

DECLASSIFIED
Authority *MM0959000*
By *WSD* NARA Date *4/28/91*

ORIGIN ACTION		
<i>AIR-NONE</i>		
INFO	REP	AF
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A	P DO	AFG
AGR	COM	FRM
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ORR	NSA	NSA

AIRGRAM

DEF 18-8 115

Original to be Filled In _____ Decentralized Files.

FILE DESIGNATION

CA-3143,

SECRET

COPY NO. *30*

SERIES B

TO : BUENOS AIRES INFO LIMA, SANTIAGO, CINCUSAFSO,
AIR WEATHER SERVICE, SCOTT AFB, ILLINOIS, MATS,
TOIS *SCOTT AFB, ILLINOIS, USCINCSO, 9TH WEATHER GP,
to *McCLELLAN AFB, CALIFORNIA*

LIMDIS

SEP 17 9 33 PM '65

FROM : DEPARTMENT OF STATE

DATE:

SUBJECT: Project QUICK DIP

REF *1-1-77* (a) Deptel 640, December 30, 1964, rptd Santiago 570.
copy (b) Deptel 143, August 12, 1965
pk by PM

STATE/DEFENSE MESSAGE

CA 3143

I. QUICK DIP and SKIN DIVER.

Ref (a) describes a program for contingency air sampling by US Air Weather Service from El Plumerillo Airport, Mendoza, Argentina. GOA approval was granted on 26 February (Embtel 1146) and the project, known as SKIN DIVER, continues to be a US requirement. In addition, USAF now has requirement for the AWS to carry out routine air sampling operations at medium to high altitudes from Mendoza on a regular schedule as a continuing operation beginning in November or December, 1965, depending on the time required to obtain GOA approval and to arrange for POL supply. This program, to be known as Project QUICK DIP, is a continuation of CROWFLIGHT operations currently carried on in Australia. The rationale for transferring the operation to the Western Hemisphere is set forth in ref b, copies of which are attached for info addressees.

II. OPERATING CONCEPT FOR QUICK DIP

A flight of two USAF RB-57F aircraft would visit Mendoza on a bi-weekly basis for periods or cycles of 4 to

FORM DS-323

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to out

Prepared by: *SAFCC:Reynolds:FMRA:Wolfe:dga*

Drafting Date: *9-16-65*

Contents and Classification Approved by: *G/PM - David L. Evans*

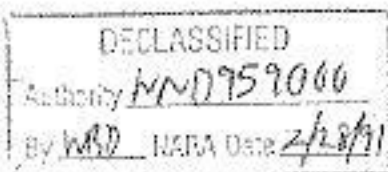
Classified by: *CD/WHRO - Col. Hill*

Approved by: *ARA/IAS - Mr. Nugent*
ARA/APU - Mr. Barch

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5 days each. The aircraft would not be stationed permanently at Mendoza but would fly from Kirtland Air Force Base, New Mexico, and during each cycle would make 5 or 6 air sampling flights from Mendoza over Argentine territory due south to 50° south latitude (vicinity of Santa Cruz) and return. It is possible that occasionally a third aircraft would be added, increasing the total number of missions proportionately, but this would not be expected to occur frequently. For each cycle of flights from Mendoza, support personnel would be transported to Mendoza from Albrook AFB, Canal Zone, via USAFSC aircraft.

Equipment for the project would be positioned at El Plumerillo and would remain between cycles. It would consist of Mission Support Kits, aerospace ground equipment (starters, etc.), one liquid oxygen trailer, a physiological support van (used to prepare pilots for high altitude flying, using full pressure suits), two or three vehicles for aircraft towing and transporting personnel on the airfield and mobile communications equipment. The QUICK DIP unit would be self-sufficient as to equipment and would not expect to borrow Argentine Air Force equipment except in an emergency.

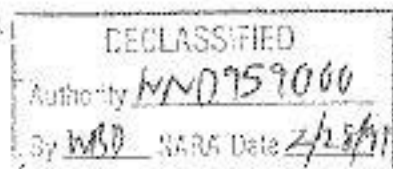
The high altitude portion of this project is, in effect, a resumption of Project HASP, carried out from Buenos Aires in 1960, ostensibly as a continuation of the earlier CROWFLIGHT operation in Argentina (1958). Argentine agreement to the 1960 program is recorded in TIAS 4037.

III. PURPOSE.

FYI. The primary use for the air samples obtained from these flights is to compute the total amount of a rare gas given off in the process of producing plutonium, which is a prime element in the construction of nuclear weapons. By determining from samples of air taken at various latitudes the total amount

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of this gas in the atmosphere and subtracting the amount of the gas released by the production of the US and its allies, a reasonably accurate estimate of amount produced by Sino-Soviets can be made. So far as we can determine, no one in the GOA was told the true purpose of the 1960 air sampling project; Deptel 1421, 8 March 1960, contained a strict injunction against revealing this aspect of the project to the Argentines, and the foregoing information continues to be SECRET NOFORN.

Although this project is related to the US Atomic Energy Detection System (Project CLEAR SKY) in that the AEDS is the primary "customer" for information on rare gas, the aircraft are to be operated by the USAF Air Weather Service, and there would be no outward connection with the AEDS. The Embassy may, in its discretion, indicate that there is a relation between the two projects in that fallout information is used by AEDS, or it may treat the two as completely separate projects. If the former course is adopted, obviously only those persons already familiar with the true purpose of CLEAR SKY should be made privy to the relationship. END FYI.

