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Withdrawer

KDB 12/11/2015

File Folder USSR - SOVIET COSMOS REENTRY (JANUARY 1983)

FOIA

F03-002/5

Box Number 23

SKINNER

299

ID	Doc Type	Document Description	No of Pages	Doc Date	Restrictions
171217	MEMO	W. CLARK TO VICE PRESIDENT, SECRETARY OF STATE ET AL. RE INTERAGENCY GROUP R 4/8/2013 CREST NLR-748-23-36-1-2	1	1/4/1983	B1
171218	MEMO	G. WEISS TO J. POINDEXTER RE RE-ENTRY OF COSMOS 1402 (INCL. ATTACHED ARTICLE) R 1/13/2012 CREST NLR-748-23-36-1-2	8	1/3/1983	B1
171219	MEMO	R. POLLOCK THROUGH R. BOVERIE TO W. CLARK RE INTERAGENCY GROUP	1	1/4/1983	B1
171220	FORMS	WASHFAX RECEIPTS PAR 10/8/2010 CREST NLR-748-23-36-4-9	3	ND	B1
171221	CABLE	RE REENTRY OF SOVIET SATELLITE R 4/8/2013 CREST NLR-748-23-36-5-8	4	1/5/1983	B1

Freedom of Information Act - [5 U.S.C. 552(b)]

B-1 National security classified information [(b)(1) of the FOIA]

B-2 Release would disclose internal personnel rules and practices of an agency [(b)(2) of the FOIA]

B-3 Release would violate a Federal statute [(b)(3) of the FOIA]

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B-8 Release would disclose information concerning the regulation of financial institutions [(b)(8) of the FOIA]

B-9 Release would disclose geological or geophysical information concerning wells [(b)(9) of the FOIA]

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0031

NLRR 748-23-36-1-2

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URGENT

BY COB NARA DATE 9/8/83

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

SECRET/NOFORN

January 4, 1983

MEMORANDUM FOR THE VICE PRESIDENT
THE SECRETARY OF STATE
THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
THE ATTORNEY GENERAL
THE SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION
THE SECRETARY OF ENERGY
THE DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF SCIENCE AND
TECHNOLOGY POLICY
THE ADMINISTRATOR, NATIONAL AERONAUTICS
AND SPACE ADMINISTRATION
THE DIRECTOR, FEDERAL EMERGENCY
MANAGEMENT AGENCY

SUBJECT: Interagency Group to Deal with Reentry of
COSMOS 1402 (S)

The Soviet Radar Ocean Reconnaissance Satellite (RORSAT) COSMOS 1402 is apparently out of control. Reentry of its nuclear power supply is now predicted for January 23. (S)

Because of the potential health hazard and considerations of policy and international relations, the NSC has decided to immediately form an *ad hoc* committee to address all aspects of this reentry. The committee will be chaired by Richard T. Boverie, Director, NSC Defense Group staff. Please immediately submit the name of your representative to Mrs. Jean Collier (395-3330). If possible, your representative should have had experience in dealing with the 1978 uncontrolled reentry of RORSAT COSMOS 954. (S)

FOR THE PRESIDENT:



William P. Clark

SECRET/NOFORN
Declassify on: OADR

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0014

MEMORANDUM

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

January 3, 1983

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INFORMATION

MEMORANDUM FOR JOHN M. POINDEXTER

FROM:

GUS WEISS

Gus W.

SUBJECT:

Re-entry of the Nuclear Power Reactor on
COSMOS 1402

This Soviet satellite is out of control and its power supply will most likely come in January 23, with a current error of minus one week or plus two weeks (the large prediction error comes from uncertainty about the ballistic coefficient). On the day of re-entry, one orbit trace for re-entry impact can be determined, which is $\pm 12,000$ n. miles (not very good).

The vehicle is a Radar Ocean Reconnaissance Satellite which uses 100 kg of highly-enriched uranium with graphite moderator. The setting of the control rods isn't known, but in any circumstance, there will be residual radioactivity. The possibility of physical harm is remote and that of a nuclear detonation nil. Still, this poses many problems for ourselves and the Russians.

The 1402 problem is just like that posed by COSMOS 954 which crashed in Canada in January 1978. That episode was coordinated within the USG by NSC and is described in detail in the attached article (Tab I) in Studies in Intelligence. (I was in OSD at that time.) Many of the considerations that applied in 1977-78 apply now, except this is a repeat and comes coincidental to the freeze movement, TNF modernization, and other more recent policy considerations.

I've called NSA, DIA, and CIA, and have determined that no agency or ad hoc group is in charge. Agencies that should be involved include State, Defense, Energy, Justice, CIA, FAA, OSTP, and FEMA. I've asked the intelligence community to keep us informed daily. The Soviets haven't said anything.

This episode will embarrass the Soviets, but any "active measures" contemplated by us should be tempered by considerations of sensitive sources and methods used for determining the satellite's operating status.

Attachment

Tab I "The Life and Death of COSMOS 954"

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081
NLRR 117-7482336-2-1

BY Cv NARA DATE 1/13/12

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DECLASSIFY ON: OADR

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STOODGES in
Intelligence
Spring 1978

The satellite that came into the cold.

THE LIFE AND DEATH OF COSMOS 954

Gus W. Weiss

Cosmos 954 was launched in the Soviet Union on 18 September 1977. By November, U.S. tracking radars had observed an unusual decay in its orbit. On 6 January 1978 the satellite lost its attitude stabilization system, a terminal ailment. On 24 January Cosmos 954 crashed in the ice and snow near Great Slave Lake, Northwest Territories, Canada.

