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89 STATE 151598

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UNCLASSIFIED

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 INFO LOG-00 ADS-00 INR-07 SS-00 CIAE-00 H-01 NSCE-00
 NSAE-00 L-03 TRSE-00 PM-10 PA-01 INRE-00 ACDA-12
 USIE-00 SP-02 SNP-01 PRS-01 P-02 /040 R

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INR/EAP: FDAVENPORT (SUBS)
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DENY

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 TO AMEMBASSY TOKYO IMMEDIATE
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 C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 151598
 E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR
 TAGS: MNUC, MARR, JA, US
 SUBJECT: 1965 A-4/NUCLEAR WEAPON ACCIDENT
 1. [REDACTED] ENTIRE TEXT.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR

REVIEWED by hph DATE 8/24/90
 RELEASE DECLASSIFY
 EXCISE DECLASSIFY in PART
 DENY Non-responsive info.
 FOI/EO or PA exemptions 552 (b) (1)
 Authority is: OADR

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END TEXT PAGE 1.

BEGIN TEXT PAGE 2:

A TEAM OF NUCLEAR WEAPON DESIGN SPECIALISTS FROM THE U.S. NATIONAL LABORATORIES HAS EVALUATED THE SHORT- AND LONG-TERM CONSEQUENCES OF THE A-4 AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT LOADED WITH ONE NUCLEAR WEAPON THAT OCCURRED ON DECEMBER 5, 1965. THE FOLLOWING IS A SUMMARY OF THEIR FINDINGS:

(1) NEITHER A NUCLEAR NOR HIGH EXPLOSIVE DETONATION COULD HAVE OCCURRED AT THE TIME OF THE ACCIDENT BECAUSE THE SYSTEM WAS DESIGNED NOT TO ARM OR RECEIVE AN ARMING COMMAND UNDER THIS ACCIDENT CIRCUMSTANCE.

(2) THE NUCLEAR DEVICE INVOLVED IN THE ACCIDENT WAS NOT DESIGNED TO REMAIN STRUCTURALLY INTACT AT EXTREME OCEAN DEPTHS; THEREFORE, STRUCTURAL FAILURE OCCURRED BEFORE IT REACHED THE OCEAN FLOOR AT 16,000 FEET, EXPOSING NUCLEAR MATERIAL TO THE HYDROSPHERE. THE HIGH EXPLOSIVE (HE) COMPONENT ALSO WAS EXPOSED TO SEA WATER CORROSION EFFECTS. THIS ACTION WILL ASSURE THAT NO NUCLEAR OR HE DETONATION CAN EVER OCCUR IN THE ENVIRONMENT NOW OR IN THE FUTURE.

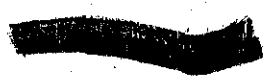
(3) WITH REGARD TO ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT, THE INVOLVED NUCLEAR MATERIAL HAS BEEN TESTED IN SEA WATER TO DETERMINE ITS SOLUBILITY. THESE TESTS SHOW THAT THE MATERIAL WILL DISSOLVE IN A RELATIVELY SHORT TIME. BECAUSE OF ITS HIGH DENSITY, THE SOLUTE WOULD HAVE SETTLED VERY QUICKLY TO THE FLOOR OF THE OCEAN ALONG WITH OTHER SEDIMENTATION. THEREFORE, THERE IS NO ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT.

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END TEXT PAGE 2.

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