

OUTGOING TELEGRAM Department of State

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Origin

ACTION: Amembassy COPENHAGEN PRIORITY

Info:

STATE

EXDIS

SUBJ: Ocean Bottom Survey at Thule, Greenland
REF: NAVSHIPSYS COMHQ 111615Z Jul 68
FOR AMBASSADOR

1. Department currently examining DOD project to send by air small self-propelled submersible two-man craft to Thule AFB to conduct photographic observations of ocean bottom below the impact point of B-52 crash. Primary and confidential purpose of survey, as explained during your May 1 call on Dr. Walske, is to assure that no visible and recoverable sensitive parts of the nuclear devices are on the bottom. For purposes of discussions with Danish Government and for press treatment, however, project would be billed as part of US/Danish summer observation program, with Danes conducting surface effort and US sub-surface, in order to do everything physically possible to assure that no hazards exist in the area. The submersible, Star III, is a private oceanographic research vessel with no recovery capability. It would operate for about four hours daily for ten days.

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Drafted by:

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Telegraphic transmission and classification approved by:

G - Ambassador Bohlen

CMB

Clearance:

EUR - Mr. Springsteen (draft) EUR/SCAN - Mr. Ingram (draft) S/S-Mr. Walsh
G/PM - Mr. Trippe (draft) DOD/OSD/AE - Dr. Walske (draft)
DOD/AF/RDC - Gen. Glasser (subs) DOD/OSD/ISA - Gen. Wheelock (draft)
EUR/P - (info) P - (info) Mr. Phillips

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1. Project will likely result in Danish and international press speculation that survey is really effort to find missing bomb or important components. Consequently, we believe project would require approval highest levels Danish Government, and especially well thought out scenario for public affairs treatment.

3. We would very much appreciate your personal comments and suggestions re following, before we provide you with instructions and press guidance:

(a) what would be best means of approach to Danish Government to assure high level consideration and approval, while at same time maintaining excellent cooperation and consultation at scientific level. In this connection, General Glasser planning be in Copenhagen on July 18 and could describe project to Dr. Koch. At same time, Embassy could make simultaneous but low key approach to Foreign Ministry at level you deem appropriate. Alternatively, single approach could be made by General Glasser and accompanying Emboff (perhaps DCM) to Koch and Fonoff rep, who would be asked to obtain full Danish Government concurrence;

(b) should project be carried out, we believe publicity must be coordinated with Danish Government and that survey be treated simply as part of joint scientific observation effort to be undertaken this summer. Possibly low key announcement of project could be contained in joint or entirely Danish release describing summer scientific program. In unlikely event significant and recoverable bomb parts are observed,

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US Navy ~~xxx~~ salvage vessel would be sent to Thule almost immediately to undertake recovery. This would, of course, require new press guidance.

4. In view relatively short ice-free period for survey, we would like to work out USG position before General Glasser arrives in Copenhagen, and hope to have your views by Washington COB July 15.

GP-1

End

RUSK