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January 30, 1968

MEMORANDUM FOR CHAIRMAN SEABORG
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Folder MHS 3-9 January (1968) Thule Incident

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

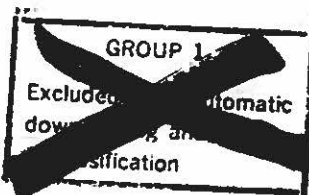
This is the second report on the B-52 crash at Thule Air Base, Greenland, which summarizes all information available to the AEC as of 2:00 p.m., January 26, 1968. This report is a follow-on to the one provided January 22, 1968, which presented information as of 2:00 p.m., January 22, 1968.

Accident investigation efforts were resumed on January 25 after having been halted during January 24 because of a blizzard. The primary search problems continue to be lack of light and severe cold. The cold not only reduces the effective life of batteries but is having an adverse effect on instruments used to detect contamination.

Initial information available indicated no reports of an explosion resulting from the accident. It was subsequently reported that personnel at Thule Air Base had heard a loud noise in addition to seeing a fire at the crash scene. Widely scattered small parts of the aircraft and some weapon parts indicate that one or more weapons sustained a detonation of the HE [REDACTED]

DELETED No broken-up HE components have been found at the scene. Weapon-associated items identified so far consist of a 1A valve (component of gas bottle), four parachutes or parachute parts (each weapon has four parachutes), DELETED

DELETED



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Reviewed by Carl [signature] 4/6/88
J. Diaz 5/10/88

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Thule Incident

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The 1A valve was located approximately 150 yards south of the burned area. One main parachute was found spread out approximately 25 yards southwest of the edge of the burned area. One of these parachutes was in a hole in the ice which measured approximately 30 inches in diameter and which apparently had been caused by something burning into the ice. The water in the hole had refrozen at a level 12 inches lower than the original ice level. It is not known whether the object causing the hole had gone all the way through the ice and into the water. The fourth parachute was located approximately 100 yards north of the burned area. Ice in that area was badly fractured and had been badly churned up. Some observed cracks were up to four feet wide in the fractured area. It is not known whether the ice was fractured by the impact of the aircraft or by the subsequent explosion. The parachutes have not been identified by association with any specific weapon or weapons. The pieces tentatively identified as secondary cases were found about 2 1/2 miles south-southwest of the aircraft impact point and about 300 yards apart, but have not been identified with any specific weapon.

The zero contamination line has been identified and marked. It encompasses an area about 1 mile wide and 3 miles long extending in a southwesterly direction from the crash site. The aircraft impacted on a southerly heading and the prevailing wind was 110°, seven knots. Metal fragments within 300 yards of the crash site to the east, north and west, and about 600 yards to the south, show alpha contamination readings exceeding the measuring capability of the PAC-1S detector (2,000,000 cpm).

AEC technical representatives who have been sent to Thule to advise the DoD and assist in determining and evaluating whatever problems may exist include Mr. Paul Smith of the AEC Albuquerque Operations Office; Dr. Wright Langham (who also provided advice and assistance during the Palomares, Spain, incident in 1966) and Mr. John Kinker from the Los Alamos Scientific Laboratory; Mr. Roy Lambert from the Sandia Laboratory, Albuquerque, New Mexico; Mr. M. Benedict and Mr. J. Tinney from the Lawrence Radiation Laboratory; and Dr. H. D. Bruner from the Division of Biology and Medicine. A Danish scientific investigative team has been sent to Thule to conduct an independent study of any dangers of radiation. Team members are:

- a. Professor Jorgen Koch, University of Copenhagen.
- b. Professor Otto Korsoed-Hansen, University of Copenhagen.

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c. Mr. H. L. Gjorup, Danish AEC.

d. Mr. PerGrande, Danish Radiation Laboratory.

A press conference was held at 5:00 p.m. on January 25 attended by newsmen from 10 nations including the U. S. Dr. Langham, in addition to Air Force representatives, presented the situation as of that time and answered questions. The press is reported to have appeared curious but not hostile. For the immediate future, daily press conferences are planned.

/s/ Winter

Edward B. Giller
Brigadier General, USAF
Assistant General Manager
for Military Application

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