This satellite was one of a series scanning the oceans by radar, seeking out large surface ships. Such satellites use a small nuclear reactor to power a radar and the equipment needed to report to a ground station. CIA and DIA judged the reactor to be of the so-called *Romashka* variety, but no one could say for certain that it *was* this type; this was surmise, nicely done, but still circumstantial. Fuel for *Romashka* is 90 percent enriched Uranium-235, embedded in carbide and surrounded by graphite moderator, yielding a compound considered distinctly unhealthy to fondle. Throughout 954's decay and reentry, its reactor (of whatever type) was alive and hot.

One virtue of 954's life and death is the simplicity of describing the problem it posed, namely: what does one *do* about a live nuclear reactor reentering the earth's atmosphere aboard a Soviet surveillance satellite? A quick scan of literature showed no textbook answer, nor even a textbook question. It remained for the National Security Council Staff to put together a group to cope with the problem, and this article is some of that group's story. It contains elements of tension, humor, self-satisfaction, and some demonstration of the timely use of intelligence.

For those enamored of methodology, permit me to suggest two problem-solving approaches:

Type One: Crisis Management. This scheme suggests that untoward circumstances can be contained, that reasoned information can be made available and used, and that calculated risks are there to be taken. Objectives can be set and means for those objectives spelled out, and out of that array a decision can be reached.

Type Two: Muddling. This implies making up responses as a problem progresses, and coping as events and information unfold over time. Muddling is very much the label for a process, and is to be distinguished from "muddling through," which is a conclusion. Muddling occurs when the decision maker is not sure where he is headed, but has a good idea where he would *not* like to end up. A fancy word is "heuristic," meaning figuring out how to figure it out as time yields its clues.

Those bloodied by the real world recognize that both types apply—the issue of which scheme dominates a problem is determined by the properties of the problem itself. In theory, it would seem necessary to divine the characteristics of a situation before launching into its resolution (nobody in modern history has ever done this, given the resolute dominance of the demand for answers over processes needed to obtain them). In the instance of Cosmos 954, two properties dominated: the NSC group had some time to think the problem through, and second, the "opposition" was Newton's Law of Gravitation, later compounded by Bernoulli and the physical effects of aerodynamic drag on the satellite. The game was against nature rather than against conscious intelligence. This in turn became reckoning the time and place of 954's

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Cosmos 954 Decays

reentry and the likely consequences of that reentry. To the group, "likely consequences" was the probability that one human might be injured (the judgment was one chance in 10,000). For the time and place of reentry, United States tracking experts produced the correct date—24 January—with a spread of two days that narrowed as the 24th approached. For the place, one might cautiously describe this estimate as night baseball with the lights out.

One precondition to problem-solving is in fact to deduce that a problem exists and to move the issue to a forum where it can be worked. The Air Defense Command inferred decay in November, and by formal and random ways sufficient interest boiled up so that by early December DIA had its own interagency group in session. At that time reentry was judged to be for the late spring or summer of 1978, given that the satellite maintained its attitude stabilization. Loss of stabilization would produce tumbling and early reentry, a process which indeed began on 6 January. But an open question in December was the existence of a fail-safe system on 954: if one was on board, it would sense an abnormal condition and automatically boost the reactor portion of the vehicle to a higher altitude parking orbit, where the reactor would cool harmlessly. Judgments varied over this issue, and prudence dictated that the analysis proceed without any presumption of a fail-safe system (note that the eventual crash of 954 still did not preclude the presence of such a system, as it could itself have failed).

DIA's group concluded there was a small chance of a very serious problem. It recognized that the issues posed by 954 spread across many agencies, a circumstance anticipated by the Department of State representative who had already drafted a letter to NSC suggesting that the problem be taken over by the NSC Staff. It was sent. The Department of Energy representative had nearly finished his statistical study of the outcomes and their probabilities; this study proved to be the key analytic piece and upon it was premised the one-in-10,000 chance of harm to a human. The tone of the DIA group was stoic in that we felt captured by a no-win situation (i.e., a negative sum game to theorists). A colleague suggested the outcome of 954 would be akin to determining the winner of a train wreck.

The NSC group formed on 19 December, fetchingly calling itself the *Ad Hoc* Committee on Space Debris. It was put together by active recruiting on the part of its chairman from the NSC Staff, rather than the usual procedure of agency nominations. The facts were recounted, and NSC directed the preparation of, if you will, pre-contingency plans. These included the availability of tracking resources and the assurance that the proper agencies and representatives were receiving information from collection resources. Operation MORNING LIGHT was born.

By 6 January the NSC representative and the respective members of MORNING LIGHT had briefed their principals, and the prospective reentry date was judged to be April. Then, on the 6th, the Air Defense Command reported 954 out of control. The telephones of MORNING LIGHT members summoned them to NSC, and what had been pre-contingencies became an inexorable fact: the satellite was coming down carrying a live reactor, with the best reentry guess 24 January. (This again validated the policy maker's rule of probability, i.e., the simple fact that an event is unlikely does not stop it from happening. For instance, Cosmos 954 landed on its 2,060th revolution, one that had only an 8 percent chance of any land impact.)

