



Associated Press cablephoto

SAFE ON DECK—Crewmen on board the USS Petrel lash down the recovered hydrogen bomb, which is still wrapped in its parachute protection. The bomb is about 12 feet long, resembling a torpedo, is dull silver in color.

U. S. Reveals a Top Secret Weapon— Shows the H-Bomb to Reassure Spain

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**ABOARD THE USS ALBANY
OFF PALOMARES, SPAIN.**

The United States Navy yesterday displayed the hydrogen bomb the Air Force lost Jan. 17 when an B-52 bomber crashed during a routine refueling operation near the sleepy Spanish town of Palomares.

The display was a floating funeral ceremony except that the bomb, recovered from 2,850 feet under water by Navy crews Thursday morning, was not buried in the Mediterranean where it had lain for 81 days after the crash.

The bomb lay on the fan-tail of the small submarine rescue vessel Petrel which approached to within 65 feet of the cruiser Albany, flagship of the recovery task force. On the Albany were 100 newsmen and photographers, camera-wielding American junior Naval officers and a handful of Spaniards who managed to sneak aboard. U. S. Ambassador to Spain Angier Biddle Duke and his wife also were aboard.

It was the first time the U. S. had ever publicly displayed an H-bomb. The decision to show it obviously was aimed at proving to the Spanish people—and the world—that the weapon indeed had been recovered.

(An informed source in Washington said there was

good reason to assume that the need to disclose such proof outweighed whatever security disclosure might accompany the bombs display.

The Petrel, hardly longer than a seagoing tug, puffed slowly near the Albany, anchored a mile off shore, in order to provide a good view of the bomb. The bomb itself is about 10 feet long and about 6 feet in circumference. It is silver-grey, with masking tape over presumably top secret markings on its side. Its nose and tail are dented. It was on view for perhaps five minutes.

Also on board the Petrel was the curv—cable-controlled underwater recovery vehicle—which plucked the bomb from a tricky underwater slope.

The task force commander, Rear Adm. William A. Guest, who normally is deputy commander of naval striking forces in southern Europe, declined in a press conference aboard the Albany to say how much the bomb weighs without its sandpacked installation case and what kind of fissionable material is at its core.

He did say that the weapon would be transported by ship to the U. S. as soon as possible and that a Spanish fisherman Francisco Simo Orts was "most helpful" in recovering the bomb. Mr. Simo Orts took rudimentary sightings of the location of the falling bomb, using mountain peaks

and valleys to mark his sightings.

The Admiral said the bomb, which was first sighted five miles off shore by the 22-foot long submarine Alvin on March 15, was an elusive one. Several times the bomb slipped the recovery cable. The parachute attached to the bomb became entangled with the Alvin last Wednesday and the sub maneuvered for two hours before it could disengage itself without letting go of the weapon, the Admiral said.

Visibility, the Admiral said, was about eight feet at the 2,500-foot depth and the bomb frequently slipped deeper through what he described as "slime about the consistency of wet cement." On the day of recovery the bomb almost broke the thick nylon cord applied by the Alvin and the CURV, Adm. Guest said.

Pressed for dramatic comments on what he felt when he was sure the bomb had been recovered, the Admiral refused to be dramatic. "Thank God, we finally got it," he quoted himself as saying. "I'd prefer combat any day to this."

The Admiral said there was never any question of the bomb exploding and leveling the south of Spain. The weapon was harmless, he said.

Then why all the trouble to recover it?

The admiral hedged, but

indicated that although he was "not worried" by reports of Soviet trawlers observing the recovery area, he "took into consideration" the security aspects of his mission.

Three other hydrogen bombs also fell from the B-52, but they were recovered quickly—unexploded—from the fields and vineyards of Palomares.