing group of journalists was waiting in Madrid for

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permission to visit the crash site and view the results of the recovery operation. Press coverage of the clean up and recovery was limited, first by the need to keep everyone not associated with the operation away from areas of potential contamination at the land sites and then by security considerations and the practical impossibility of accomodating large numbers of press representatives on the recovery ships. The Franco Government, of course, preferred to keep the press away from the site entirely. Its aims were facilitated by the isolation of Palomares and the slow progress and generally unnewsworthy nature of daily recovery and clean-up operations. The vast majority of the press gladly preferred to await major developments in the comfort of Madrid's hotels.¹⁸

(S) On April 7, 1966, the naval task force retrieved the missing bomb. The Embassy notified the Spanish Foreign Office and Information Ministry while JUSMG reported the successful recovery to the High General Staff, Air Ministry and JEN. Ambassador Duke proceeded to the recovery site together with representatives of the Spanish Government.¹⁹ On April 8, the Spanish officials boarded a U.S. Navy recovery vessel and viewed the weapon. A small number of press representatives were brought alongside the recovery ship for a glimpse of the bomb and the U.S. military provided a briefing on the recovery operation for the the entire press corps. At the request of the Government of Spain, relayed through the Embassy, the recovery ship with its atomic cargo immediately departed for the United States without docking at any Spanish port. A majority of the press departed soon after the weapon recovery was completed.²⁰

(S) Palomares remained a public relations problem for the Embassy for nearly a decade afterwards. The annual anniversaries of the accident were marked by television and press retrospectives focusing on the effects of the crash on the people of Palomares. The Embassy was frequently requested to provide technical assistance for these inquiries and to explain the U.S. position. The population of the village declined rapidly as the soil became increasingly alkaline and incapable of supporting the area's primary cash crop, tomatoes. In addition, many villagers departed out of fear of radiation effects. Internal opponents of the Franco regime, initially spearheaded by the Duchess of Medina-Sidonia, attacked the Spanish Government, claiming it had failed to safeguard the interests of its own citizens, particularly their rights to claim damages from the United States. The Embassy originated a plan to show U.S appreciation to the people of Palomares for the assistance they rendered to the downed aviators and their patience during the subsequent clean up by building a water desalination plant to assist in irrigation

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projects. The idea, which Washington approved with some reservations, ran into a series of bureaucratic impasses in Spain.²¹

Conditional Reinstatement of Permission for Overflights

(S) Once the Spanish Government suspended overflight permission for SAC nuclear armed bombers, the Embassy, through the JUSMG, was the primary channel through which the United States sought a reinstatement of its former privilege. Initially, the Embassy counseled Washington to avoid bringing up the overflight issue until the fourth atomic device was recovered. Negotiations for basing rights for three U.S. fighter squadrons assigned to NATO (from which Spain was excluded) and the approach of the renegotiation of the U.S.-Spanish Defense Cooperation Agreement further complicated the U.S. position.²²

(S) Shortly after the recovery of the missing bomb, the Embassy advised the Department of State that it believed the Spanish Government would agree to permit flights of nuclear equipped-aircraft over the Straits of Gibraltar, but that this concession would increase Spanish resistance to allowing nuclear armed aircraft to overfly its territory, adding that it could not judge "when, if indeed ever, . . . GOS would be willing again . . . expose itself to . . . possibility, however remote, of another Palomares."²³

(S) Nevertheless, acting on instructions from the Departments of State and Defense, the chief of JUSMG met with Munoz Grandes on May 3, 1966 to begin a long and ultimately unsuccessful effort to resume SAC flights over Spanish territory. While Munoz Grandes appeared willing to consider permitting U.S. aircraft to cross southern Spain via the base at Rota, strong opposition to any rescinding of the ban on overflights, led by the Spanish Foreign Office, delayed any final action on the U.S. request. Finally, at the end of December 1966, Munoz-Grandes informed the chief of JUSMG that the resumption of overflights by nuclear armed aircraft was "out of the question" for the foreseeable future. Munoz Grandes did leave open, subject to further study by the Spanish Government, the possible use of Rota airfield "as (a) stopover."²⁴

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Settlement of Claims

(S) Although the Embassy showed no desire to interfere with the on-site operations of the Air Force and Navy it was slowly dragged into a more active role in the Palomares area by the complaints of local residents (magnified through the reporting of the Spanish and international press) that claims settlements were progressing too slowly. Ambassador Duke urged that the process be sped up. On February 12, 1966, at a meeting of the chief of JUSMG and the High General Staff, Spanish officers requested that the claims agreements forms used by the United States be reworded to permit filing later or supplementary claims for 10 to 20 years after the accident. They pointed out that the effects of the crash on the citizens and land of Palomares might not be fully revealed for many years after the accident. The Embassy contacted the Department of State and urged speedy consideration and action on the position of the Spanish Government.²⁵ Meanwhile, claims processing was suspended at Spanish request. After consideration of the legal aspects of the Spanish request, the Department of State forwarded a letter for delivery to the Spanish Government which explained the procedures outlined in the Foreign Claims Act and provided assurances that claims could be filed for an extended period of time following the accident. Negotiations on the claims settlements issue took place on February 19 and 21, 1966 between the chief of JUSMG and a representative of the Spanish High General Staff. The negotiators reached agreement that the assurances contained in the U.S. letter satisfied Spanish concerns.²⁶

(C) Claims settlements continued for years after the accident. Francisco Simo Orts, the Spanish fisherman who saw the fourth bomb land at sea and assisted in rescuing downed US airmen, filed a series of claims against the United States which embarrassed both U.S. and Spanish officials and kept the issue of U.S. fairness in the press. The Embassy also inherited responsibility for handling claims after the military clean-up teams left Palomares, serving as a clearing house for the inquiries and complaints of the Spanish Government. The satisfaction of claims of Spanish citizens remained an irritant in U.S.-Spanish relations for nearly a decade. In 1976, the Embassy braced for major demonstrations which would mark the tenth anniversary of the Palomares crash. None took place. Internal political matters connected with the transition from dictatorship to democracy in Spain had evidently lessened public interest in the 1966 crash.²⁷

Clean-Up Operations

(U)As was the case with claims issues, the Embassy initially left the clean-up operations to the representatives of the Department of Defense at Palomares. However, the requirements of an effective public relations effort and of effective communication with the Spanish Government inevitably led to an increased Embassy role in these matters.

(S)Initially, Ambassador Duke's major requirement was accurate information on the on-site operations. Teams of nuclear experts from the Department of Defense and the Atomic Energy Commission had arrived at the crash site within days of the accidents and were directing the clean-up and bomb land-portion of the search for the missing nuclear bomb. The Embassy lacked a specialist in nuclear matters Duke relied upon his military attaches to provide the Embassy with full information on the recovery and decontamination operations. Utilizing their contacts with the 16th Air Force, the attaches were able to provide the Ambassador with a frequent (initially daily) written report on operations at Palomares which was then summarized and passed on to the State Department.²⁸

(C)In early February the first concern of U.S. officials in Spain was rapid completion of a safe clean-up operation. The thoroughness of the operations carried out to insure the safety of the local population had the paradoxical effect of increasing public concern with the effects of radiation and of keeping the Palomares story in the forefront of news for the Spanish and international press. In addition, the tourist season was approaching. Tourism was a principal element in the rapid expansion of the Spanish economy in the 1960's and a critical factor in the modernization of Spanish politics and society. Both the United States and Spanish Governments were eager to eliminate the memories of Palomares in order to assure the continued growth of this key element in Spain's development. However, accelerating the pace of the decontamination effort proved difficult. On February 2, 1966, General Delmar Wilson, the on-site commander of the clean-up operation signed an agreement with the Spanish on-site representative, General Arturo Montel, which committed the United States to build a disposal pit near Palomares in which all contaminated soil registering 7,000 counts per minute (cpm) on a geiger counter would be stored. U.S. military officials quickly discovered that these ground rules for removal of contaminated soil could not be met by the deadline established by the tourist season. They also concluded that these figures were excessive from the safety standpoint and would seriously

