



1 November 1977

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MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

Subj: AV-8B/A-18 Cost-Effectiveness Evaluation - ACTION MEMORANDUM

Your Program Decision Memorandum of 16 August 1977 directed a cost-effectiveness comparison between the AV-8B and A-18 for the modernization of the Marine Corps tactical aviation light attack force. The evaluation was conducted by a joint study group composed of personnel from the Navy, Marine Corps, and the Department of the Navy Secretariat. Close liaison was maintained between the study group and your staff to ensure understanding of key assumptions and methodology. The study report is attached.

The study finds that, at equal total cost, the AV-8B will be more effective than the A-18, within the framework of Marine tactical aviation force structure and capability, the intended heavy application of light attack forces to the close air support task, and the dominant mobility and flexibility requirement inherent in the Marine Corps' mission. I strongly concur. One can, of course, postulate circumstances under which the A-18's greater flexibility between fighter and attack roles would be a determining factor. The evaluation, however, does not find this to be a driving consideration. Again, I fully agree. In light of the uncertainty attendant to planning force capability and potential application, I am convinced that a Marine fighter/attack force of F-18's and a light attack force of AV-8B's offer the best balance for effective response to the full spectrum of possible contingencies.

The great advantage of the AV-8B is, of course, its unique basing flexibility. The nation requires an effective, mobile force of combined arms, independent of scenario considerations, to aid in protecting our worldwide interests, and those of our allies. This is, simply put, the mission of the Marine Corps. The AV-8B light attack force is the latest in a continuing history of Marine initiatives focused on responsiveness to this mission. It is, I believe, a sound plan.

Other factors worthy of your consideration include the decade of expanded VSTOL operational experience and tactical knowledge which the AV-8B will provide, and the significant NATO commonality, interoperability, and mutual trade implications inherent in the HARRIER Program.

I commend the study report executive summary to your personal attention, and I look forward to discussing with you the study's content and findings.

31 Oct 77 "S-18 Study"
Attachment DMC

Graham Clayton

W. Graham Clayton, Jr.

011/21A

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EXEMPTION CATEGORY # 3
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Russ M.'s paper for
the Fri 1430 mtg
on Aviahuin issues.

The Study itself
is 12 pgs. The
clipped part is backup.

~~This is only a piece~~ ^{11/24} ~~of the issue. The~~ ^{TR} ~~beginning is~~ ^{advanced} ~~another~~ ^{F-14/A7 vs F-18/A-18} ~~is~~ ^{1/572} ~~is~~ ^{1/72}

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