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March 4, 1958

WS [unclear]  
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TO: The Under Secretary

FROM: S/AE - Philip J. Farley

SUBJECT: Report of radioactive contamination found to be exaggerated (b)(3):42 USC 2168(a)

Discussion

The Nuclear Energy Working Group met yesterday to discuss, among other things, the reported contamination (b)(3):42 USC 2168 as a result of an aircraft accident there on January 31, 1958. As you know, the Air Force reported that a B-47 burned with a nuclear weapon aboard. Although the weapon was damaged, it did not detonate and no significant radioactive contamination hazard was believed to exist.

Toward the end of February clothing and shoes worn by Navy personnel (b)(3):42 USC 2168(a)(1)(C)(FRD) who had visited the accident area on February 1 were found to be "contaminated". The Navy authorities (b)(3):42 USC 2168 requested assistance in determining the extent of the hazard involved and raised the question of possible contamination (b)(3):42 USC 2168(a)(1)(C) who worked on repairs to the runway. An Air Force detachment, a survey team from SAC, and a DOD team which included an AEC representative were sent to the site of the accident.

Detailed reports indicate that no decontamination in area of crash or downwind is necessary although the debris from the fire was contaminated through vaporization of the plutonium in the weapon. This debris was removed from the scene of the accident initially and is now back in the United States. (b)(3):42 USC 2168 an NIDL expert has now reported the contamination found to be 2-3ug/m<sup>2</sup> (permissible level - 1,000 ng/m<sup>2</sup>.)

Subsequent medical checks of U. S. personnel working on the runway revealed no significant contamination. (b)(3):42 USC 2168(a)(1) were at least one-half mile from the scene of the accident and no possibility of their contamination exists. Indigenous persons were utilized in repair of the runway only after the survey showed no significant contamination. Medical checks made on U. S. personnel working alongside indigenous personnel reveal no significant contamination, and accordingly no check of the latter is contemplated.

Conclusion

The DOD regards the situation as under control and no NIDL plutonium decontamination procedures are required.

It is understood that General Goodpaster has been provided the foregoing information in order that he might brief the President,

S/AE:CCSpiegel:rip [Signature]

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cc - 1, 2 + 3; - U/O P - [unclear]  
4 - SA/E File  
5 - S/R Echorn