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TELEGRAM

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CLASSIFICATION CANCELLED *
BY AUTHORITY OF DOE/OC

Reviewed by *J. Diaz* 4/19/89
DATE

* memo DOS to DOE: OCTP, 3/21/89
Fahn 4/21/89

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US DOE ARCHIVES	
826 U.S. ATOMIC ENERGY	
RG	COMMISSION
Collection <i>DOS McCraw</i>	
Box	<i>17 Job 1320</i>
Folder <i>MHS 3-9 (1968) February</i>	
<i>Thule Incident</i>	

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JOINT STATE/DEFENSE MESSAGE

1. NEIL SHEEHAN OF NEW YORK TIMES HAS ASKED SERIES OF QUESTIONS RE CRASH CLEAN UP ACTIVITIES. IN RESPONDING, DOD PROPOSES REFER TO DISCUSSIONS OF US AND DANISH SCIENTISTS. PLEASE INFORM DANES ASAP THAT FOLLOWING RESPONSES ARE PLANNED AND ADVISE IF THEY RAISE OBJECTIONS.

2. BEGIN QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS:

QUESTION: WHAT HAVE THE ICE BORINGS SHOWN?

ANSWER: SOME SAMPLES OF ICE BORINGS IN THE IMPACT AREA WHERE

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Wolfe
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THE ICE WAS CRACKED HAVE SHOWN RADIOACTIVITY. THE ICE DOES NOT SHOW RADIOACTIVITY AWAY FROM THIS LIMITED AREA; I.E., AWAY FROM A CIRCULAR AREA 100 METERS IN DIAMETER.

QUESTION: WHAT IS THE THICKNESS OF THE ICE ALONG THE SWATH MADE BY THE PLANE WHEN IT IMPACTED?

ANSWER: THE ICE IS ABOUT 30-40 INCHES THICK IN THE SWATH MADE BY THE B-52.

QUESTION: HOW DEEP IN THE ICE DOES THE RADIOACTIVITY GO AND HOW HIGH IN COUNTS PER MINUTE ARE THE READINGS OF RADIOACTIVITY IN THE ICE?

ANSWER: IN THE IMPACT AREA THE RADIOACTIVITY IS FOUND IRREGULARLY IN THE ICE. AWAY FROM THE IMPACT AREA THE ICE IS FREE OF RADIOACTIVITY. THE AREA COUNTS PER MINUTE INFORMATION IS NOT RELEASABLE.

QUESTION: DID THE ICE MELT OR WAS IT BROKEN ALL THE WAY THROUGH AND DID PARTS OF THE BOMBS OR THE PLANE GO THROUGH INTO THE SEA?

ANSWER: THERE WAS SOME BREAKING OF THE ICE IN THE IMPACT AREA. WHETHER ANY DEBRIS WENT COMPLETELY THROUGH THE ICE IS NOT KNOWN.

QUESTION: WHAT DID THE SNOW SAMPLINGS SHOW?

ANSWER: INDICATIONS ARE THAT THERE WAS CONTAMINATED DEBRIS IN THE SNOW.

QUESTION: HOW FAR IN DISTANCE DID THE RADIOACTIVITY SPREAD?

ANSWER: IN THE MAIN, CONTAMINATION IS CONFINED TO THE CRASH AREA. HOWEVER, AIRCRAFT DEBRIS, SUCH AS ENGINES, OUTSIDE THE CRASH SITE, ARE CONTAMINATED. IN THESE INSTANCES, THE CONTAMINATION IS RESTRICTED TO THE AIRCRAFT PARTS AND THE IMMEDIATE SNOW AREA ADJACENT TO THE AIRCRAFT PARTS.

QUESTION: WHAT ARE THE COUNTS PER MINUTE OF SNOW WITHIN 300 YDS OF THE SWATH AND WHAT ARE THE READINGS OF SNOW SAMPLES TAKEN FROM ONE MILE AND TWO AND THREE MILES AWAY?

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ANSWER: THE AREA COUNTS PER MINUTE INFORMATION IS NOT RELEASABLE. IN ANY EVENT, AREA COUNTS DO NOT PROVIDE A MEANINGFUL BASIS FOR PLACING IN PERSPECTIVE THE LEVELS OF RADIOACTIVITY IN THE IMPACT AND SURROUNDING AREAS. THE CONCENTRATIONS OF RADIOACTIVITY HAVE NOT PREVENTED NORMAL RECOVERY OPERATIONS EVEN IN THE IMPACT AREA. ADDITIONALLY, AS ITEMS OF CONTAMINATED DEBRIS ARE REMOVED FROM THE IMPACT AND SURROUNDING AREAS, THE LEVELS OF RADIOACTIVITY ARE CHANGED. INITIAL RECOVERY AND SUBSEQUENT DETAILED SEARCHES OF THE CLOSE-IN AREAS HAVE RESULTED IN RECOVERY AND REMOVAL OF ALL BUT MINUTE FRAGMENTS. SEARCH AND RECOVERY EFFORTS WILL CONTINUE UNTIL THE CONTAMINATION IS REDUCED TO SATISFACTORY LEVELS.

QUESTION: DID SOME OF THE RADIOACTIVE SNOW BLOW AWAY IN STORMS SINCE THE CRASH?

ANSWER: INDICATIONS SHOW THAT THE CONTAMINATED DEBRIS HAS LARGELY REMAINED IN THE SNOW IN THE CRASH AREA. SNOW SAMPLES ARE BEING TAKEN FROM OUTLYING AREAS FOR ANALYSIS.