NSC gave responsibility to the Department of Energy for domestic contingencies, and assigned it to State in the event of a foreign reentry. Defense was to provide support as required, and I found myself promising airplanes, reconnaissance, and all manner of gadgets to these agencies, should they be needed. At the time, I was not sure I had the authority to do this, but such was the sticky wicket of MORNING LIGHT members.

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Arrangements for contingencies are easy: handling the world after the contingency is yet another proposition. Although the risk of harm was judged low, still, the possible harm to populated places could be so severe that its low probability could not allow one just to hope that the satellite could be ignored. And it was here that MORNING LIGHT became a sobering experience for those navigating the problem. This wrenching was not at all helped by worry that a sensationalized leak would disturb the public in unforeseeable ways.

The MORNING LIGHT group had to cope with a set of arrangements and decisions:

Contingency Plans for Cleanup of Radioactive Materials: This estimable task entails finding radioactive sources, decontaminating land areas, and attending to persons found within a harmful distance. It turns out that locating active materiel on the ground is far from a simple mission. The hunt for radioactive pieces surviving reentry has to begin with large search areas, prompted by reentry plots furnished from tracking radar, backed up by any visual sightings. Sensor aircraft would patiently refine the ground search, while high altitude U-2s would seek out the debris cloud left by burned and dispersed uranium. The Departments of Energy and Defense shared this unappealing assignment, but the planning was such that the men and equipment could be launched when the President said to do so.

Ask the Soviets for Information: Because MORNING LIGHT had to infer the type of reactor on 954, we were in some measure presuming our design to the Soviet reactor, substantially complemented by CIA and DIA details about *Romashka*. Little seemed to be at risk in our asking the Soviets for information, and it was the general view that no good answer could be formulated to a postmortem inquiry asking why the United States did not seek data from the owners of the satellite. These are the questions posed to the Soviets, and a paraphrase of their response:

- According to information available to us, Cosmos 954 appears to be quickly decaying into the earth's atmosphere. We estimate that it will reenter the atmosphere any time within the next month.
- We are concerned that Cosmos 954 may be powered by a nuclear reactor and that its reentry into the atmosphere thus may represent a potential for nuclear contamination. If the debris falls on or near a populated area, there is the obvious possibility of a serious hazard to the public.
- In view of these serious possibilities and in the spirit of cooperation called for by the Outer Space Treaty, we would like to hear your view of the problem, as well as any additional information you can give us.
- In particular, if there is a nuclear reactor on board Cosmos 954, we would like to know whether it is designed to disintegrate during reentry or whether there is a significant probability of impact of the nuclear fuel. We need this information to assist in determining what steps to take in the United States to protect our public.
- Given the urgency of this question, we request an expeditious answer.

The Soviets replied that:

The small power plant at the satellite "Cosmos 954" operates only on U-235 fuel. As we have already said, it is explosive-proof because the accumulation of a critical mass is ruled out. Besides that, the design of the plant provides for its destruction and burning upon entering denser layers of atmosphere.

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However, in view of the accident aboard the satellite [depressurization], it cannot be ruled out that some destroyed parts of the plant still would reach the surface of the earth. In that case an insignificant local contamination may occur in the places of impact with earth which would require limited usual measures of cleaning up.

A colleague remarked that he wasn't too sure what "usual measures of cleaning up" a reactor crashing in from outer space might be, and there was also some ambiguity in the meaning of "explosive-proof".* But some considerable relief was expressed when MORNING LIGHT was told the reactor had been designed to burn up during reentry. (I observed that any seemingly hard information is gratefully received during a crisis, and also noted how vulnerable one can be to that information.)

Notification of Other Countries: The Soviets had not told anybody of 954's impending reentry. The United States had the information, a sensitive problem was nearing full brew, we had no idea where 954 would come down, a lurid leak seemed inevitable, and the satellite belonged to the Soviets.

Who should be informed by the United States, if anybody? What were our responsibilities to our allies and to the world for a problem which was not of our making but about which we knew? Skipping pros and cons, lists of countries, and the imponderable factor that the more nations informed, the greater the chance of a leak, the notification problem was surely disturbing. Mortals, with notorious shortcomings, should not have to make these judgments. But it had to be done, and we went at it on the general approach of notifying our allies and some other countries with which we share such special relationships as tracking facilities. From those countries notified, State received uniform gratitude, but some governments were intensely upset over the slightest prospect that Cosmos 954 might land on their soil.

Notification of U.S. Citizens: Another scrimmage. Congressional leadership was briefed. In MORNING LIGHT contingency planning, the Federal Preparedness Agency was primed to provide state and local civil defense officials with pertinent information *after* a reentry in the United States. At issue again was what to say before anything happened. Judging the imponderables, the plan was to notify local authorities if there was something tangible to notify them about. In retrospect, the steps taken proved right, but 16 hours before reentry, the MORNING LIGHT group was still debating public announcement; we argued through the circumstances pertinent at that late hour and decided to stay on our original approach. The effort had come nearly to reentry time without a break in security, and the United States had been encouraging other countries to contain public comment. A reversal at that hour would have been, at best, awkward.

As the Day of Reentry neared, computers plotted the predicted ground trace. Gazing at the traces, a colleague observed that only one pass would cut across the Soviet Union and that a number of ascending and descending paths traversed Canada (after it was all over, we noted the marvels of retrospective clarity). At 0500 on the 24th, the DIA Current Operations Center called to announce imminent reentry, with a window equal to one complete orbit. At 0653 EST the satellite was down in Canada.

