

Editor

Proliferation Danger

Where will the next Palomares H-bomb incident take place? The United States Government was responsible for at least 14 nuclear weapons accidents prior to the Palomares incident. There will no doubt be more incidents unless drastic changes in the respective policies of the United States and other nations are effected. The danger of Palomares is not so much the possibility of an H-bomb exploding as the result of a collision or crash as it is the probability that a lost bomb might fall into the hands of a previously non-nuclear State. The Chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission has indicated that at least a dozen independent countries could produce atomic bombs within a few years if they chose to do so. Other authorities have cited virtually an "Nth" number of States as having such a capacity given sufficient time.

Currently, it would seem that the relatively slight attention being given by the United States to the proposal for establishing a regional Nuclear-Free Zone in Latin America is lamentable. Our policy of conditioning its support upon Cuban participation is self-defeating. No one wants another Cuban missile crisis and it would be wonderful if Cuba would agree to denuclearization. But an equally threatening missile crisis could arise in some other Latin American nation unless denuclearization is effected.

Clearly the acquisition of nuclear weapons by some Latin American countries, as the result of years of expensive research or as the result of a Palomares-type incident, is inevitable unless collective preventive action is taken now by the U.S. as well as her sister republics in Latin America.

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