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complicate efforts to remove contaminated materials. Finally, the Embassy and JUSMG opposed the creation of a nuclear dump in Spain since this would only become a monument which anti-nuclear and anti-American forces could utilize for the political purposes. DOD officials argued that a reading of 50,000 cpm was perfectly safe and requested the Embassy to secure Spanish approval for using this level as the benchmark for soil removal. The Department of Defense proposed to remove all soil with readings above this level and to plow under and water down soil with lesser readings. 29

(S)Based on advice provided by the U.S Atomic Energy Commission, the Department of State believed that a reading level of 100,000 cpm was perfectly satisfactory to protect public health and instructed the Embassy to seek an accord on soil removal based on that level as the benchmark. In order to assist Embassy and Department of Defense representatives in Spain, the Atomic Energy Commission sent two American nuclear energy specialists to Madrid in early February. Dr. John Hall was the Assistant Director for International Relations for the AEC. Dr. Wright Langham was the AEC's expert on plutonium contamination. He had previously worked at the Palomares site. Langham would remain in Madrid until mid-March to serve both as the Embassy contact with the JEN and as a special advisor to Ambassador Duke on nuclear matters. In addition to providing advice for Ambassador Duke, both men were instructed to provide technical explanations to buttress the U.S. positions in negotiations with the Spanish Government over soil clean-up operations. The State Department also provided the Embassy with a Washington interagency-approved position paper on decontamination for use in dealing with the Spanish Government. This paper reiterated U.S. concern that the Spanish cpm level guideline for soil removal was much too low and would needlessly delay decontamination operations to the detriment of both Spanish tourism and public relations aspects of the Palomares recovery while feeding local fears regarding the effects of radiation. 30

(S)Armed with this technical aid, the Embassy arranged a meeting between U.S. and Spanish atomic energy experts on February 15. American scientists argued that the 100,000 cpm benchmark for soil removal was adequate for public health and safety. The Spanish scientists did not contest this position on technical grounds but would not accept it as the basis for continuing decontamination operations. U.S. officials were aware that clearance of their proposal would require action at a higher and political level of the Spanish Government. On February 17, the U.S. scientists and the chief of JUSMG met with representatives of the High General Staff. The Spaniards continued to press for soil removal to the 7000 cpm level. The

U.S. representatives repeated their arguments for utilization of a 100,000 cpm benchmark. Finally, the two sides reached a compromise. The United States would plow up two plots of ground registering a 60,000 cpm reading. In one plot the plowing would reach a depth of 8 inches. This land would be watered and broken up in the internationally-accepted manner proscribed for decontamination. The second plot would be plowed to the depth of 4 inches--the depth normally plowed by Spanish farmers. If readings taken on these two plots were at a normal level, the Spanish Government would abandon its demands for soil removal to the 7,000 cpm level. A copy of the Washington interagency paper and a copy of the telegram outlining the verbal agreement are attached as appendices C and D respectively.³¹

(S)The Department of State approved the compromise but expressed reservations about utilizing a 60,000 cpm benchmark for soil removal, arguing that this might set a precedent for future decontamination operations which would needlessly complicate U.S. efforts. It provided suggested wording for an agreement with the Spanish Government which would permit the United States to hold to a 100,000 cpm level as the benchmark for future clean-up operations.³²

(S)The soil testing was completed on February 21, 1966. U.S. and Spanish scientists agreed that the cpm levels registered after the experiment were at "reasonable levels" for public health and safety. Based on these conclusions, the Spanish Government abandoned its 7,000 cpm benchmark. Contaminated soil already collected was shipped to the United States for final disposal. The remaining areas were plowed under and watered down. The benchmark of 60,000 cpm became the practical measure for soil removal.³³

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THULE, GREENLAND, JANUARY 1968

(U)At approximately 3:40 pm, January 21, 1968, a SAC B-52 bomber carrying nuclear weapons crashed on the 7-foot-thick ice of North Star Bay approximately 7 miles from the runway at Thule AFB. The aircraft had been attempting an emergency landing after a fire broke out in its heating system. Six crewmen bailed out successfully and were subsequently rescued. A seventh died during the bailout procedure. The four nuclear devices remained within the aircraft and broke up upon impact. Alpha radiation was released in the crash site area. In addition, small fragments from the aircraft passed through the ice pack and settled at the bottom of North Star Bay.

(U)The B-52 crash occurred at a particularly sensitive time for the government of Danish Prime Minister Jens Otto Krag, since a national election campaign was in its final days. The Danish Government, upon receipt of information of the crash (apparently through military channels), released a statement (January 22, 1968) which claimed that Denmark did not permit flights by nuclear armed aircraft over any part of its national territory, including Greenland, and stressed that the plane had been attempting an emergency landing after encountering inflight problems. The text of this statement was not cleared with the U.S. Government prior to its release. The United States had operated its nuclear armed aircraft over Greenland since the conclusion of a 1957 agreement with the Government of Denmark.³⁴

(U)Because the wreckage was located in a remote and lightly populated area, claims did not play a major role in the Thule incident. The distance between the crash site and Denmark reinforced the clear division of responsibility between the military and U.S. Embassy already evident after the Palomares accident. The Department of Defense took charge of the recovery and clean-up operations at the crash site, and assumed responsibility for the payment of claims arising from the accident. In addition, the Defense Department public relations teams took charge of the press covering the recovery operation in Greenland and were the primary source of information for reporters in Washington. However, Denmark's democratic politics put an even greater premium on the skillful handling of public relations by Ambassador Katherine White and the Embassy staff in Copenhagen.

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Initial Public Relations Efforts

(S) Within hours of the first news of the crash, the Embassy faced a mounting volume of requests from Danish journalists to travel to Thule. These requests were referred through the Air Attache to the USAF Foreign Liaison Office. The Embassy cautioned both the Departments of State and of Defense that U.S. failure to grant permission to travel to Thule AFB and to facilitate the work of the press in this frigid area would create serious political problems since it would be interpreted as an affront to Danish territorial sovereignty.³⁵

(S) The lessons of Palomares concerning the need for a good public relations program were in the forefront of U.S. Government concern in Washington. On January 23, the Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs, John Leddy, met with Danish Ambassador Torben Ronne. Leddy opened the discussion by stressing the need for providing the press with as much information as possible, consonant with security requirements, on both the crash and the clean-up operation. He pointedly cited the bad precedents created by press censorship at Palomares. Leddy secured Ambassador Ronne's approval for a Department of Defense press release describing the findings of a ground survey team at the crash site. Ronne urged the quickest possible release of the document. The United States repeatedly cleared its press releases with the Danish Government during the first stages of the Thule operation.

This action may have been designed to establish reciprocity with the Danes on public relations issues. If so, the effort failed. The Danish Government repeatedly issued statements without prior U.S. approval.³⁶

(U) The immediate problem for both governments was insuring the availability of proper support and transportation for Danish and American reporters desiring to visit Greenland. In addition to troublesome climatic conditions, the arrival of reporters threatened to overwhelm the limited facilities of Thule AFB already straining under the requirements of supporting recovery operations in sub-zero temperatures. In spite of protests by local commanders, the U.S. Government insisted that facilities be provided for the press. Fortunately, the forbidding conditions in Greenland and other major stories (in particular the capture of the U.S.S. Pueblo and the Tet offensive) quickly diverted international press attention. By early February the press corps had left Thule but the story remained a major item of interest in Denmark.³⁷

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Reaction in Denmark

(U)The need to provide accurate and credible information on the Thule accident was underlined by the response of the Danish press. Anti-American feeling, fueled by the war in Vietnam, reached its peak in Europe during the late 1960's. Even normally pro-American parts of that press publicly called into question the honesty of the U.S. Government and reported that U.S. aircraft had frequently overflown Greenland, fueling suspicion that the United States had violated its agreements with the Danish Government. Danish participation in the study of the nuclear effects of the crash, however, strengthened the credibility of U.S. public statements.³⁸

