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This document consists of 3 pages
Number 4 of 13 copies, Series A

45-August Curry
S/AE FILE COPY next 4
January 31, 1958

Sidi Slimane Air Incident Involving Plane Loaded with Nuclear Weapon.

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|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| Mr. Robert Murphy, C | Mr. E.M.J. Timmons, EA |
| Mr. Frederick Jandrey, EOR | Mr. Arthur Richards, U/SP |
| Mr. Joseph Palmer, EEA | Mr. Earle Wilkinson, P |
| Mr. Philip Farley, S/AE | Mr. Richard Finn, C |

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Mr. Murphy said that he desired the views of the interested offices regarding the proposal of the Air Force to issue a public announcement to the effect that a B-47, which had caught fire at Sidi Slimane in Morocco with a nuclear weapon aboard, had suffered no harmful consequences by way of explosion of the weapon, radiation or other unexpected results. Mr. Palmer said that any announcement regarding carrying of nuclear weapons by planes based in North Africa would have very disadvantageous effects in that area and throughout the Arab world. He felt that it would probably be desirable to authorize Ambassador Cannon in his discretion to inform the King or a senior official regarding the incident, including the fact that a nuclear weapon was involved, but this would be for the confidential information of the senior Moroccan officials. Mr. Jandrey concurred that any statement regarding the carrying of nuclear weapons by our planes overseas would have harmful effects and would provide large opportunities for Soviet propaganda even though there might be a partial benefit from the point of view of our relations with the United Kingdom. Mr. Richards noted that the OCB had continuously expressed serious reservations about statements involving the carrying of nuclear weapons by our aircraft overseas. Mr. Farley thought that we should give further consideration to a general statement regarding crashes of planes loaded with nuclear devices but that attention should not be

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SPECIAL ASSISTANT TO THE SECRETARY
S/AE

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focused on the particular incident in Morocco. Mr. Wilkinson agreed that the less said about the Moroccan incident the better. It was noted that the air base had been temporarily evacuated during the fire and that this would probably create considerable local interest with a danger of leaks.

It was agreed that the Department should advise the Pentagon that we do not agree to the release of a statement regarding the incident at Sidi Slimane and that Mr. Palmer should draft a telegram authorizing Ambassador Cannon in his discretion to advise senior Moroccan officials about the incident for their confidential information.

Mr. Murphy informed Mr. Robbins in the office of Murray Snyder regarding the views of the State Department and later confirmed these views in a conversation with Mansfield Sprague.

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