The Center has its complement of maps, red and green telephones, TV monitors, and flashing lights: I didn't have all the right badges (two were required, and at one point some earnest young officer asked why I didn't have all the right badges; at a

* Three senior government officials when briefed wondered if the reactor could detonate like a nuclear weapon. The lesson applies to those who live so close to technical matters that they tend to presume widespread knowledge of engineering or physics to officials trained or experienced in other fields.

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moment of high crisis, his inquiry about badges proved most helpful). The CRITIC message failed to reach the responsible State Department officer; he called to find out what had happened. Another officer from State inquired about the satellite impact in the Azores. The computer connecting the DIA center and NSA went down, so a backup system had to be brought up. Later on, a commercial power reactor in Colorado experienced a valve malfunction and some release of radioactivity; at first the release was reported as very dangerous, so intense that it would require the diversion of a nuclear emergency team from the Canadian mission to Colorado. Because of a mix-up, the first report never reached me; by the time the mix-up was repaired, it had been discovered that someone in Colorado misread the radiation sensors and that there was never a problem in the first place. Despite these tiny upsets, the necessary airplanes and search teams were ordered to Canada by the President and did their job.

Later a well-known television journalist called, breathlessly announcing that his network management in New York was "about to be tipped off" that the mysterious East Coast sonic booms were really American ABM attempts to shoot down the errant satellite. Could I confirm before the story went on the air? With an effort worthy of Zeus, I resisted the temptation to respond that the booms were really the Navy's X-25 hypersonic underwater earthquake generator. (Isn't it strange that a reporter might ask for verification of a story about which he was *about to be* tipped off? But then, one can't bother too much about logical sequences.)

The Use of Intelligence in Operation MORNING LIGHT: A pet definition of intelligence is simply information that helps people making decisions think ahead. But "information" is a loaded word. There are facts or data, but then there is creeping interpretation (opinions about facts), followed by hypothesis, conjecture, and theory. Hard work must be done to keep from scrambling these terms and acting on one when it is in the guise of another. Facts and data are observational (at least some of the time), while information is a testing of observation and an arranging of data by some thoughtful procedure. Information gets at the question, "what do the data mean?" and so must lend itself to creeping interpretation. This sets up a dilemma, in that there are too many pieces of data for any decision maker to handle, but going beyond raw data requires the use of judgment by the person doing the organizing. The First Rule of Intelligence is—forgive me—if you want to know something, ask, but be careful whom you ask and how you do it. Hear and listen, see and observe, and go back and do it again, while trying mightily to diversify sources of both data and meaning.

The ear should be tuned to the uncertainty latent in any interpretation, and special efforts have to be made to isolate the variance of a projection, extrapolation beyond known facts, and, perhaps most of all, the compound or aggregate consequences of the separate unknowns bearing on a particular problem. For the re-entry of Cosmos 954, the MORNING LIGHT group had to contend with its fair allotment of queasy questions (some of which could not be termed intelligence issues):

- Did 954 have a fail-safe system?
- What sort of power supply?
- Health hazard?
- Landing when and where?
- Could the Soviet response be believed? Were they conjuring up some rococo scheme to throw us off?
- Consequences of a leak on public psychology?

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Cosmos 954 Decays

— Response of foreign governments to our telling them, and responses of those governments not cut in?

For instance, the conviction about the fail-safe device weakened about in proportion to the length of time 954 was in orbit decay. References to the system shifted from "the system," to "if there is a system," to 50-50 odds. Cross-checking suggested that one observation and the notion of sound engineering practice, that is, our own American perspectives, were the premises of the first judgment. Uncertainties became more apparent as time went on, but early checking among sources had made it clear that this would probably happen. This experience underscores the Second Principle of Analysis, that is, carefully observe the difference between the second estimate and the first, for that difference gives a good clue to emerging uncertainty. Surely there must be an epistemology of variable constants, and a price, that is, the longer the waiting period for information, the more circumstances constrain the range of response.

As for public reaction, one reporter said, "What I could have done with that story if I had it a day early!" You can visualize the headline, and the MORNING LIGHT working group took it for granted that any publicity before impact would produce florid reporting and a tense public response. After it was over, a social psychologist at the Center for Disaster Research observed that "people prepare" for earthquakes, floods, fires, and hurricanes, and in general make do. One would surely like to see the research footnotes on public reaction to the first live nuclear object (spewing deadly nuclear radiation) tumbling in from the cold depths of outer space. Intelligence was not asked to judge likely public response or that of governments to notification, but a compilation of post-event reactions was put together.

In retrospect, intelligence stuck to its knitting. The MORNING LIGHT team had a good grasp for that which was known and that which was conjecture. Creeping interpretation never became a problem: the CIA representative gave his reports by way of what we knew, what we did not know, followed by this or that could happen. By 24 January the compound uncertainties had become an almost agreeable way of life; there is some comfort in knowing what is in the realm of the factual and what resides in the realm of pure chance. MORNING LIGHT knew what it couldn't know and prepared accordingly.

Of the two decision approaches, Crisis Management and Muddling, it is clear both were used, however unconsciously they may have been incorporated in the proceedings. Policy work requires the use of any procedure that helps lead to sound decisions, and only the unwise lock themselves into any single approach. The 954 project was blessed with perceptive leadership from the NSC (get a strong team together, listen and fight the issues, but force decisions and get those to officials who can put them into effect). The inexorable approach of 24 January surely provided an incentive not to dawdle over methodological niceties, but the deadly deadline was not by itself the reason MORNING LIGHT worked well.