(U)Due to the distances and time problems involved in coordinating information between Washington, Thule, and Copenhagen, Embassy press officers played a limited role in the U.S. public relations effort which was the primary responsibility of Air Force public relations teams at Thule AFB and in Washington. The Embassy information officer, in cooperation with the Air Attache and Embassy press office, arranged transportation for 21 Danish and European journalists to Thule and accompanied them on the visit. The press office also managed to coordinate a nearly simultaneous release of information with Washington by taking down the texts of Department of Defense press bulletins over the phone, copying them, and then providing them to Danish journalists. Department of Defense films on nuclear safety were flown from Washington to Copenhagen for screening by the Danish press. The European Command of the U.S. Army provided the Embassy with a specialist in nuclear matters who assisted press office personnel in preparing and delivering press briefings on such potentially sensitive subjects as safe levels of radioactivity and decontamination procedures. The Embassy also reported that it found a Department of Defense guidance on nuclear matters, prepared after the Palomares accident, of value in its dealings with the press.³⁹

(U)On February 5, 1968, the U.S. command at Thule began sending a daily report to Washington and the Embassy on the clean-up operations, designed for briefing the press. The daily information summary was replaced on March 16, 1968 by a system of infrequent releases marking new stages in the progress of the clean-up operation. In the meantime, Danish press interest in the Thule crash began to recede. U.S. cooperation with the Government of Denmark on health and environmental safety overcame the effects of initially hostile press reporting and reestablished credibility with the Danish

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public. As early as February 8 Danish scientists returning from Thule reported that no evidence existed of immediate danger to the population of Greenland from the crash.⁴⁰ To further strengthen the sense of U.S. concern, Ambassador White made a personal visit to the Thule area on February 24-28. White initially proposed a personal visit to the site on February 2. The Ambassador was accompanied by her Deputy Chief of Mission and by a delegation of Danish Government officials and press. Both White and Danish officials stressed the speed and efficiency of the clean-up operations at a press conference.⁴¹ The program of combining the quick release of accurate information, facilitating the travel and accommodations of Danish and foreign journalists, and cooperation with the Government of Denmark paid major dividends for the United States by improving the tone of Danish press coverage and increasing public confidence in the ability and determination of the United States to handle the clean-up operations safely.

Clean-Up Operations

(S)The inhabitants of the Thule area, an estimated 650 Greenlanders, were never in any danger of direct contamination from the crash. The area around the crash site was immediately sealed off by Thule AFB personnel to prevent any chance of contamination of the population. Local concern about the effects of radiation centered on indirect contamination through the entry of plutonium into the food chain. Of particular concern was the possibility that radioactive wreckage might have passed through the ice flow and contaminated the sea floor. Statements issued by scientists from the Danish Atomic Energy Commission who participated in the clean-up operations and by the subsequent follow-up examination of the ocean floor conducted during the summer of 1968 by the Department of Defense greatly allayed these fears.⁴²

(U)During the winter, Department of Defense directed clean-up operations centered on recovery of aircraft wreckage, including pieces of the four nuclear weapons, and the collection of contaminated ice and snow. The major problems facing the military were delays caused by bad weather and the assembling of adequate equipment. Core samples were taken from the ice to ascertain the depth to which radioactivity had penetrated. The clean-up proceeded from the edges of the crash site to the center so the burned-out crash impact area was the last to be cleaned up. Recovered debris together with contaminated water were then packed and shipped to the United States for final disposal.

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(S)The clean-up operations produced only minimal economic disruption for the inhabitants of Thule. Most of the restricted area was reopened for use in April and the SAC clean-up operation was finished by mid-April. Tests run by Danish scientists on the plant and marine life in the area during the spring indicated that the crash had had no effect on the local ecology. In August 1968, U.S. submarine vehicles

scanned the ocean floor for missing debris,

A few small pieces of debris which did not pose a threat of contamination were discovered.⁴³

Most of the discussions relating to nuclear clean-up and monitoring of the crash site were carried out by scientific teams representing the two governments. The U.S. team was organized and led by the Department of Defense. The Embassy played no significant role in clean-up operations.

B1, B3

B1, B3

Nuclear Overflight and Storage

(U)In matters relating to nuclear policy the Embassy in Denmark played a much more restricted role than did the Embassy in Spain after the Palomares accident. The Danish Government chose to utilize its Embassy in Washington to convey its views and carry on most of the substantive negotiations on nuclear policy questions with the United States.

(S)The major objective of the Government of Denmark in its discussions with the United States was to secure a joint statement that no atomic weapons were stored in Greenland and that the frequently-observed B-52 flights into Thule and over Greenland were by aircraft that did not carry nuclear armament. (The Danish press was full of stories quoting Greenlanders who claimed that B-52 aircraft regularly flew over the island and landed at Thule AFB.) The United States, as a matter of policy, wished to avoid any statements regarding the storage or transportation of its nuclear armaments. On January 26, 1968, U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Leddy submitted to the Danes a draft statement which avoided any mention of the nuclear issue. Leddy noted that

the United States and Denmark had agreed in 1957 that their 1951 defense accord granted the United States the right both to store weapons at Thule AFB and to overfly Greenland with nuclear armed aircraft. Leddy also underlined U.S. irritation over the Danish Government's failure to consult with it prior to making public statements on nuclear policy.⁴⁴

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(S)On February 7, shortly after the formation of a new Danish Government, Ambassador White met with Foreign Minister Poul Hartling at the Dane's request. Hartling presented White

with the text of a statement which he planned to read to the Danish parliamentary committee on foreign affairs. This statement assured parliament that no nuclear weapons were stored in Greenland and that the new ministry was entering into negotiations with the United States to insure that none would in the future. White replied that U.S. policy was neither to confirm nor deny matters relating to nuclear arms. Hartling assured the Ambassador that this statement did not imply that his government intended to seek to renegotiate the 1951 defense cooperation agreement. These assurances were repeated to White by Ambassador Ronne, who had returned to Copenhagen for consultations following the formation of a new ministry. Ronne stressed the need for U.S. comprehension of Denmark's position. The Danish Government apparently hoped to win Embassy endorsement for its action in making a public statement on nuclear storage and overflights.⁴⁵

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(U) The following day the Danish parliament passed a motion instructing its government to seek "absolute guarantees" from the United States that Denmark would remain a nuclear-free zone.

(S) During the negotiations which followed, the Embassy played a secondary role: providing information on public opinion, the attitudes of Danish civilian and military officials, and the negotiating positions of the Danish Government and suggesting U.S. negotiation strategy based on this information. Talks between the United States and Denmark took place in Washington.⁴⁶

(S) The United States sought to preserve its rights to nuclear storage and overflights as outlined in the 1957 agreement. Negotiations conducted by Assistant Secretary of State Leddy and Ambassador Ronne resulted in a May 31, 1968 exchange of notes between the two governments which supplemented the 1951 defense agreement. The United States agreed that it would neither store atomic weapons in Greenland nor initiate overflights of Danish territory without prior consultations with the Government of Denmark. However, in a separate oral statement to Ronne (May 10), Leddy noted that conditions of extreme and sudden peril to the Atlantic Alliance which did not permit sufficient time for consultations with the Danish Government might lead the United States unilaterally to resume overflights of Greenland. The Danish Government dropped its request for a U.S. statement endorsing its position on nuclear weapons (May 16) and subsequently issued a unilateral declaration which reaffirmed its earlier statements. In keeping with its standing policy, the United States made no comment.⁴⁷

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Coordination Between the Embassy and the Recovery Operation

(U)Distance and the isolation of the crash site warranted the Embassy policy of non-interference in recovery operations. In addition, the Embassy had no contingency plans for coping with a nuclear accident and the Embassy officers had no training in this field. Moreover, the Mission in Denmark lacked specialists in nuclear affairs and in the days following the crash urgently sought the loan of a qualified specialist in nuclear affairs from the Embassy in Stockholm. As earlier noted, the Department of Defense came to the rescue when it authorized the loan of an officer from the European Command with the necessary technical expertise and the ability to deal with the press.

