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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Washington, D.C. 20520

June 17, 1980

*Slas-hecke
Rule 333*MEMORANDUM

TO : AF/S - Mr. Paul Hare

FROM : INR/PMA - Robert A. Martin

SUBJECT: Naval Research Laboratory (NRL) Analysis of Data Relevant to 22 September 1979 Possible Nuclear Event

In response to your memorandum of June 12, we contacted Dr. Jack Varona, DIA, to verify statements on this subject attributed to him by Ms. Cook of AF/P. Dr. Varona made the following observations:

- the Ruina panel report on the 22 September event was indeed a "white-wash, due to political considerations;"
- the Ruina panel used "flimsy" evidence and analysis to arrive at a "probable" non-nuclear explanation. In fact, the weight of the evidence points toward a nuclear event;
- recent analysis of hydroacoustic data by the NRL has traced the location of the possible nuclear event to relatively shallow waters between Prince Edward and Marion Islands south of South Africa. The hydroacoustic signals, which at 1.5 Hz frequency are thought by NRL to be "unique to nuclear shots in a maritime environment," were received at two collecting stations: Ascension Island and Argentia (Newfoundland). The former signals were received directly while the latter were received after being reflected from a point in Antarctica. NRL will soon issue an official report on these latest hydroacoustic findings, which were not fully available to the Ruina panel or the DCI's Nuclear Intelligence Panel when they issued their recent reports on the 22 September event.

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--there is no evidence of a "deep hole in the shallow ocean floor at the spot" or of "two sighting towers" on the islands. In the past, South Africa has surveyed the islands and has operated a small meteorological station on Prince Edward Island.

--it is well accepted within the intelligence community that radioactive waste would not necessarily have been detected from a low-yield, near-surface nuclear explosion in a maritime environment south of the African continent.

We will keep you informed of ongoing intelligence community efforts to obtain more information on the 22 September event.

Attachments:

Hare Memo - June 12, 1980
Cook Memo - June 10, 1980

cc: AF - Mr. Moose
S/AS - Mr. Locke
OES/NEP - Mr. Guhin
INR/RAF - Mr. Thorne

Drafted: INR/PMA/NS - CCohen:cbp

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Washington, D.C. 20520

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June 12, 1980

TO: S/AS - Mr. Locke
 INR/RAF - Mr. Thorne
 OES/NEP - Mr. Guhin

FROM: AF/S - Paul J. Hare TM

SUBJECT: Reported Naval Research Relevant to
 September 22 Suspected Event

Attached is a largely self-explanatory memorandum from Frances Cook, Director of Public Affairs for AF. While most of its contents cause no surprise here (we are familiar with the views of DIA on this matter) the information contained in the last three ticks is new to us. I would appreciate any information you may have on these points and your assessment of the NRL data.

Attachment:


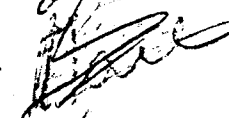
As stated.

cc: AF - Mr. Moose

Drafted: AF/S:LR ^{Qu} MacFarlane:jk
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June 10, 1980

MEMORANDUM

TO: AF - Mr. Moose

FROM: AF/P - Frances D. Cook

SUBJECT: Nuclear Event: South Africa

As requested, what follows is a summary of what I told you this morning:

-- during my "Intelligence and Foreign Policy" course at FSI (director: FSO Ed Maitland) last week, we spent one day at CIA and one day at DIA;

--during both visits, the "nuclear event" was discussed: CIA didn't seem to know much (I asked both the DDO rep and the expert on satellite photography); but the DIA's head of Science and Technology, Dr. Jack Varona, was voluble on the subject;

--in sum, he alleged that the White House (Press) report was a white-wash, due to political considerations;

--in his lab, they had calculated the probability of the Vela producing a like-nuclear 'footprint' from lightning and/or comets and that, mathematically, it came to something "like the age of the universe" (in other words, the chances of such an occurrence were nil);

--more importantly, he said that some seismic work recently done by the NRL (Naval Research Lab, I believe) not only traced the exact location of the blast--between two islands (whose names he called, but I don't remember)--in South African territorial waters;but,

--he also said there was a deep hold in the shallow ocean floor at the spot and that two sighting towers can be seen on the islands;

--he also explained why there would be no radioactive waste from such a blast.

cc: AF/S Paul Hare

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