Early on, the fate of Cosmos 954 was largely of statistical interest, but after tumbling, arithmetic calculation gave way to more intense considerations. Surprises, when they arrive, are usually unpleasant (this may be especially true in technology). History has shown there is a vast market for oracles, but vision is not a gift nature dispenses generously, so mortals are left to ponder what-ifs and prepare for them as best they can. When 954 tumbled out of control, MORNING LIGHT was able to move quickly, mainly because much of its homework had been done, this thanks in good measure to timely and persuasive intelligence work.

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OPERATION MORNING LIGHT

CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS, COSMOS 954

- September 18, 1977 Soviets launched Cosmos 954.
- November 1977 Intelligence sources determined Soviets experiencing difficulties.
- December 1, 1977 Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Policy (Admiral Murphy) alerted by his staff.
- December 19, 1977 NSC interagency task force on space debris established (State, Defense, NASA, CIA, Energy and OSTP).
- January 6, 1978 Through intelligence sources, determined Soviets had lost control of satellite; reentry date established January 23 or 24, 1978.
- January 12, 1978 Approached Soviets on the issue.
- January 14, 1978 Soviets' response confirmed that nuclear power source was on board and that they had lost control of satellite. Projected reentry on January 24, 1978.
- January 17, 18, 1978 Informed key Congressional leaders (Byrd, O'Neill, Baker, Rhodes, Inouye and Boland) of problem and steps we were taking in event the satellite landed in the United States.
- January 17, 1978 Dr. Brzezinski memorandum making Energy responsible for clean-up and other safety considerations relating to possible reentry in the United States, receiving support from Defense and from other agencies as appropriate. State was made responsible for foreign requests for assistance, calling on Energy and Defense as appropriate.
- January 17, 1978 Approached Soviets for clarification.
- January 18, 1978 Informed our allies and other countries with which we have a special relationship, e.g., tracking facilities.
- January 19, 1978 Soviets responded, indicating the reactor would not go critical and that it was designed to disintegrate during reentry.
- January 20, 1978 The Department Energy Task Force went into operation.
- January 22, 1978 Approached the Soviets and asked if there were any new developments.
- January 23, 1978 Soviet response indicated that reentry was projected for January 24, 1978.
- January 24, 1978 Satellite reentered atmosphere at 6:53 a.m. EST over Queen Charlotte Island and impacted last at Great Slave Lake.
- January 24, 1978 Prime Minister Trudeau was immediately informed that the satellite had landed in Canada. United States offered assistance in locating fallen debris and in cleanup. Trudeau accepted by a return telephone call to the President.
- January 24, 1978 Dr. Brzezinski informed the Soviets that the satellite had landed in Canada.
- January 24, 1978 AFTAC/MAC aircraft and Nuclear Energy Search Teams dispatched to Canada.

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National Security Council
The White House

Package # 2031

001104 P 7:05

	SEQUENCE TO	HAS SEEN	ACTION
John Poindexter	<u>1</u>	<u>[initials]</u>	<u> </u>
Bud McFarlane	<u>2</u>	<u>[initials]</u>	<u> </u>
Jacque Hill	<u>3</u>	<u>[initials]</u>	<u> </u>
Judge Clark	<u>4</u>	<u> </u>	<u>A</u>
John Poindexter	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
Staff Secretary	<u>5</u>	<u> </u>	<u>EXD</u>
Sit Room	<u>5a</u>	<u> </u>	<u>LDX</u> <u>JAN 6 1983</u>
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>

I-Information A-Action R-Retain D-Dispatch N-No further
Action

DISTRIBUTION

cc: VP Meese Baker Deaver Other

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B-6 Release would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy [(b)(6) of the FOIA]

B-7 Release would disclose information compiled for law enforcement purposes [(b)(7) of the FOIA]

B-8 Release would disclose information concerning the regulation of financial institutions [(b)(8) of the FOIA]

B-9 Release would disclose geological or geophysical information concerning wells [(b)(9) of the FOIA]

C. Closed in accordance with restrictions contained in donor's deed of gift.

3 JAI 5 3:04

WASHFAX RECEIPT

THE WHITE HOUSE

-5

JUN 1983

C

MCC

171220

URGENT

MESSAGE NO. 983 CLASSIFICATION UNCLAS PAGES 4

FROM John P. ... / Bob Sims
(NAME) (EXTENSION) (ROOM NUMBER)

MESSAGE DESCRIPTION

TO (AGENCY)	DELIVER TO:	DEPT/ROOM NO.	EXTENSION
<u>B</u>	<u>STATE</u> Secretary Shultz John Hughes/Alan Romberg PA - Room 2109 632-2492		
<u>D</u>	<u>DEFENSE</u> Secretary Weinberger General Vessey Henry Catto/Ben Welles PA - Room 2E800 Tel. 697-9312		
<u>A</u>	<u>CIA</u> Charles Wilson		

REMARKS: STAT

DECLASSIFIED IN PART / RELEASED

NLR

BY CN NARA DATE 1/13/02

WASHFAX RECEIPT

THE WHITE HOUSE



JM

STATE

URGENT

MESSAGE NO. 3983 CLASSIFICATION UNCLAS PAGES 4
 FROM John Pandeter / Bob Sims
 (NAME) (EXTENSION) (ROOM NUMBER)