(~~S~~)Nevertheless, the Embassy played an important though limited role in facilitating contact between U.S. and Danish scientists. Ambassador White insisted on acting as the go-between for Defense Department scientists and their Danish counterparts. The Embassy did the groundwork for a joint meeting at Copenhagen between a team of U.S. scientists led by Dr. Carl Walske, Assistant Secretary of Defense for Nuclear Energy, and representatives of the Danish Atomic Energy Agency. All messages between the U.S. scientific team and the Danish Government were sent through the Embassy in order to maintain . . . excellent coordination among all American agencies which has characterized . . . B-52 crash."⁴⁸ The Embassy also provided communications facilities between the Department of Defense Science Team and Washington. Initially, communications between the DOD and Danish representatives travelled through a number of channels. However, once the Embassy became aware of this, it insisted that all future contacts must go through it, permitting the State Department to stay up to date with the scientific and technical aspects of the negotiations over the clean-up operation.⁴⁹

(~~S~~)The Embassy also played an important role in the coordination of the texts of joint U.S.-Danish statements on scientific and technical aspects of the clean-up and recovery operations. Finally, during the summertime U.S. and Danish ecological surveys of North Star Bay and environs, Embassy officials worked with the representatives of the Danish Government on the public information program.⁵⁰

(U)Overall cooperation between the Embassy and Department of Defense representatives was extremely close and appears to have been unmarred by any serious policy or personality disputes.

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Claims

(U)The Danish Government declined to press any claims against the United States arising from the accident. The Department of Defense handled the payment of local claims arising from the accident. These claims were minimal and the Embassy does not appear to have taken any role in the settlement procedures.⁵¹

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CONCLUSIONS

(U) While the documentation available for this study was not sufficient to trace the daily activities of either the Ambassador or the Embassy staffs during the crises which followed the crash of B-52's at Palomares and Thule, it does permit certain conclusions concerning the role of the Ambassador, the tasks performed by the Embassy, and the relationship of the Embassy to the U.S. military during the recovery and clean-up operations.

(U) Both Ambassadors confined themselves to traditional diplomatic functions, seeking to establish cooperation with the host government and to provide information which would put U.S. actions in the most favorable light before the publics of Spain, Denmark, and Greenland. Still, a good deal of flexibility existed for the definition of the ambassadorial role during these incidents and the degree to which the Ambassador took a hand in the resolution of events was determined by the circumstances of the accident and the personality of the incumbent. On the whole, Ambassador Duke took a more active role than Ambassador White both in diplomatic exchanges with the host government and in the public diplomacy function of his mission.

(U) Geography was a factor in the role which Ambassadors had in these crises. Although Palomares was situated in a remote part of Spain, it was on the European mainland and close enough to the centers of Spain's booming tourism trade to endanger part of Spain's economy as well as heighten concern about the possibility of an accidental nuclear explosion throughout the western Mediterranean area and northern Europe. The B-52 crash near Thule occurred in a virtually uninhabited area, offshore, and close to a U.S. military facility. These factors in the Thule incident led to greater Department of Defense control and less Embassy involvement.

(U) The differing experiences and managerial styles of the two Ambassadors also interacted with the particular circumstances of the two incidents. Both Ambassadors were political appointees, but Duke had previously served as Chief of Protocol at the Department of State and, possessing a more complete knowledge of the foreign policy-making apparatus in Washington, was potentially in a better position to gain acceptance of his views. More importantly, Duke's particular situation required a more aggressive representation of U.S. interests. The United States was seeking to preserve its nuclear rights and to widen the scope of the information made

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issues related to the clean up and to claims arising from the accident. This made the Embassy in Spain and the Ambassador a key figure in the complex negotiations which finally resolved the Palomares incident.

(S) On the other hand, within hours of the crash at Thule, the Danish Government began aggressively seeking concessions from the United States through their Ambassador in Washington. Thus the Embassy in Denmark was largely bypassed on matters of policy and handled more routine matters. Moreover, the documentation indicates that Ambassador White handed responsibility for these matters to her deputy chief of mission who, while very active, probably lacked the weight with both the highest levels of the Danish Government and senior U.S. officials which an Ambassador often enjoys.

(U) The Embassy role in both episodes was almost exclusively non-technical in character. Inadequately staffed to handle the scientific and technical problems arising from the accidents, both Embassies relied upon the Department of Defense, the Atomic Energy Commission, and the Department of State for technical advice. This essential technical support was quickly available in Spain but was not immediately available in the Danish case. Coordination on technical matters, such as clean-up, decontamination, and weapons recovery, was performed primarily by the Defense attaches who utilized their familiarity with the agencies and commands of the Defense Department and with the military establishment of the host nation to provide the Embassy with accurate information and advice. In addition, in Spain, the Chief of JUSMG was able to utilize a close relationship with Munoz Grandes to improve inter-governmental cooperation on the recovery and clean-up operations and to assist the Embassy's ultimately unsuccessful efforts to regain Spanish permission for overflights by nuclear armed aircraft

(U) Throughout both incidents the overriding concerns of the Embassy were the impact of the accident on the U.S. public image and the retention of special rights and privileges relating to the movement and storage of nuclear weapons. The Embassy in Spain faced almost unsurmountable public relations problems due to the authoritarian nature of the Spanish regime which sought to impose a heavy-handed censorship on the press and thus increased public concerns and suspicions. Profiting from the lessons of the Palomares incident and from the requirements of Danish democracy, the Embassy in Denmark was able to create a more successful public relations effort after the Thule accident.

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(S) Neither Embassy was able to influence significantly the host government on the matter of U.S. nuclear weapons rights. In the case of Denmark, the decision was made to revoke those rights within hours of the Thule crash. In the case of Spain, the Embassy's efforts were undercut by the inability of U.S. recovery teams to find the missing nuclear device and a resultant public outcry which drove the Franco regime toward a cancellation of permission for U.S. overflights.

(U) Cooperation between the agencies of the Defense Department and the Embassies was good: In Spain, the Embassy felt compelled to prod the military over the speed of its claims repayment operation, but also provided the Department of Defense with badly-needed assistance in negotiations over both claims settlements procedures and standards for contamination clean-up.⁵²

(U) Finally, both missions inherited responsibility for final settlement of legal problems arising from the crash. In the case of the Embassy in Denmark, these responsibilities were very limited due to the site of the crash and the disinclination of the Danish Government to press any claims. The Palomares crash, however, produced a long lasting series of headaches for the Embassy in Spain, arising primarily from legal claims but also involving the actions of opponents of the Franco regime. The Embassy in Spain continues to take action on problems related to the 1966 crash at Palomares.

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NOTE ON SOURCES

(U) This study was based on the files of the Department of State. In preparing it, primary reliance was placed on the Madrid and Copenhagen Post files and upon the files of the Danish Desk. The Central files of the Department of State were also consulted but they yielded little useful information. Other sources included press accounts, books published in the aftermath of the Palomares accident and information supplied by officers of the Department of State.

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NOTES

1. Madrid tel. 839, Jan. 17, 1966, Confid-NoFor. Def 18 Madrid Post Files (Hereinafter cited MPF). On the release of information to the press, cf. Madrid tel. 846, Jan. 17, 1966, Confid., Def 17, MPF. Detailed accounts of the initial actions of the embassy staff are in Tad Szulc, The Bombs of Palomares (NY, 1967), pp. 54-62 and Flora Lewis, One of Our H-Bombs Is Missing (NY, 1967), pp. 63-68. Both are based on interviews conducted shortly after the accident.

