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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

DIRECTOR OF INTELLIGENCE AND RESEARCH

*3/**Intelligence Note - 85*

January 31, 1968

To : The Secretary
 Through: S/S
 From : INR - Thomas L. Hughes *TW*
 Subject: Implications of the B-52 Crash for
 US-Scandinavian Military Arrangements

The crash near the Thule Base of the B-52 carrying nuclear weapons has increased criticism throughout the Scandinavian countries of US military policies. Such criticism was already substantial because of their dislike of the United States' Vietnam policy. This criticism could become strong enough to cause the governments of Denmark, Iceland, and possibly Norway to demand formal assurances from the US that no planes carrying nuclear weapons overfly their countries.

Denmark Most Concerned. While the Danish Government that was in caretaker status since the parliamentary election on January 23 has accepted US assurances that the B-52 approached Greenland only because it was seeking an emergency landing site, demands are rising in all political parties for an investigation into the question of whether US planes carrying nuclear weapons have overflowed Greenland in the past. Press interviews with Greenlanders and with Danes working in Greenland who have stated that such flights have occurred have aroused widespread suspicion. All parties support the government's policy that no nuclear weapons may enter Danish territory (Greenland is considered an integral part of Denmark), and it appears likely that the new government currently being formed will feel forced to seek formal assurances from the US that such flights will not be undertaken.

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How far the new government will go in restricting US military actions in and over Greenland will depend to a large extent on its composition. It now seems almost certain that this government, which is expected to be announced on February 1, will be a coalition of the rightist Conservative and Moderate Liberal Parties, who are the most friendly of all Danish parties to the US and NATO, and of the centrist Radical Liberal Party, which is pacifist-inclined. The leaders of the Radical Liberals, particularly their parliamentary spokesman, Hilmar Baunsgaard, who is expected to head the new government, are not formally opposed to Denmark's current security arrangements, including membership in NATO. However, they may attribute some of their heavy gains in the election--they doubled their parliamentary representation--to their campaign for drastic defense cuts and a referendum on Denmark's continued membership in NATO after 1969.

Some Leftists May Push for Anti-US Policies. Many of the Radical Liberals' new supporters and some of their newly elected parliamentary deputies are anti-militarists in foreign policy who will exploit the B-52 crash, as well as the rising fear among Danes of US policies in Vietnam and elsewhere in the Far East, to try to reduce Denmark's ties to the US and NATO and to put it on a more neutralist path. These Radical Liberals will be supported by the parliamentary delegations of the far left Venstresocialister Party (VS) and the Socialist People's Party (SPP) and by some of the left-wing Social Democratic deputies. This combination of these Radical Liberals, VS, SPP, and left-wing social Democrats could not effect any basic changes in Denmark's foreign and defense policies because the great majority of the Parliament agrees on their

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continuation. Yet, the key parliamentary position of the Radical Liberals makes it likely that they will feel that they can force the government to request explicit US assurances that nuclear-armed planes will not overfly Greenland, to cut defense spending, and to call a referendum on continued Danish membership in NATO after 1969.

Icelanders Also Asking Questions. Icelanders, who are highly sensitive about Icelandic sovereignty over the Keflavik Base, are also concerned over the B-52 incident. Foreign Minister Jonsson has already felt obliged to state that the US is observing his country's policy, which forbids any nuclear weapons on Icelandic territory. The erroneous impression has spread that there is a formal agreement between Iceland and the US concerning storage of nuclear weapons at the base and flights of aircraft carrying nuclear weapons. If the Danish Government requests explicit assurances regarding the overflight of nuclear-armed planes, popular pressures in Iceland may increase to the point where the government will be forced to seek such a formal agreement with the US. However, US-Icelandic relations have improved so much and the present Independence Party-Social Democratic coalition has been so friendly toward the US and NATO that the US can expect it--and particularly Prime Minister Benediktsson--to do everything possible to contain worries concerning flights of US planes over Iceland.

Norway Least Concerned. Of the three Scandinavian NATO countries, Norway is the least affected by the B-52 incident. However, memories of the 1960 U-2 affair, when suspicions arose that the US was using a Norwegian base at

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Bodø for activities that Norwegian officials knew nothing about, are still fresh. That episode, and the similarity between the Danish and Norwegian criticisms of US policy in Vietnam, lead us to believe that the Norwegian Government would most likely follow the lead of Denmark if the latter sought formal assurances from the US that no nuclear-arms-bearing flights will be made over its territory. However, as in the case of Iceland, the four-party coalition in Norway is basically friendly to the US and can be counted on to try to prevent any serious strain on US-Norwegian relations.

Potential for Strains in Relations. How far the Scandinavian governments that are members of NATO will go in their demands for concrete assurances concerning overflights of nuclear-armed aircraft will depend to a great extent on their impression of US actions and policies concerning this issue. If the Danish Government fails to get such assurances, it and possibly also the Icelandic Government may have great difficulty in withstanding public pressure for forcing renegotiation of current base agreements to have explicit guarantees against such overflights and storage of nuclear weapons written into them. If relations reach this point, Denmark and Iceland might also seek to assume greater control over all US activities at Thule and Keflavik.

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