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Office of International Programs

Daily Item of Interest

March 19, 1987

To: J. Becker ^{1a}
C. MacDonald
S. Kent

From: M. Peterson
x 27866

Air Shipments of Plutonium Through Alaska

On March 16, the NRC staff (IP, NMSS, OGC, and OCA) briefed Tom Roberts of Senator Murkowski's staff (Alaska) concerning possible future air shipments of plutonium between Europe and Japan which would require landing in Alaska for aircraft refueling. Mr. Roberts was primarily interested in the technical health and safety and physical security regulatory requirements for such shipments. He had been briefed separately by the State Department on the policy aspects of plutonium air shipments and the related provisions of the proposed new U.S./Japan Agreement for Cooperation.

With respect to NRC's regulatory role, Mr. Roberts was particularly interested in the design requirements for the containers used to ship plutonium by air. The staff described the rigorous criteria for such containers and the very significant difficulties in designing an acceptable container for the larger quantities of plutonium the Japanese contemplate shipping.

Copy for Mr. C. Hillman

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Stacy -

The staff also noted that
the NRC has must have request
to review and certify the prototype
being developed by Japan.

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