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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Washington, D.C. 20520

SECRET

May 29, 1968

TO: The Under Secretary

THROUGH: S/S

FROM: EUR - John M. Leddy *JML/ML*SUBJECT: Negotiations with Denmark on Nuclear Overflights
and Storage in Greenland - BRIEFING MEMORANDUMDANISH REQUEST

The Government of Denmark, shortly after the January 21, 1968 crash of a nuclear armed USAF B-52, requested an absolute ban on nuclear overflights and storage in Greenland. Ambassador Rønne requested such a ban in his discussions with me and in his February 26 note to the Secretary.

At that same time, the Danes made repeated requests for U.S. participation in, or endorsement of, a Danish Government announcement that would indicate that Greenland was, in effect, a nuclear free zone. We could not accede to the latter request, although did in confidence give oral assurances to the Danes that we were overflying Greenland with nuclear weapons.

U.S. OBJECTIVES

In our negotiations we sought:

- a) to retain the right to conduct such nuclear overflights of Greenland as might be required by security;
- b) to avoid subjecting the entire 1951 Agreement, to review and possible modification under terms of Article XIII (3). (It should be noted in this context, that we

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sought both to retain overflight rights, as noted above, and to maintain our access to Greenland as an important base for electronic surveillance, i.e., BMEWS (ballistic missile early warning system) installations;)

c) to avoid as far as possible, public discussion of the deployment and movement of U.S. nuclear weapons.

EFFECT OF THE PROPOSED SETTLEMENT

We have, after lengthy negotiations with the Danes, reached agreement in principle on the issues noted above. The proposed secret exchange of notes accomplishes the following:

a) We retain the right to nuclear overflights and storage in Greenland, subject to the agreement of both Governments that such actions are necessary;

b) The Danes are on notice that the U.S. may conduct nuclear overflights under circumstances of a grave and sudden threat that does not allow us time to consult the Danish Government. (The Danish Foreign Office has formally noted my May 10 oral statement of this possible need);

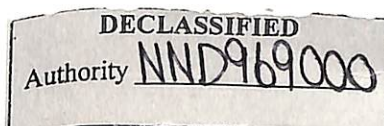
c) We avoid reopening the 1951 Agreement for renegotiation, thus avoiding any new provisions that might hinder our activities in Greenland including the operation of the Thule Air Base and the maintenance of an extremely important segment of the BMEWS;

d) In conjunction with the proposed settlement the Danish Government agreed to drop its request for any U.S. participation in or endorsement of a public statement concerning nuclear weapons in Greenland.

TIMING OF AGREEMENT

The Danish Government is extremely anxious to effect the proposed exchange of notes prior to the June 5 visit of Foreign Minister Hartling.

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Attachment:

May 23 Staff Study.-S/S 7794

 EUR/SCAN:EKlebenov.mbw, Ext. 4207, 5/29/68

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