

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Memorandum of Conversation

This document consists of 2 pages
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DATE: January 24, 1968

SUBJECT: Greenland Overflights

PARTICIPANTS: Torben Rønne, Ambassador of Denmark

John M. Leddy, Assistant Secretary for European Affairs
Walter J. Stoessel, Jr., Deputy Assistant Secretary
David H. McKillop, Country Director, EUR/SCAN
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Ambassador Rønne opened the discussion by stating that his Government was pleased with the January 24 press release that had been issued by the Department of Defense.

He said that he had telephoned Copenhagen on the question of a U.S. statement on Air Force overflight routes which he had raised at his January 23 meeting with Mr. Leddy. He said that, since there was now only a caretaker government in Denmark, he did not have any firm instructions. Dr. Fischer, the Secretary General of the Foreign Office, had said that the Danish Government had taken note of the U.S. position on this matter, and may raise the matter in the future.

Ambassador Rønne said that Dr. Fischer had asked him to raise several questions. The first question concerned the purposes of the various U.S. flights in the area. Specifically, he asked if the plane that crashed at Thule had had any surveillance function, apart from its nuclear alert function. He said that there was considerable public discussion in Copenhagen regarding the two types of flights.

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Mr. Leddy said that it was clear that the B-52 that crashed at Thule was an alert plane, but whether it also might have had another role he could not say. He agreed to see whether information on this could be provided.

The second more definite question that the Ambassador had been asked to raise concerned the report of the Landshandsformand (Chairman of the locally elected party in Thule) to the effect that, in the days since the crash, B-52's had continued to be sighted over Thule. The Chairman had asked whether he could be assured the B-52's did not carry atomic or hydrogen weapons. Ambassador Rønne asked if we could specify the role of these planes. He wondered whether they might, for example, be supporting the rescue operations, which would account for an increase in air activity.

Mr. Leddy said that, in general, both the Danish Government and the Danes at Thule are aware of our alert system. He said, however, that in the case of the B-52's sighted in the last few days, we would check out the question with Defense.

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