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UNITED STATES
ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20545

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MAR 13 1968

MEMORANDUM FOR CHAIRMAN SEABORG
COMMISSIONER RAMEY
COMMISSIONER TAPE
COMMISSIONER JOHNSON

SUBJECT: B-52 CRASH AT THULE AIR BASE, GREENLAND

68-445

This is the fifth in a series of status reports to the Commission on the Thule B-52 accident situation. This report briefly summarizes information available as of 5:00 p.m., March 11, 1968.

Except for parachute material, all weapon residue received at Rocky Flats and LASL has been examined.

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The ten (10) urine samples which were sent to Wright Patterson Air Force Base have been subjected to tritium analysis. The highest reading was 150 times less than the permissible body burden. Thorough plutonium analysis is being deferred until personnel return to home stations due to previously experienced difficulties at Palomares in obtaining uncontaminated specimens.

The Oak Ridge National Laboratory is continuing to act as the technical liaison agent within the AEC family to work directly with Thule to assure technical compatibility of shipping configurations and to ascertain the amounts of residue involved, the proposed shipping times and methods of

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REVIEWED BY *J. Diaz 2/1/88*
Carl Miller 4/4/88

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shipping. Action is being taken to provide ORNL an additional \$10,000 to cover their estimated costs for this fiscal year. If it develops that the aircraft debris is shipped separately and relatively soon, it is the staff's understanding that this debris will be sent to Oak Ridge Operations. On the other hand, if aircraft debris shipments are delayed until summer and combined with the contaminated ice, it may be desirable that all of the debris be sent to the location finally selected for disposal.

Within the AEC staff, the Division of Operational Safety will provide technical advice to assist in determining the method and place for disposing of aircraft debris and contaminated ice as well as developing criteria for effecting a material balance. The matter of effecting a material balance is considered highly desirable to (a) satisfy AEC's interest in the amounts that are to be disposed of either through burial or economic recovery, if feasible, (b) satisfy AEC's interest in the long-term health and safety aspects of the amount that is not removed from the incident site, and (c) assure the Danish Government that adequate cleanup has been accomplished. The material balance activities may be broadly grouped into four categories:

1. Liquid - It should be fairly inexpensive to obtain a reasonably accurate material balance for the liquid (contaminated ice) which is to be returned to the AEC. One possible method would be to simply stir each tank, obtain a sample, and chemically analyze. (It is possible that the core sample analyses may provide information adequate for this phase of the material balance.)
2. Aircraft Debris - It was suggested that this balance might be most reasonably obtained by employing measuring techniques and statistical analysis methods now used by Rocky Flats. The feasibility of duplicating the RF equipment for use at the site to which the aircraft debris is returned will be explored.
3. Weapons Scrap - Since this material is all being shipped to RF, several methods may be used, depending on the economic considerations, for obtaining a material balance. Among these are dissolution and chemical recovery, scrubbing, with solution analysis and residue monitoring.

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- 4. Parachutes - The parachutes have been shipped to Richland Operations and are being opened for inspection in an existing "hot cell" facility. Two methods considered for obtaining material balances on these items are (1) to monitor each parachute as it is being removed from the container and (2) to dissolve or burn the parachutes and analyze the residue. We believe that facilities for both of these methods are now available at RL.

General cleanup activities are continuing at the accident scene and the removal and packaging of ice and snow from the burned area are now underway. As of March 11, thirty-seven (37) 25,000 gallon tanks have been filled with ice and snow from the burned area and the overall removal effort was estimated to be 50% complete.

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We understand that Dr. Walske is making arrangements for a meeting with Danish representatives at the Pentagon on March 18-19, 1968. It is expected that General Hunziker and Dr. Langham, IASL, will present briefings to the group prior to open discussions. We also understand that Commissioner Tape will attend.

In response to a request by Mr. Conway, arrangements have been made for Dr. Langham to brief the JCAE on the Thule accident at an Executive Hearing on March 20, 1968, at 10:00 a.m. We understand that Commissioner Tape plans to attend.

Access clearance to the unclassified Health Physics area at Los Alamos has been granted for a visit with Dr. Langham by Dr. Per Grande of the Danish Public Health Service during the period March 13-14, 1968.

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Edward B. Giller
 Director, Health, Safety, and Environment
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