MESSAGE DESCRIPTION

TO (AGENCY)	DELIVER TO:	DEPT/ROOM NO.	EXTENSION
<u>B</u>	<u>STATE</u> Secretary Shultz John Hughes/Alan Rosenberg PA - Room 2109 632-2492		<u>1</u>
<u>D</u>	<u>DEFENSE</u> Secretary Weinberger General Vessey Henry Catto/Ben Welles PA - Room 2E800 Tel. 697-9312		
<u>A</u>	<u>CIA</u> Charles Wilson		

REMARKS:

STA

DECLASSIFIED
 BY CW NARA DATE 1/13/12
 (REDACTED)

WASHFAX RECEIPT

THE WHITE HOUSE



JAN 5

6 09 PM '83

URGENT

93 JAN 5 3:04

MESSAGE NO. 983 CLASSIFICATION UNCLAS PAGES 4

FROM John Penderfer / Bob Sims (NAME) (EXTENSION) (ROOM NUMBER) 25X1

MESSAGE DESCRIPTION

TO (AGENCY)	DELIVER TO:	DEPT/ROOM NO.	EXTENSION
<u>B</u>	STATE Secretary Shultz John Hughes/Alan Romberg PA - Room 2109 632-2492		
<u>D</u>	DEFENSE Secretary Weinberger General Vessery Henry Catto/Dan Williams PA - Room 2E800 Tel. 697-9312		
<u>A</u>	CIA Charles Wilson		

REMARKS:

STAT

CLASSIFIED IN PART (RELEASE)
CET

NARA DATE 1/13/12

15

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

January 5, 1983

Attached is NSC-approved press
guidance, based on IG recommendations.

16

FOR DEFENSE DEPARTMENT RELEASE

A portion of a Soviet Cosmos military satellite, which we believe contains a nuclear reactor as its power supply, will probably reenter the earth's atmosphere in late January. At this time, we do not know where it will land, nor do we know precisely when to expect reentry. A similar satellite landed in northern Canada in early 1978. We are monitoring this situation carefully.

17

FOR WHITE HOUSE USE

Q: Has the President been notified?

A: Yes.

Q: When and by whom?

A: By National Security Advisor William P. Clark on January 4.

FOR DOD USE

Q: Do we have similar satellites?

A: No.

Q: What are the potential dangers, should it land in a populated area?

A: There is a health risk from debris.

Q: How large is the satellite?

A: No comment.

Q: How are we monitoring?

A: NORAD.

Q: What information will be provided to the public and by whom in the event there is a threat to public safety?

A: The Energy Department would be responsible.

Q: What happens if it lands in water?

A: There would be no consequential risk.

Q: Can the satellite explode?

A: ~~It is~~ *It is not* a weapon. It would burn on reentry.

Q: Has Congress been notified?

A: Yes. The Intelligence Committees were provided preliminary notification January 5.

FOR STATE DEPARTMENT USE

Q: Have we asked the Soviets for information?

A: No, but we intend to request information through normal diplomatic channels.

Q: Have we contacted other countries?

A: We will be providing information to other governments.

Q: Would we assist in the cleanup operations outside the United States?

A: A determination will be made if that becomes necessary. We did assist in Canada in 1978.

COSMOS 1402 Reentry

Q: How long have we known about the Soviet satellite now about to re-enter, carrying a nuclear reactor?

A: NORAD continually monitors the behavior of all objects in satellite orbit. Early this week it became apparent that this particular satellite was out of control.

Q: How do we know this satellite carries a nuclear reactor?

A: This satellite is similar - perhaps identical - to COSMOS 954 which made an uncontrolled reentry over Canada in January, 1978.

Q: Where do we believe the satellite may come down?

A: Since the satellite appears to be out of control, there is no way to predict this now with any useful precision. We will know better as the reentry time nears, in the last few orbits.

Q: Does this represent a significant health hazard?

A: If parts of the reactor were to impact on a populated area, there would be some health risk.

Q: Would we assist in cleanup operations outside the United States?

A: We did assist Canada in 1978. We will certainly be open to any requests for assistance, should that become necessary.

Q: After the 1978 COSMOS 954 incident, would you not expect the Soviets to take measures to prevent a recurrence?

A: We have no indication that they have taken such measures. We hope they have, and believe they have a responsibility to provide information on this point. This is, after all, a problem of their creation.

Q: Have we asked the Soviets for information?

A: We intend to request information through normal diplomatic channels.



P

Time Stamp
RECEIVED

21

STAFF	C/O
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83 JAN 6 A 8: 04

Clark	
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McFarlane	
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Poindexter	C
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SITUATION ROOM

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*Cleared with
Clay Inc tomorrow*

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Merchant	
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NSC S/S	C
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C : Copy

O : Original

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URGENT

WASHFAX RECEIPT
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

B

S/S #

JAN 5 1983 04

SITUATION ROOM

MESSAGE NO. 75 CLASSIFICATION CONFIDENTIAL No. Pages 3

FROM: C. McManaway S/S 23126 7224
(Officer name) (Office symbol) (Extension) (Room number)

MESSAGE DESCRIPTION Cable to ALDAC re Uncontrolled Reentry of Soviet
Nuclear Powered Satellite

TO: (Agency)	DELIVER TO:	Extension	Room No.
NSC	Michael Wheeler	395-3044	
NSC	ADM. Poindexter		