2. Tel. 839 from Madrid, Jan. 17, 1966, Confid. op. cit.

3. Deptel. 851 to Madrid, Jan. 22, 1966, Secret, Def 18.1, MPF. Unnumbered Department of Defense tel. to the Embassy in Madrid, Jan. 22, 1966, *ibid.* Cf. Madrid tel. 838, Jan. 21, 1966, Def. 17, *ibid.*

4. Madrid tels. 855 and 857, Jan. 19, 1966, both Secret. Madrid 859, Jan. 20, 1966, Secret, all Def 17, MPF. DOD officials at Palomares initially attempted to place a veil of secrecy around all aspects of the accident to avoid exposure of the nuclear weapons on board the B-52. Szulc, whose presentation of the activities of the Embassy is consistently favorable, is highly critical of U.S. military efforts at press control and later DOD public affairs programs. He enjoyed a good relationship with Embassy personnel and his criticisms of the military public relations effort, in addition to reflecting a reporter's pique with the efforts at a news blackout, apparently magnified Embassy frustrations with the DoD handling of its on-site press briefings. Bombs of Palomares, pp. 114-15, 123, 168-69, 214-15. Lewis, while critical of the DOD public relations effort more accurately places most of the blame for the lack of information on the Spanish Government and notes U.S. Embassy irritation with Spain's efforts at censorship. One of Our H-Bombs, pp. 101-02, 176.

5. Madrid tel. 871, Jan. 22, 1966, Secret, Def 17, MPF.

6. Ibid.

7. Madrid tel. 869, Jan. 21, 1966, Confid. Cf. Madrid tel. 873, Jan. 23, 1966, Confid. Tel. JUSMG to CINCEUR, Jan. 22, 1966, Secret, all Def 17, MPF. See, Szulc, The Bombs of Palomares, p. 117 on trend of press reporting.

8. Madrid tel. 896, Jan. 26, 1966, Secret. Madrid tel. 914, Jan. 29, 1966, Confid., all Def 17, MPF. The extra-legal opposition capitalized on the crash to mount a small and peaceful demonstration outside the U.S. Embassy on Feb. 2, 1966. Franco's police eventually broke this march up.
9. Madrid tel. 951, Feb. 5, 1966, Secret, Def 17, MPF. Notes of a conversation with Ambassador Duke, Feb. 2, 1966, Secret, Def 18.1 MPF. Madrid tel. 966, Feb. 9, 1966, Confid, Def 17, MPF. The proposal for a Palomares press conference was turned down in Deptel. 941, Feb. 12, 1966, Secret, Def 18.1, MPF. No rationale for this decision was outlined in the telegram. When Duke's proposal failed to win the agreement of the Spanish Government, the Embassy suggested a joint TV appearance by U.S. and Spanish scientists. Madrid tel. 974, Feb. 11, 1966, Confid., Def 17, MPF. Cf. Szulc, Bombs of Palomares, pp. 168-69.
10. Madrid tel. 942, Feb. 4, 1966, Confid., Def 17, MPF. A somewhat garbled version of this incident is in Szulc, Bombs of Palomares, p. 175.
11. Madrid tel. 1020, Feb. 18, 1966, Secret. Madrid tel. 1066, Feb. 25, 1966, Confid., both Def 17, MPF.
12. Madrid tel. 1099, Mar. 2, 1966, Secret, Def 17, MPF.
13. Ortiz to Duke, Jan. 20, 1966, Confid., Def. 18.1, MPF. Szulc, Bombs of Palomares, pp. 219-227 for further details.
14. Madrid tel. 1239, Mar. 22, 1966, Confid., Def 17, MPF.
15. On the problems of the recovery operation and its effect on press relations, see Sculz, Bombs of Palomares, pp. 234-45; Lewis, One of Our H-Bombs, p. 213.
16. Madrid tel. 1276, Mar. 26, 1966, Secret, Def 17, MPF.
17. Unnumbered telegram from Madrid to the Secretary of Defense, Mar 24, 1966, Confid. Madrid tel. 1269, Mar. 25, 1966, Secret, both Def 17, MPF. Sculz, Bombs of Palomares, pp. 215-16, reprints part of one of the press conferences which vividly present the press relations problems created by efforts to avoid admitting that a nuclear weapon was missing:
Reporter: "Tell me, any sign of the bomb?"
USAF Spokesman: "What bomb?"
Reporter: "Well, you know, the thing you're looking for..."
USAF Spokesman: "You know perfectly well we're not looking for any bomb. Just for debris."

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Reporter: "All right, any signs of the thing which you say is not the bomb?"

USAF Spokesman: "If you put it that way, I can tell you that there is no sign of the thing that is not the bomb."

Sculz adds: "And so it went for days, for weeks." The New York Times (March 4, 1966.) greeted the March admission that a bomb was in fact missing with the caustic comment that it took the United States only 40 days to acknowledge the truth. On Embassy officials complaints to the press about being treated as nuisances, Szulc, Bombs of Palomares, p. 171. On growing Embassy dissatisfaction with the public relations operation and stains between Embassy officials and DOD representatives; cf., Notes, "Action," Jan. 24, 1966, Unclass., Def 18.1, MPF. "Ambassador's Comments on Return from Almería," Feb. 3, 1966, *ibid.*

18. Cf, Szulc, Bombs of Palomares, pp. 226-27.
19. Madrid tel. 1359, April 7, 1966, Confid., Def 17, MPF.
20. Munoz Grandes request was reported in Madrid tel. 1264, March 25, 1966, Confid., Def 17, MPF.
21. Cf. Deptel. 118041, Jan. 14, 1967, LOU, Def 17-Palomares, MPF. On the problem with the duchess, Madrid tel. 1800, Jan. 13, 1967, LOU, Def 17, MPF. On the problems with the desalination plant, cf. Madrid 1557, Jan. 12, 1966, Confid., Def 17, MPF. See also the post mortem in Time, Jan. 24, 1969, pp. 41-42., Washington Post, Feb. 9, 1969, and Atlas, Dec. 1971, pp. 78-79.
22. Madrid tel. 1316, April 1, 1966, Secret, Def 12, MPF.
23. Madrid tel. 1444, April 22, 1966, Secret, Def 17, MPF.
24. Madrid tel. 1531, May 6, 1966, Secret, Def 17-1, MPF. Madrid tel. 1836, June 23, 1966, Secret, Def 12, MPF. Madrid tel. 1555, December 16, 1966, Secret, Def 17-1, MPF.
25. Madrid tel. 997, Feb. 12, 1966, Secret, Def 17, MPF.
26. Madrid tel. 1025, Feb. 19, 1966, Secret. Madrid tel. 1031, Feb. 21, 1966, Secret. Madrid tel. 1038, Feb. 21, 1966, LOU, all Def 17, MPF. On the claims settlement procedures, see Defense Nuclear Agency, "Palomares Summary Report," Jan. 15, 1975 (U), pp. 149-81. A copy of the agreement on claims procedures is attached as appendix A to this paper.
27. Memorandum of a conversation between Duke and Aguirre de Carcer, Director General of North American Affairs, Spanish

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Foreign Office, Madrid, Jan. 5, 1967, Confid, Def 17, MPF. Notes of discussion with Harvey Ferguson, INR/WEA, Nov. 1, 1984. Ferguson was Economics Officer in Madrid in 1976.

28. Madrid tel. 888, Jan. 25, 1966, Confid-Limdis. Madrid tel. 887, Jan. 25, 1966, Confid. Memorandum from Wilson to Duke, Jan 26, 1966, Secret, all Def 17, MPF.

29. Defense Nuclear Agency, "Palomares Summary Report," pp. 44-73 for details. A copy of the Wilson-Montel agreement is included as appendix B to this paper. For objections to the notion of a nuclear waste site in Spain, see tel. from Chief of JUSMG to the Chief of Staff of the Air Force, Feb. 3, 1966, Secret, Def 18.1, MPF.

30. State tel. 941 to Madrid, Feb. 12, 1966, Secret. State tel. 942 to Madrid, Feb. 12, 1966, Secret, both Def 18.1, MPF. A copy of the interagency paper is included as appendix C to this paper.

31. Madrid tel. 995, Feb. 15, 1966, Secret. Madrid tel. 1019, Feb. 18, 1966, Secret, both Def 17, MPF. A copy of the telegram outlining this verbal agreement is attached as appendix D to this paper.