QUESTION: WHAT ARE THE DIMENSIONS OF THE CLEANUP PROBLEM NOW?

ANSWER: IN ADDITION TO THE REMOVAL OF THE RECOVERED AIRCRAFT AND WEAPON DEBRIS WHICH IS NEARING COMPLETION, A JOINT US-DANISH DECISION HAS BEEN MADE TO REMOVE THE CONTAMINATED SNOW IN THE BURN AREA AT THE CRASH SCENE. THIS MATERIAL WILL BE STORED AT THULE AB IN SEALED METAL CONTAINERS FOR SUBSEQUENT SHIPMENT TO THE US DURING THE SUMMER SHIPPING SEASON FOR FINAL DISPOSAL. EXCEPT FOR RELATIVELY BRIEF WEATHER DELAYS, RECOVERY TEAMS AT CAMP MUNZIKER HAVE BEEN CONDUCTING DAILY SEARCH AND RETRIEVAL OPERATIONS TO COLLECT, CONTAIN AND REMOVE DEBRIS FROM THE AREA.

QUESTION: HOW MUCH ICE WILL HAVE TO BE REMOVED?

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ANSWER: PERHAPS NONE. EXCEPT IN THE IMPACT AREA, THE CONTAMINATION IS IN THE SNOW ON TOP OF THE ICE.

QUESTION: HOW MUCH SNOW WILL HAVE TO BE REMOVED?

ANSWER: FROM 5,000 TO 10,000 TONS.

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QUESTION: IF IT IS REMOVED, HOW WILL IT BE TAKEN AWAY AND WHAT WILL BE DONE WITH IT?

ANSWER: (SEE 3 ABOVE)

QUESTION: HOW MUCH OF THE BOMBS HAVE BEEN FOUND?

ANSWER: THE SPECIFIC AMOUNT OF WEAPON MATERIAL FOUND IS CLASSIFIED.

QUESTION: HOW MANY OF THE FRAGMENTS DOES IT APPEAR WILL NEVER BE RECOVERED? WHAT I WOULD LIKE TO KNOW, IN SHORT, IS HOW MUCH OF THE ORIGINAL WEAPONS HAVE WE BEEN ABLE TO RECONSTRUCT FROM DEBRIS AND HOW MUCH WILL NEVER BE RECOVERED?

ANSWER: SIGNIFICANT PORTIONS HAVE BEEN RECOVERED AND POSITIVELY IDENTIFIED AS PORTIONS OF THE 4 WEAPONS INVOLVED IN THE CRASH. THE SEARCH AND RECOVERY EFFORT CONTINUES TO ASSURE MAXIMUM RECOVERY.

QUESTION: WHAT KIND OF A CLEANUP PROGRAM HAS THE DANISH GOVT REQUESTED? IF THEY HAVE MADE NO SPECIFIC REQUESTS YET, HOW FAR ALONG IS THEIR INVESTIGATION OR THE NEGOTIATIONS WITH US FOR CLEANUP? WHAT KIND OF COMPENSATION HAVE THEY REQUESTED?

ANSWER: AS PREVIOUSLY STATED IN THE ANSWER TO QUESTION 3 ABOVE, REPRESENTATIVES OF THE US AND DANISH GOVTS. HAVE AGREED TO REMOVE THE CONTAMINATED SNOW IN THE BURN AREA AT THE CRASH SCENE. THE DISCUSSIONS AND INVESTIGATIONS HAVE BEEN CONDUCTED ON A JOINT BASIS CHARACTERIZED BY COOPERATION AND HARMONY. WE AND THE DANES HAVE NOT YET DISCUSSED COMPENSATION.

QUESTION: DO THE FISH AND MAMMAL SAMPLES (WALRUSES, SEALS, ETC.) SHOW EVIDENCE OF RADIOACTIVITY?

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ANSWER: ANALYSES HAVE NOT BEEN COMPLETED. THE US AND DANISH SCIENTISTS ARE WORKING CLOSELY CONCERNING THE POSSIBLE EFFECTS OF RADIOACTIVITY ON FISH AND MAMMALS. A PROGRAM WILL BE DEVELOPED FOR MONITORING THE ECOLOGICAL SYSTEMS RELATING TO MAN. PARTICULAR ATTENTION WILL BE GIVEN TO SEALS, EIDER DUCK AND LITTLE AUK, MUSSELS, PLANKTON OF THE BAY AND LOCAL BLUE FOX. BOTH DANISH AND AMERICAN EXPERTS BELIEVE THERE IS NO HAZARD NOW NOR FOR

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THE FUTURE FOR LIVING ORGANISMS.

QUESTION: HAS THE NAVY BEEN CALLED UPON YET TO DO UNDERWATER RECOVERY WORK UNDER THE ICE OR ARE PREPARATIONS OR PLANS BEING MADE FOR SUCH UNDERWATER RECOVERY WORK?

ANSWER: THE NAVY HAS NOT BEEN CALLED UPON TO DO UNDERWATER RECOVERY WORK. THERE ARE NO PRESENT PLANS FOR SUCH WORK.

QUESTION: HOW MANY MEN ARE WORKING AT THE BASE AND THE SITE AND WHAT HAS THE RECOVERY OPERATION COST SO FAR?

ANSWER: AT PRESENT, 562 PERSONNEL ARE ON TDY AT THULE AB FOR SUPPORT OF PROJECT CRESTED ICE (15 FEB). MAXIMUM NUMBER OF MEN WORKING AT THE RECOVERY SITE AT ANY ONE TIME HAS BEEN 206. COST OF THE RECOVERY OPERATION HAS NOT BEEN DETERMINED. RUSK

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