FOR: CLEARANCE ☒ INFORMATION ☐ PER REQUEST ☐ COMMENT ☐

REMARKS: Clearance requested ASAP 1/5/83

S/S Officer:

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RETURN TIME-STAMPED COVER SHEET TO S/S

171221N

CONFIDENTIAL

DECLASSIFIED

NLRR 748-23-36-5-8

OES/SAT:LROSE:GJG

1-5-83 EXT. 22433

P:LSEAGLEBURGER

BY 1988 NARA DATE 4/8/13

OES/S:CHORNER

DOD/JCS:COL. GOETZ

EUR/SOV:BMORTON

EUR:MPALMER

OES/SAT:SAMEER

/UNA:DSMALL

EUR:RUPCHURCH

EA:DO'DONOHUE

IMMEDIATE

ALDAC

E.O. 12065: OADR

TAGS: TSPA/UR

SUBJECT: UNCONTROLLED REENTRY OF SOVIET NUCLEAR-POWERED SATELLITE

1. ALL POSTS ARE REQUESTED TO CONTACT HOST GOVERNMENTS AND INFORM THEM THAT THE U.S. HAS LEARNED THAT A SOVIET NUCLEAR-POWERED SATELLITE HAS SUFFERED A MALFUNCTION AND IS EXPECTED TO MAKE AN UNCONTROLLED REENTRY INTO THE EARTH'S ATMOSPHERE SOME TIME IN LATE JANUARY. A SIMILAR SOVIET SATELLITE, COSMOS 1554, STRUCK NORTHERN CANADA IN 1978 AND SCATTERED RADIOACTIVE DEBRIS. IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO PREDICT THE PRECISE TIME OR LOCATION OF REENTRY OF THE PRESENT UNCONTROLLED SOVIET SATELLITE.

2. HOST GOVERNMENTS SHOULD BE TOLD THAT THE U.S. IS PASSING THIS INFORMATION ON IN THE GENERAL INTEREST AND THAT THE PROBLEM IS CLEARLY THE SOVIETS'. IF HOST GOVERNMENTS REQUIRE FURTHER PARTICULARS REGARDING THE TECHNICAL CONFIGURATION AND PERFORMANCE CAPABILITIES OF THE SOVIET SATELLITE, ITS TRAJECTORY, ANTICIPATED TIME OF REENTRY, ETC., THEY SHOULD BE ENCOURAGED TO QUERY SOVIET AUTHORITIES DIRECTLY. HOST GOVERNMENTS SHOULD BE TOLD THAT, IF THEY SO REQUEST, THE U.S. WOULD OFFER ALL POSSIBLE ASSISTANCE IN LOCATING RADIOACTIVE DEBRIS AND IN THE DECONTAMINATION OF

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THAT DEBRIS - - - - - ALL OTHER HOST GOVERNMENT
QUERIES REGARDING U.S. REACTION AND ANTICIPATED RESPONSES
SHOULD BE REFERRED TO THE DEPARTMENT FOR REPLY.

3. DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE RELEASED THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT
AT ITS DAILY PRESS BRIEFING TODAY:

-- A PORTION OF A SOVIET COSMOS MILITARY SATELLITE, WHICH
-- WE BELIEVE CONTAINS A NUCLEAR REACTOR AS ITS POWER
-- SUPPLY, WILL PROBABLY REENTER THE EARTH'S ATMOSPHERE
-- IN LATE JANUARY. AT THIS TIME, WE DO NOT KNOW WHERE
-- IT WILL LAND, NOR DO WE KNOW PRECISELY WHEN TO EXPECT
-- REENTRY. A SIMILAR SATELLITE LANDED IN NORTHERN
-- CANADA IN EARLY 1978. WE ARE MONITORING THIS SITUATION
-- CAREFULLY.

4. THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS HAVE BEEN DEVELOPED FOR PRESS
GUIDANCE OF APPROPRIATE AGENCIES.

FOR WHITE HOUSE USE:

Q. HAS THE PRESIDENT BEEN NOTIFIED?
A. YES.

Q. WHEN AND BY WHOM?
A. BY NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISOR WILLIAM P. CLARK ON
JANUARY FOUR.

FOR DOD USE:

Q. DO WE HAVE SIMILAR SATELLITES?
A. NO.

Q. WHAT ARE THE POTENTIAL DANGERS, SHOULD IT LAND IN A
POPULATED AREA?
A. THERE IS A HEALTH RISK FROM DEBRIS.

Q. HOW LARGE IS THE SATELLITE?
A. NO COMMENT.

Q. HOW ARE WE MONITORING?
A. NORAD.

Q. WHAT INFORMATION WILL BE PROVIDED TO THE PUBLIC AND BY
WHOM IN THE EVENT THERE IS A THREAT TO PUBLIC SAFETY?
A. THE ENERGY DEPARTMENT WOULD BE RESPONSIBLE.

Q. WHAT HAPPENS IF IT LANDS IN WATER?
A. THERE WOULD BE NO CONSEQUENTIAL RISK.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

CONFIDENTIAL

13

25

Q. CAN THE SATELLITE EXPLODE?

A. IT IS NOT A WEAPON. IT WOULD BURN ON REENTRY.

Q. HAS THE CONGRESS BE NOTIFIED?

A. YES. THE INTELLIGENCE COMMITTEES WERE PROVIDED PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATION JANUARY FIFTH.