32. State tel. 993 to Madrid, Feb. 19, 1966, Secret, Def 17, MPF.

33. Madrid tel. 1031, Feb. 21, 1966, Secret. Madrid tel. 1054, Feb. 25, 1966, Confid., Def. 17, MPF.

34. The text of this statement and the text of a telegram reporting Danish agreement are attached as appendix E to this paper.

35. Copenhagen tel. 2837, Jan. 22, 1968, Secret, Def 17, Copenhagen Post Files. Hereinafter cited CPF.

36. Memorandum of a conversation between Leddy and Ronne, Washington, Jan. 23, 1968, Secret.

37. Copenhagen tel. 2863, Jan. 23, 1968, Unclass., Def 17, CPF.

38. Copenhagen tel. 2949, Jan. 28, 1968, Unclass., Def 17 B-52, CPF.

39. Copenhagen tel. 1340, Feb. 2, 1968, LOU. PAO Monthly report for January 1968, Feb. 21, 1968, Unclass., both Def 17 B-52, CPF. The "information guidance" referred to was no. 5329 sent to Madrid on March 3, 1966. No copy of this guidance was found in the Madrid Post files.

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33

40. Copenhagen tel. 1552, Mar. 3, 1968, Unclass., Def 17 B-52, CPF.
41. Copenhagen tel. 1341, Feb. 2, 1968, LOU. Tel. from 4683 AB Group Thule to the Department of Defense, Feb. 29, 1968, Unclass., Def 17, B-52, CPF.
42. Tel. from the SAC Disaster Control Team, Thule, to the Embassy in Denmark, Jan. 28, 1968, Confid. Tel. from Thule AFB to the Department of Defense, Jan. 28, 1968, Unclass. Tel. from the Department of Defense to the Embassy in Denmark, Jan. 30, 1968, Secret. Copenhagen tel. 1358, Feb. 8, 1968, Def 17 Greenland Crash, CPF.
43. Memorandum from Leddy (EUR) to Rusk (S), Feb. 23, 1968, Confid., Lot 73D170, "Thule Crash-Internal Memos." Memorandum on the Thule Operation, April 10, 1968, Unclass., Lot 73D170, Thule Crash--Information, General." Memorandum from George Springsteen (EUR) to Rusk (S), July 22, 1968, Secret, "Lot 73D170, "Thule Crash-Clean-Up Operation." State tel. 231303 to Copenhagen, Aug. 31, 1968, LOU, Def 17 B-52, CPF.
44. Memorandum of a conversation between Leddy and Ronne, Jan. 26, 1968, Secret, Def 17 B-52, CPF.
45. Copenhagen tel. 1352, Feb. 7, 1968, Confid. Copenhagen tel. 1360, Feb. 8, 1968, Confid., both Def 17 B-52, CPF.
46. Copenhagen tel. 1389, Feb. 14, 1968, Confid., Def 17 B-52, CPF. Copenhagen tel. 1395, Feb. 15, 1968, Secret, Def 15, CPF. Copenhagen tel. 1401, Feb 16, 1968, Secret. Letter from Byron Blankinship (DCM, Copenhagen) to David McKillop (Director, EUR/SCAN), Copenhagen, Feb. 23, 1968, Confid., both Def 17 B-52, CPF.
47. President's Evening Reading, May 9 and 31, 1968. Letter from Leddy to Paul Warnke, Assistant Secretary of Defense, April 17, 1968, Secret, both Lot 73D170, "Thule Crash-Internal Memos." The memoranda outlining this agreement are attached as appendix F to this paper.
48. Copenhagen tel. 3210, Feb. 10, 1968, Unclass. Letter from White to Goulding, Assistant Secretary of Defense, Feb. 12, 1968, Unclass., Def 17, CPF.
49. Copenhagen tel. 3346, Feb. 16, 1968, Confid., Def 17 B-52, CPF.
50. Copenhagen tel. 1431, Feb. 27, 1968, LOU. Copenhagen tel. 5684, July 18, 1968, Secret, both Def 17 B-52, CPF.

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34

51. Copenhagen tel. 4315, April 22, 1968, Unclass., Def 17 B-52, CPF. Letter from White to Goulding, op cit.

52. In spite of disagreements over public relations matters and other irritants, the level of cooperation between Embassy and on-site DOD teams was so satisfactory that Ambassador Duke wrote a three page letter to Secretary of the Air Force Harold Brown, praising the performance of General Wilson, the commander of the clean-up operation. Duke to Brown, May 10, 1966, Def. 18.1, MPF.

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United States of America

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American Embassy MADRID

DEF 17

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ACTION: Secstate WASHDC 1038

Control:

Date: Feb 21, 1966

INFO: LONDON 72

PARIS 108

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FILES
POL (2)
ECOUN
ADMIN
USIS
JUSMG

London for NAVEUR

Paris for EUCON

Joint Embassy-JUSMG Message

AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT

Ref Embtel 1025

Following is operative portion of letter dated Feb 18 on claims procedure delivered same day by Chief JUSMG to Gen Prado, Dep Chief High General Staff (unnecessary words omitted):

QUOTE. With reference our conversations 12 February concerning claims for damages arising from aircraft accident which occurred Palomares 17 January 1966, I have been authorized to assure you officially that:

- a. Claims forms now in use meet requirements prescribed by Foreign Claims Act, which is legislation authorizing expeditious payment of claims;
- b. Notwithstanding wording of these forms, payment of a claim is considered by USG as settlement only for claimed damages or injuries known at time

AMBUCEL 1000
London 72
Paris 108

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c. Damages or injuries, even though arising from same incident, which subsequently accrue and were unknown at time of filing of first claim may be made the basis of a new claim, which, if found meritorious and otherwise meets requirement of Foreign Claims Act, will be paid;

d. Previously signed release would not be a bar to such claims and two year statute of limitations under Foreign Claims Act would not begin to run until date the damages or injuries became known, and

e. In event any future meritorious claims should arise as result of this accident which cannot be paid legally under Foreign Claims Act, they will be handled through diplomatic channels in accordance with existing agreements between our two Governments which give recognition to Spanish Nuclear Energy Law 25/1964 of 29 April 1964, Article 67 of which in turn provides for a statute of limitations of 10 and 20 years, in the case of immediate and deferred damage, respectively.

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Date:

I take this opportunity to emphasize that funds have been made available to USAF Foreign Claims Commission at Palomares to enable it pay claims promptly.

I trust foregoing assurances will satisfy fully any doubts or uncertainties which may have arisen with regard to our claims procedures and that restrictions heretofore placed on filing of claims may now be removed. In order to dispell any possible misunderstandings, it may be useful to have assurances contained in this letter disseminated to all interested parties.

Finally, I want to assure you that it is intention of USG to settle all claims arising from this unfortunate accident in an equitable and prompt manner. You can count on full support of US Mission in Spain in carrying out this intention. UNQUOTE.

DUKE

LBaskew:mct 2/21/66

WWalker

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MEMORANDUM

United States of America

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Recd: 13 FEBRUARY 66

FROM: SECSTATE WASHDC

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NO: PRIORITY 942, FEBRUARY 12

ACTION MADRID PRIORITY 942 INFO DOD

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REF: DEF 3281; DEPTTEL 925

~~B1, 1.4(A), 1.4(D), B3, ATOMIC~~

DOD FOR HOWARD, ATSD/AE

DEPTTEL 942

FOLLOWING AGREED INTERAGENCY PAPER SETS OUT US POSITION ON PALOMARES SOIL CLEAN-UP OPERATION AND SUBSEQUENT POSSIBLE ECONOMIC RESTITUTION MEASURES. IT IS DESIGNED TO BE USED AS BACKGROUND FOR SECURING APPROVAL BY SPANISH AUTHORITIES OF COURSES OF ACTION PROPOSED BY US. WOULD APPRECIATE EMBASSY COMMENTS SOONEST, AS WELL AS YOUR VIEWS ON BEST METHOD DEALING WITH SPANISH AUTHORITIES. SUGGEST YOU DISCUSS WITH HALL AND LANGHAM MONDAY. MECHANICS OF DEALING WITH POSSIBLE FUTURE RESTITUTION OFFER OUTLINED NUMBERED PARA 4 BELOW ARE STILL UNDER URGENT STUDY HERE AND WE WILL SEND FOLLOW-UP AUTHORIZING MESSAGE WITH FISCAL AND OTHER NECESSARY INFO. IN MEANWHILE NO RPT NO COMMITMENT FUTURE PAYMENTS THIS SORT SHOULD BE MADE.

