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Weapons of Mass Destruction . Nuclear Weapons

Project Larkspur, Amchitka Island, Alaska. Investigations of Areas 1, 2, 3 and 4

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Abstract: Project "Rufus" was initiated on 8 July 1962 for the. purpose of selecting a suitable site for field testing the response of a typical Minuteman missile installation to the detonation of a nuclear device of one megaton or greater yield. The Project "Rufus" study eliminated several sites in different parts of the world and selected three sites, all in Alaska, for further study. These were: (1) Amchitka Island, (2) North Slope of the Brooks Range, and (3) Chirikof Island, which is to be held in reserve. Project "Larkspur" was initiated in April 1963 to further study the three Alaska sites. One of the conclusions of the "Rufus" study was that Amchitka is land is the only site where a nuclear detonation of 10 megatons or larger yield can be tested safely. It was also concluded that safe yield limits on the North Slope of the Brooks Range were 2 to 10 megatons, and for Chirikof Island, 2 megatons. This report summarizes results of field and office studies to date and makes a partial evaluation of the Amchitka Island portion of the "Larkspur" project. Four specific areas were studied over the length of the island, and each was evaluated insofar as possible with respect to design criteria set forth in the "Rufus" report. Except for Area 2 which was inaccessible to drilling equipment, each site was investigated with a 120-foot deep core boring, which approximates the depth of a Minuteman missile silo. Sample cores from each drilled site have been subjected to comprehensive testing procedures by both USGS and Corps of Engineers. A complete discussion on results of the Corps of Engineers testing program is included as an appendix to this report.

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