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US DOE ARCHIVES
 826 U.S. ATOMIC ENERGY
 RG COMMISSION [REDACTED]
 Collection DOS McCraw
 Box 3 Job 1320
 Folder Accident in Spain #2

[REDACTED]
 [REDACTED] of 12 Copies, Series [REDACTED]

(Note: The following has been drafted with the idea of presenting it to Embassy Madrid for use with Spanish Authorities).

THE U.S. POSITION ON NORMALIZING SOIL REMOVAL

General

The U.S. intends to conduct clean-up operations to a level which is conservative by U.S. safety standards. We are concerned, however, by the apparent desire of Spanish authorities to extend the cleanup far beyond safety requirements in the interest of combating psychological consequences.

We do not see this as the best way to cope with possible future emotional concern at the market place. It would seem to us preferable go back to normality as soon as possible, and thus hasten the departure of this subject from the public mind. Complex, long term cleanup gestures serve as a reminder, and could inflate the importance of the whole matter. Our general rationale should be that it is neither in our own or Spanish interest to erect a monument in Spain to this crash. Physically, we would take care of this by removing from the country all material contaminated above a certain level. It is possible to have psychological as well as physical monuments, however, and to avoid this is also a problem of joint interest.

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To assure resumption of normalcy to the economy of the area,

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 BY AUTHORITY OF DOE/OC
 DATE 12/14/87
 BY [Signature]
 10/17/87

we intend if at all possible to avoid the "inflation of attention" which might result from taking excessive measures.

✓ We are aware that the U.S. may be required to secure a part of the area's economy by outright purchase, for consumption, of part or all of the next tomato crop. Such measures need not be specifically committed at this time, but we should make clear that while we don't support soil removal as an economic palliative, we are open to considerations of some form of restitution. U.S. believes it would be a mistake, for instance, to announce publicly now that we are prepared to buy tomato crop for next year and/or succeeding years. Would be preferable let area economy proceed normally, but with understanding and commitment made at this time to GOS that in event real or imagined fears of radiation imperil future produce sales or other economic activity, U.S. ✓ fully prepared purchase crops or make such other economic restitution as may be jointly agreed to be warranted, (FYI: Question of future U.S. payments of this sort still under study here and we are not prepared at moment to authorize any commitments. End FYI)..

Specific

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✓ U.S. safety criteria for this type of situation (as distinct from laboratory conditions) stipulate that (a) areas with contamination greater than 1000 micrograms per square meter shall be decontaminated and (b) areas with lesser amounts of contamination-23

[REDACTED] [REDACTED]

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~~Areas with a concentration of less than 1000 micrograms per square meter shall be decontaminated to as low a value as possible consistent with reasonable efforts and costs. These criteria are based on extensive data from field tests conducted under conditions not too dissimilar to those in Spain. The relevant data from these field tests can be made available to the Spanish. Adherence to these safety criteria will limit potential radiation doses to the lungs to values far below hazardous amounts.~~

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For this specific incident political considerations are overriding. Thus, the procedures for decontamination recommended below will reduce to even lower values any potential radiation exposures. Part b of the U. S. safety criteria is an expression of a desirable but not mandatory act. We consider wetting and plowing of areas contaminated with less than 1000 micrograms per square meter to be an appropriate and adequate procedure consistent with the intent of this criterion. We understand that 130,000 counts per minute registered by instruments currently in use on site corresponds to 1000 micrograms per square meter and that tentative negotiations with the Spanish have been based upon 100,000 counts per minute as one category. For our present purposes, you may consider 100,000 counts per minute as equivalent to 1000 micrograms per square meter.

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Currently U.S. proposed criteria contemplate wetting and plowing of areas initially bounded by contamination of 100,000 counts per minute and 7000 counts per minute. However, we interpose no objection if it should prove operationally feasible and desirable to wet and plow down to lower values than 7000 counts per minute. In any event, we are in agreement to wet down areas initially bounded by contamination of 7000 and 500 counts per minute. We understand that ²²⁵ 200 cubic yards of topsoil have already been removed from area 3. This quantity of soil and a comparable quantity from area 2 can reasonably be returned to COMUS, and in the long run that is our real criterion for soil removal. If the ²²⁸ 200 cubic yards from area 3 did not come up to the 100,000 cpm specification, we can possibly protect our position by admitting this was a compromise acceptable to us because area 3 is inhabited and cultivated. Since area 3 is not generally so employed, we do not intend to use compromise criteria there.

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The criteria detailed above are based on possible suspension of the plutonium into the air with subsequent inhalation. The other potential health problem is intake of plutonium by ingestion. However, this is almost entirely a simple problem of surface contamination of vegetation existing at the time of the incident. Since we understand that this vegetation has been harvested this problem no longer exists. Any plant uptake in the future of the plutonium from the soil would be exceedingly small.

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