FOR STATE DEPARTMENT USE:

Q. HAVE WE ASKED THE SOVIETS FOR INFORMATION?

A. NO, BUT WE INTEND TO REQUEST INFORMATION THROUGH NORMAL DIPLOMATIC CHANNELS.

Q. HAVE WE CONTACTED OTHER COUNTRIES?

A. WE WILL BE PROVIDING INFORMATION TO OTHER GOVERNMENTS.

Q. WOULD WE ASSIST IN THE CLEANUP OPERATIONS OUTSIDE THE UNITED STATES?

A. A DETERMINATION WILL BE MADE IF THAT BECOMES NECESSARY. WE DID ASSIST IN CANADA IN 1978.

S. USUN: SUBMIT ABOVE INFORMATION TO SECRETARY GENERAL.
MOSCOW: TRANSMITTED FOR INFORMATION PURPOSES ONLY.

YY

CONFIDENTIAL

ADDITIONAL CLEARANCES:

AF:JBISHOP
NEA:HSCHAEFER
NSC:RPOLLACK
OSTP:VREIS

DOE:JTORRES
ARA:RRYAN

21-

FOR DEFENSE DEPARTMENT RELEASE

A portion of a Soviet Cosmos military satellite, which we believe contains a nuclear reactor as its power supply, will probably reenter the earth's atmosphere in late January. At this time, we do not know where it will land, nor do we know precisely when to expect reentry. A similar satellite landed in northern Canada in early 1978. We are monitoring this situation carefully.

1415
1/5

Bud/Judge,

The IG has recommended this be released as soon as possible. I have authorized its release by DOD.

J

FOR WHITE HOUSE USE

Q: Has the President been notified?

A: Yes.

Q: When and by whom?

A: By National Security Advisor William P. Clark on January 4.

FOR DOD USE

Q: Do we have similar satellites?

A: No.

Q: What are the potential dangers, should it land in a populated area?

A: There is a health risk from debris.

Q: How large is the satellite?

A: No comment.

Q: How are we monitoring?

A: NORAD.

Q: What information will be provided to the public and by whom in the event there is a threat to public safety?

A: The Energy Department would be responsible.

Q: What happens if it lands in water?

A: There would be no consequential risk.

Q: Can the satellite explode?

A: Not like a weapon. It would burn on reentry.

Q: Has Congress been notified?

A: Yes. The Intelligence Committees were provided preliminary notification January 5.

FOR STATE DEPARTMENT USE

Q: Have we asked the Soviets for information?

A: No, but we intend to request information through normal diplomatic channels.

Q: Have we contacted other countries?

A: We will be providing information to other governments.

Q: Would we assist in the cleanup operations outside the United States?

A: A determination will be made if that becomes necessary. We did assist in Canada in 1978.

GUS WEISS CALLED AND SAID THE 1402
WORKING GROUP THINKS ALL OF CONGRESS
SHOULD BE NOTIFIED NOW AND WE SHOULD
PULL KIMMITT INTO THIS. WHAT TO DO?

June

FLORENCE

Sommers thinks ~~less~~
agency should do notifying
if any - (Defense is ~~less~~
agency)

Intelligence
For. Relations
Science & Technology
Armed Serv.

Both Houses

31-
FOR DEFENSE DEPARTMENT RELEASE

A portion of a Soviet Cosmos military satellite, which we believe contains a nuclear reactor as its power supply, will probably reenter the earth's atmosphere in late January. At this time, we do not know where it will land, nor do we know precisely when to expect reentry. A similar satellite landed in northern Canada in early 1978. We are monitoring this situation carefully.

1415
1/5

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J

32-

FOR WHITE HOUSE USE

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Q: When and by whom?

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FOR DOD USE

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A: No comment.

Q: How are we monitoring?

A: NORAD.

Q: What information will be provided to the public and by whom in the event there is a threat to public safety?

A: The Energy Department would be responsible.

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Q: Has Congress been notified?

A: Yes. The Intelligence Committees were provided preliminary notification January 5.

m

FOR STATE DEPARTMENT USE

Q: Have we asked the Soviets for information?

A: No, but we intend to request information through normal diplomatic channels.

Q: Have we contacted other countries?

A: We will be providing information to other governments.

Q: Would we assist in the cleanup operations outside the United States?

A: A determination will be made if that becomes necessary. We did assist in Canada in 1978.

A portion of a Soviet Cosmos military satellite, which we believe contains a nuclear power source, will probably reenter the earth's atmosphere in mid to late January. We do not know where it will land, nor do we know precisely when to expect reentry. A similar satellite landed in northern Canada in early 1978, scattering radioactive debris over a wide area and requiring extensive cleanup operations. We are monitoring this situation carefully.

Congressional notification:

36

Q: Has the President been notified?

A: Yes.

Q: When and by whom?

A: By National Security Advisor William P. Clark on January 5.

Q: Do we have similar satellites?

A: No.

Q: What are the potential dangers, should it land in a populated area?

A: There is a health risk from debris.

Q: How large is ~~the~~ the satellite?

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Q: How are we monitoring?

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Q: What happens if it lands in water?

A: There would be no consequential risk.

Q: Can the satellite explode?

A: Not like a weapon. It would burn on reentry.

Q: Have we asked the Soviets for information?

A:

Q: What have they told us?

A:

Q: Have we contacted other countries?

A:

Would we assist in cleanup operations outside the United States?

A:

Q: Has Congress been notified?

A:

Q: When and by whom?

A: