SUBJ: GENERAL SUPPORT OF COD/NASA R&D EXPERIMENTS

REF: (A) CA-10585
(B) EMBASSY'S A-403

1. WE SEE NO OBJECTION TO SEEKING GNZ BLANKET CLEARANCE FOR MISSIONS DESCRIBED REF A. CRITICS OF NZ MILITARY COOPERATION WITH U.S. HAVE RECENTLY FOCUSED SOME ATTENTION ON U.S. MILITARY AIRCRAFT USE OF CHRISTCHURCH AIRPORT (REF B) BUT WE DO NOT BELIEVE THIS WOULD DETER GNZ FROM AFFORDING US SUPPORT WE REQUIRE, INCLUDING EXEMPTIONS CITED PARA 3 REF A.

2. IN ADDITION TO BLANKET CLEARANCE, GNZ MAY REQUIRE EMBASSY TO PROVIDE ADVANCE INFO ON EACH FLIGHT. ASSUME THESE MISSIONS WOULD USE COMMERCIAL FACILITIES FOR BILLETING AND AIRCRAFT SERVICING AS DO OTHER U.S. MILITARY AIRCRAFT STOPPING OVER IN CHRISTCHURCH.

3. IF OPERATIONS IN AIR SPACE OF COOK ISLANDS AND/OR LANDING AT RAROTONGA CONTEMPLATED, JUDGING FROM PAST EXPERIENCE GNZ WOULD FEEL OBLIGED OBTAIN GOV CONCURRENCE BEFORE GRANTING CLEARANCE.

GP-3. HENNING

INFO: CJCS-1 J3-8 J5-2 NMCC-1 S/DEF-7-ASD/ISA-9 ASD/PA-1 DDRE-3 ARPA-3 DIA-15 CSA-1 CNO-9 CSAF-1 CMC-3 FILE-1 (65)ZIM/LG
To increase the probability of recovering unmanned space capsules and their valuable (and in the case of DOD capsules, highly classified) scientific experimental equipment which, due to malfunctions, may not re-enter at planned locations, USAF has a contingency requirement to stage C-130 aircraft - equipped for aerial recovery of capsules - from Perth, Sydney, Townsville, Auckland or Christchurch on extremely short notice. These aircraft would normally fly search and recovery patterns over international waters, but, infrequently, search and recovery flights may occur in the airspace of Australia or New Zealand. No danger should occur as a result of unplanned re-entry of space vehicle in territory of either country. A schedule of operations cannot be determined because of the unpredictable nature of the malfunctions necessitating this contingency. A typical mission would evolve along these lines: After orbit, if a malfunction is detected in the space vehicle, satellite controllers have approximately two orbits (about three hours) to determine where the vehicle will deorbit. Aircraft, based at Hawaii, will depart for
that area (refueling at U.S. possessions). Then, due to fuel requirements, aircraft would land at an appropriate base in Australia or New Zealand. Due to the time required to get aircraft in place to recover the vehicle, a delay while obtaining diplomatic clearance would seriously hamper the success of recovery. One to three such deployments, lasting no more than three to five days, may be required each year. A maximum of two aircraft would be involved at any one time with a total of twenty-eight personnel - all U.S. military personnel. Flight clearances would, of course, be filed in accordance with the regulations of the host country.

The security classification of missions involving DOD capsules will vary from Confidential to SECRET. Missions on behalf of NASA are UNCLASSIFIED.

Blanket clearance for these missions is desired, including authorization to conduct search and recovery operations in airspace of host country when necessary. DAOs would be furnished flight plan prior to dispatch of aircraft. Also desired is exemption from customs duties, taxes and other charges for personal effects of crew and USG equipment installed in aircraft. Billeting would be required as necessary, as would normal aircraft servicing. There are no other special requirements.

ACTION: Embassies are requested to furnish department with their views on propriety of seeking and probability of obtaining the host country clearances, exemptions and services described in para 3 above.

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