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HISTORY OF STRATEGIC AIR COMMAND

FY 1970

HISTORICAL STUDY NO. 117 (U)

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B. K. Holloway

B. K. HOLLOWAY, General, USAF
Commander in Chief

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OFFICE OF THE HISTORIAN

HEADQUARTERS STRATEGIC AIR COMMAND

20 APRIL 1971

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AFHRA Cy 2 of 4.

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~~94-HO-067~~

OR-CVI-3771-1A

serious shortage of aircrews (unless crews excess to the 1400 Arc Light sortie rate were returned from SEA).²⁴⁹

(U) ~~(S-Gp 1)~~ On 14 October 1969, General Wheeler notified General Holloway and the other CINCs that the readiness test would last until about 0001Z on 30 October. He also informed the CINCs that their recommendations had been considered in the preparation of further tests, and that individual instructions would follow approval by "higher authority."²⁵⁰

(U) ~~(S-Gp 1)~~ An intentional omission from SAC's list of suggested actions was dispersal. In fact, Headquarters SAC strongly recommended against dispersal during the readiness test because it would further restrict crew scheduling and aggravate the problem of crew shortages. On 17 October, General Holloway sent the following analysis of the problem to the JCS:²⁵¹

A serious shortage of aircrews causes limitations in SAC's ability to fully implement further readiness conditions either for the current test or for an emergency. Our readiness plans are based on the requirement to fully generate and disperse the aircraft force and also fly SEAGA. Because of the crew shortage we do not have that full capability. In fact, if we were to fully generate the aircraft force today, there would be about eighty aircraft for which there would be no aircrew available at the time the aircraft became generated.

If we generate aircraft we should implement dispersal, but if we disperse we reduce our ability to cycle crews through airborne SEAGA, ground alert, and submarine reaction posture. In an actual emergency we would have to evaluate the situation and, in some units, make a choice between flying SEAGA and implementing dispersal.

Almost simultaneously, and at the request of the JCS, Headquarters SAC did forward a list of selected dispersal actions which would least affect the command's readiness in case of an actual emergency.²⁵² However, the JCS did not pursue the matter further.

(U) ~~(S-REFORM)~~-Gp 1) Also on 17 October, the JCS disseminated additional instructions for the military readiness test. In order to prevent the loss of critical items of combat crew training, the

were carried on "airborne alert" sorties since the B-52 crash near Thule AB in January 1968.)

(U) ~~(IS-NOROM-Op 1)~~ The readiness test ended almost as abruptly as it began. On 28 October, the JCS directed termination of the test and a return to normal operating status at 0001Z on 30 October 1969.²⁶² Headquarters SAC notified its units,²⁶³ and General Holloway informed his commanders that he was "very pleased with the excellent response and performance of the aircrews, support personnel, staffs and commanders throughout the current JCS directed readiness test."²⁶⁴

(U) ~~(IS-NOROM-Op 1)~~ Shortly after termination, the JCS requested the commanders to comment on the readiness test--difficulties, impact, and benefits.²⁶⁵ In response, Headquarters SAC commented on the lack of information concerning the objectives of the exercise. Problems encountered during execution were minimal. The most significant impact concerned the problem of aircrew shortages. As expressed by SAC, "the shortage of combat crews reduces the flexibility . . . SAC once enjoyed and this at a time when we are searching for additional options."²⁶⁶ There simply were not enough crews to support force dispersal or a full-scale SEAGA operation. The readiness test also aggravated the problem because of the curtailment of in-unit training for non combat-ready crew replacements.²⁶⁷

Training and Evaluation

Unit IWO Evaluations

(U) Throughout FY-70, Headquarters SAC continued to rely upon the operational readiness inspection (ORI) system as an effective means of evaluating a tactical unit's capability to accomplish its primary mission under realistically simulated combat conditions. Conducted by an inspector general (IG) team from Headquarters USAF, Headquarters SAC, or one of the numbered air force headquarters, the ORI was designed to evaluate all operational aspects of a unit's weapon systems as well as certain mission support areas. An operational readiness inspection test (ORIT) was that portion of the ORI