BEGIN TEXT, GENERAL:

1. US INTENDS CONDUCT CLEAN-UP OPERATIONS TO LEVEL WHICH IS MORE THAN ADEQUATE BY US SAFETY STANDARDS. WE ARE CONCERNED, HOWEVER, BY APPARENT DESIRE OF SPANISH AUTHORITIES TO EXTEND CLEAN-UP FAR BEYOND SAFETY REQUIREMENTS IN INTEREST OF COMBATTING PSYCHOLOGICAL CONSEQUENCES.

2. WE DO NOT SEE THIS AS BEST WAY COPE WITH POSSIBLE FUTURE EMOTIONAL CONCERN AT MARKET PLACE. WOULD SEEM TO US PREFERABLE GO BACK TO NORMALITY SOON AS POSSIBLE, AND THUS HASTEN DEPARTURE THIS SUBJECT FROM PUBLIC MIND. COMPLEX, LONG-TERM CLEAN-UP GESTURES COULD SERVE AS REMINDER, AND THEREFORE INFLATE IMPORTANCE WHOLE MATTER. OUR GENERAL RATIONALE SHOULD BE THAT IT IS NEITHER IN OUR OWN OR SPANISH INTEREST TO ERECT A MONUMENT IN SPAIN TO THIS CRASH. PHYSICALLY, WE WOULD TAKE CARE OF THIS BY REMOVING FROM COUNTRY ALL MATERIAL CONTAMINATED ABOVE CERTAIN LEVEL. IT IS POSSIBLE HAVE PSYCHOLOGICAL AS WELL AS PHYSICAL MONUMENTS, HOWEVER, AND TO AVOID THIS IS ALSO PROBLEM OF MUTUAL CONCERN.

3. TO ASSURE RESUMPTION NORMALCY IN ECONOMY OF AREA, WE INTEND IF AT ALL POSSIBLE TO AVOID "INFLATION OF ATTENTION" WHICH MIGHT RE SULT FROM TAKING EXCESSIVE MEASURES.

FORM 1-64 FS-501

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PAGE TWO DEPTTEL 942

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4. WE ARE AWARE THAT US MAY BE REQUIRED ASSURE PART OF AREA'S ECONOMY BY OUIRUGHT PURCHASE, FOR CONSUMPTION, OF PART OR ALL OF NEXT TOMATO CROP. SUCH MEASURES NEED NOT BE SPECIFICALLY COMMITTED AT THIS TIME, BUT WE SHOULD MAKE CLEAR THAT WHILE WE DO NOT SUPPORT SOIL REMOVAL AS AN ECONOMIC PALLIATIVE, WE ARE OPEN TO CONSIDERATIONS OF SOME FORM OF RESTITUTION. US BELIEVES IT WOULD BE MISTAKE, FOR INSTANCE, TO ANNOUNCE PUBLICLY NOW THAT WE ARE PREPARED BUY TOMATO CROP FOR NEXT YEAR AND/OR SUCCEEDING YEARS. WOULD BE PREFERABLE LET AREA ECONOMY PROCEED NORMALLY, BUT WITH UNDERSTANDING AND COMMITMENT MADE AT THIS TIME TO GOS THAT IN EVENT REAL OR IMAGINED FEARS OF RADIATION IMPERIL FUTURE PRODUCE SALES, US FULLY PREPARED PURCHASE CROPS OR MAKE SUCH OTHER ECONOMIC RESTITUTION AS MAY BE JOINTLY AGREED TO BE WARRANTED.

SPECIFIC:

5. UNITED STATES AEC-DOD SAFETY CRITERIA STIPULATE THAT (A) AREAS WITH CONTAMINATION INITIALLY GREATER THAN 1000 MICROGRAMS PER SQUARE METER SHALL BE CONTAMINATED AND (B) AREAS WITH LESSER AMOUNTS

OF CONTAMINATION THAN 1000 MICROGRAMS PER SQUARE METER SHOULD BE DECONTAMINATED TO AS LOW A VALUE AS POSSIBLE CONSISTENT WITH REASONABLE EFFORTS AND COSTS. THESE CRITERIA ARE BASED ON EXTENSIVE DATA FROM FIELD TESTS CONDUCTED UNDER CONDITIONS NOT TOO DISSIMILAR TO THOSE IN SPAIN. RELEVANT DATA FROM THESE FIELD TESTS CAN BE MADE AVAILABLE TO SPANISH. ADHERENCE TO THESE SAFETY CRITERIA WILL LIMIT POTENTIAL RADIATION DOSES TO LUNGS TO VALUES FAR BELOW HAZARDOUS AMOUNTS.

6. FOR THIS SPECIFIC INCIDENT POLITICAL CONSIDERATIONS ARE OVERRIDING. THUS, THE PROCEDURES FOR DECONTAMINATION RECOMMENDED BELOW WILL REDUCE TO EVEN LOWER VALUES ANY POTENTIAL RADIATION EXPOSURES. PART (B) OF THE US SAFETY CRITERIA IS AN EXPRESSION OF A DESIRABLE BUT NOT MANDATORY ACT. WE CONSIDER WETTING AND FLOWING OF AREAS CONTAMINATED WITH LESS THAN 1000 MICROGRAMS PER SQUARE METER TO BE AN APPROPRIATE AND ADEQUATE PROCEDURE CONSISTENT WITH INTENT OF THIS CRITERION. WE UNDERSTAND THAT 130,000 COUNTS PER MINUTE REGISTERED BY INSTRUMENTS CURRENTLY IN USE ON SITE CORRESPONDS TO 1000 MICROGRAMS PER SQUARE METER AND THAT TENTATIVE NEGOTIATIONS WITH SPANISH HAVE BEEN BASED UPON 100,000 COUNTS PER MINUTE AS ONE CATEGORY. FOR OUR PRESENT PURPOSES, YOU MAY CONSIDER 100,000 COUNTS PER MINUTE AS EQUIVALENT TO 1000 MICROGRAMS PER SQUARE METER.

B1, B3
B1, B3

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PAGE THREE DEPTTEL 942

7. CURRENTLY US-PROPOSED CRITERIA CONTEMPLATE WETTING AND PLOWING OF AREAS INITIALLY BOUNDED BY CONTAMINATION OF 100,000 COUNTS PER MINUTE AND 7000 COUNTS PER MINUTE. HOWEVER, WE INTERPOSE NO OBJECTION IF IT SHOULD PROVE OPERATIONALLY FEASIBLE AND DESIRABLE TO WET AND PLOW DOWN TO LOWER VALUES THAN 7000 COUNTS PER MINUTE. IN ANY EVENT, WE ARE IN AGREEMENT TO WET DOWN AREAS INITIALLY BOUNDED BY CONTAMINATION OF 7000 AND 500 COUNTS PER MINUTE. WE UNDERSTAND THAT 200 CUBIC YARDS OF TOP-SOIL HAVE ALREADY BEEN REMOVED FROM AREA 3 RPT 3. THIS QUANTITY OF SOIL AND A COMPARABLE QUANTITY FROM AREA 2 RPT 2 CAN RASONABLY BE RETURNED TO CONUS, AND IN LONG RUN THAT IS OUR REAL CRITERION FOR SOIL REMOVAL. IF 200 CUBIC YARDS FROM AREA 3 DID NOT COME UP TO THE 100,000 CPM SPECIFICATION, WE CAN POSSIBLY PROTECT OUR POSITION BY ADMITTING THIS WAS COMPROMISE ACCEPTABLE TO US BECAUSE AREA 3 IS INHABITED AND CULTIVATED. SINCE AREA 2 IS NOT GENERALLY SO EMPLOYED, WE DO NOT INTEND USE COMPROMISE CRITERION THERE.