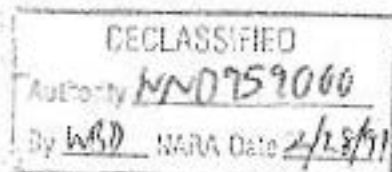
The unclassified cover story is that the aircraft are obtaining air samples for use in studying radioactive fallout. This is of course true, and unclassified reports of such air sampling are published periodically by the Atomic Energy Commission's Health and Safety Laboratories. Copies of these reports could be made available to Argentina upon request if the GOA is not already receiving them.

IV. PERSONNEL.

This project would be carried out by a total of 20 to 25 temporary duty personnel. The full complement, less flight crews (2 per plane) would arrive at Mendoza before the first operational flight and remain 60 to 90 days to set up operations. We hope to work out air lift arrangements whereby, after this initial period, all personnel except 1 or 2 caretakers would arrive shortly before each sampling cycle and be withdrawn at the end of the cycle. On this basis, the full complement would be at Mendoza only about ten days per month.

Personnel

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Personnel would be housed in hotel space in Mendoza to be leased by the USAF. We assume that personal effects of TDY personnel would not be subject to duty, personnel would not be subject to Argentine taxation (other than sales taxes on articles purchased) and that should any of them commit offenses in Argentina it would be possible to make informal arrangements to remove them from the country for trial (if trial is appropriate) under the UCMJ. Personnel would be in possession of passports, and we assume no visa would be required.

V. OPERATIONAL REQUIREMENTS.

Operational requirements for this project are as follows:

A. Overflight and Landing Rights

The USAF will require blanket clearance for all international flights into Argentina in connection with this project, subject to filing a flight plan, and waiver of the usual GOA requirement for submission of requests for clearance 4 days in advance. Virtually all flights receiving this privilege would be AWS RB-57F's, but occasionally cargo aircraft carrying spare parts or supplies might also need to use this procedure. Flights that both originate and terminate within Argentina should be subject only to local air traffic control. Permission for overflights of third countries would be obtained by the USAF from the appropriate governments.

B. Airfield Facilities at Mendoza.

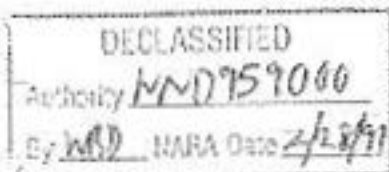
(1) 28,000 square feet of parking space and an additional 15,000 square feet when and if three aircraft are used, plus access to taxiways and runways.

(2) About 5,000 square feet of covered equipment storage and shop space.

(3) Three hundred square feet of office space.

(4) Firefighting

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(4) Firefighting and other emergency equipment support and medical and hospital facilities if required.

(5) Weather facilities and information.

(6) If Esso, with whom arrangements for fuel would be made, has no POL storage facilities, such facilities would be needed from GOA.

(7) Use of local power, water, and sanitary facilities.

(8) Occasional use of aircraft washing facilities.

(9) The right to bring US property into Argentina for use in connection with the project free of duties, taxes and customs examinations.

Details would be worked out between USAF and AAF.

C. Communications.

The USAF would wish to install a small communications unit to provide for operational control of the aircraft while outside the local area. Local communications and air traffic control would be furnished by GOA authorities. Frequencies required would be cleared through technical channels. The personnel figure for this unit (4 - 6) is included in the total given in IV above.

VI. COSTS.

We would expect GOA to furnish existing buildings and facilities, free of charge. The USAF would reimburse the GOA for any out-of-pocket expenses incurred as a result of the proposed operations at Mendoza. Services (such as tower operation and weather) that are operated whether or not they are used, so that no extra expense is incurred in making them available, would therefore be non-reimbursable. Such services as utilities would, of course, be paid for. Details concerning reimbursement could probably best be arranged directly between the USAF and the Argentine Air Force.

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By WSD NARA Date 2/28/11

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VII. CLASSIFICATION.

As indicated above, the true purpose of project is SECRET NOFORN. The connection between this project and the AEDS and AFTAC, the USAF agency responsible for the AEDS, is SECRET. Except for SECRET and SECRET NOFORN aspects, the project would be unclassified upon completion of negotiations, and CONFIDENTIAL until that time.

VIII. ACTION REQUESTED.

The Embassy is requested to approach the GOA, drawing on the foregoing as appropriate, and to seek agreement for Project QUICK DIP operations at Mendoza. A simple exchange of notes describing the project in terms of the cover story, expressing GOA concurrence in it, and agreeing that details will be worked out by respective Air Forces may be sufficient. It would be preferred if Embassy would work out an arrangement on exemptions from customs duties, taxes and inspection for US property (V.B.(9) above), and for simplified flight clearance (V.A. above), and include such arrangements in exchange of notes. In view of the relatively short time before operations should begin, we are anxious to obtain GOA agreement as quickly as possible.

The USAF would be prepared to make personnel available, upon Embassy request, to brief the Embassy and GOA and to assist in negotiations.

RUSK

Attachment

As stated

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