B1, B3
B1, B3

B1, B3
B1, B3
B1, B3

B1, B3

8. CRITERIA DETAILED ABOVE ARE BASSED ON POSSIBLE SUSPENSION OF PLUTONIUM INTO AIR WITH SUBSEQUENT INHALUTION. THE OTHER POTENTIAL HEALTH PROBLEM IS INTAKE OF PLUTONIUM BY INGESTION. HOWEVER, THIS IS ALMOST ENTIRELY SIMPLE PROBLEM OF SOURFACE CONTAMINATION OF VEGETATION EXISTING AT TIME OF INCIDENT. SINCE WE UNDERSTAND THIS VEGETATION HAS BEEN HARVESTED THIS PROBLEM NO LONGER EXISTS. ANY PLANT UPTAKE IN FUTURE OF PLUTONIUM FROM SOIL WOULD BE EXCEEDINGLY SMALL AND WOULD CONSTITUTE NO HEALTH HAZARD. END TEXT
RUSK

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2/18/66

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ACTION IMMEDIATE

INFO PRIORITY

DTG

180915Z

FROM: CHIEF JUSMG-MAAG MADRID SPAIN

SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS

TO: 16TH ADVON

INFO: 16AF TORREJON AB SPAIN
US EMBASSY MADRID SPAIN (COURIER)

~~SECRET RESTRICTED DATA~~ NOFORN FROM CH 00092

FEB 66. FOR WILSON FROM DONOVAN. Confirming teleccn

2200 hours 17 February, at meeting with High General Staff,

representatives of JEN and US AEC, agreement was reached to

conduct tests at Palomares along following lines: **ACCOMPLISH TEST ASAP** Select small

agricultural land area with readings approximately **60,000 cpm**;

water and plow to depth of eight (8) inches; break up soil in same

manner that has been accomplished on land ready to be returned

to owners; take reading; then plow to a depth of four (4) inches;

take reading. If readings at this time are at a quote reasonable

unquote level the Spanish have agreed that this process will be

used on areas of **60,000 cpm** and under. I am sure you realize

the importance of this test, therefore it is requested that you have

this test observed closely and insure that original plowing is down

DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY DECLASSIFICATION REVIEW

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NAME: [Signature]

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AUTHORITY: [Signature]

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MONTH	FEB	YEAR	1966
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PHONE

S. J. DONOVAN, MGen

X 316

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ATOMIC ENERGY ACT - 1954

TYPED (or stamped) NAME AND TITLE

S. J. DONOVAN, Maj General, USAF
Chief

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COPY FOR US EMBASSY (COVALENT)

FROM:

CHIEF JUSMG-MAAG MADRID SPAIN

to a depth of 8 inches, that a thorough work job is accomplished and that the second plowing does not exceed 4 inches in depth. Request this headquarters be advised immediately upon completion of this test. GP-1

SYMBOL CH	PAGE NR 2	NR OF PAGES 2	SECURITY CLASSIFICATION SECRET	INITIALS
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DD FORM 173-1 MAY 53

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B1, 1.4(A), 1.4(B), 1.4(D)

Control: 9764
Rec'd: November 18, 1957
8:02 a.m.

FROM: Copenhagen
TO: Secretary of State
INFO: 419, November 18, 1 p.m.

SS
C
EUR PRIORITY

5

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FOR S/AE

EMBTEL 406.

Prime Minister has given me informal written statement as his personal answer to my inquiry November 13. It notes that United States Government considers no problem under 1951 agreement of possibly storing in Greenland "supplies of munition of a special kind" and that in conversation I did "not submit any concrete plan as to such possible storing" or "ask questions as to attitude of Danish Government, and concludes that Prime Minister does not think my remarks give rise to any comments from his side.

In my opinion we have now fulfilled our obligation to Prime Minister.

He said he had only one copy of statement which he would keep in his personal file and requested me, to consider my copy purely personal. He was adamant that there should be no publicity of any kind now or later and I particularly urge that every effort be made to avoid leak, which could be highly damaging here both to Danish Government and to our whole defense relationship with Denmark.

PETERSON

BB:RB/9

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Def 17

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2837

Date: Jan. 22, 1968
2339

ACTION: SecState WASHINGTON _____ IMMEDIATE

INFO: Headquarters US EUCOM Vaihingen, Germany _____

PIE

COPENHAGEN 2837

OSD for OASD/PA
Ref: Copenhagen's 2835

1/22/68

RELEASED IN FULL

Subject: Thule B-52 Crash

1. PM Krag stated today "It is well known that in accordance with the Govt's policy there are no atom weapons within Danish territory. This includes Greenland. Consequently, there can be no overflights over Greenland by aircraft carrying nuclear weapons. On the other hand, you cannot exclude that American aircraft in times of emergency will try to seek landings in Greenland."
2. Danish press correspondents are trying hard to find means to reach Thule. They are being told that in accordance with long standing practice their applications will be forwarded through usual Air Attache channels to Air Force foreign liaison office. The clamor to visit site may grow. Refusal to facilitate travel or an appearance of blocking access to Danish territory by American military could lead to strong criticist

Drafted by: DCM:BEBlankinship/mbe (typed 1/23/68) Approving Officer:

Concurrence:

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of American base policy in Denmark which purports to cherish freedom of travel. Permitting American correspondents to visit site while denying ~~em~~ similar privilege to Danish correspondents would be considered intolerable by Danish press. We ~~XXXXXXXX~~ recommend that immediate consideration be given to providing briefings by experts to Danish Govt. officials and possibly media in Copenhagen. Ideally, officials should be briefed so that they can carry the burden of explanation to public media. Even if this is done, it may become necessary and advisable to sponsor a press tour to accident site.

3. About 120/~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~ ^{demonstrated} peacefully before Embassy for an hour this evening.

WHITE

B

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Approving Officer:

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PH



Proposed Response to Confidential Danish Note of
February 26

B1, B3

The United States Government assures the Government of Denmark that, notwithstanding the provisions of the 1951 Agreement on the Defense of Greenland, it will not store nuclear weapons in Greenland or overfly Greenland with aircraft carrying nuclear weapons except as a result of a joint decision by our two Governments.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE
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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE ~~SECRET~~
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P16

Sub

SECRET

For the President's Evening Reading

Subject: Denmark - Agreement on Nuclear Overflights and Storage in Greenland

The United States and Denmark, by means of an exchange of notes on May 31, agreed to supplement the April 27, 1951 Agreement on the Defense of Greenland. The supplement makes U.S. storage of nuclear weapons in Greenland and U.S. overflights of Greenland with nuclear armed aircraft subject to the consent of the Danish Government. The exchange of notes became effective on May 31 and constitutes an integral part of the 1951 Agreement.

On May 10, when discussing the texts of the proposed notes, Assistant Secretary Leddy made an oral statement pointing out the possible need for U.S. nuclear overflights under circumstances of a grave and sudden threat that did not allow time to obtain the consent of the Danish Government. On May 16, the Danish Ambassador reported that his Foreign Ministry had noted Mr. Leddy's oral statement.

On May 16 the Danish Ambassador also reported that his Government had dropped its request for U.S.G. participation in or endorsement of a Danish Government public statement concerning nuclear weapons policy for Greenland. The Danish Government plans to make a unilateral statement on this question. In line with the standing U.S.G. policy of neither confirming nor denying statements on the movement or deployment of the nuclear deterrent, we do not plan to comment on the Danish statement.

Clearance:
EUR/SCAN - Mr. Ingram

EUR/SCAN:EKlebenov:mbw
5/31/68

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