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DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE  
WASHINGTON 20330

*Handwritten initials*



5 Aug 1973

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Authority: EO 13526  
Chief, Records & Declass Div, WHS  
Date:

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

August 15, 1973

SEP 19 2018

DEP SEC. HAS SEEN

MEMORANDUM FOR THE DEPUTY SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

SUBJECT: Airborne Warning and Control System (AWACS) Study for DSARC IIB (U)

(U) A memorandum by the Deputy Secretary of Defense, dated January 19, 1973, subject, "AWACS Program," requested the Air Force to perform an analysis on unresolved AWACS issues and to submit a study no later than July 20, 1973. The study was to examine (1) whether changes in the AWACS program are appropriate in light of the current status of the modernized air defense program, and (2) the survivability of the AWACS in a NATO conflict, the cost of its defense, the force structure required for the tactical mission, and the feasibility of alternative command and control systems to meet tactical requirements.

113.77 AWACS

(U) The study (nicknamed SABER SCAN) was conducted pursuant to a study plan developed by the Office of the Director of Defense Program Analysis and Evaluation (ODDPA&E) as negotiated with the Air Staff. Volume II - Evaluation of the Need for AWACS in a Modernized CONUS Air Defense Force (SABER SCAN - STRATEGIC); Volume IV - AWACS Brassboard Demonstration in the European Environment (SABER SCAN - ALPHA); and Volume V - Southeast Asia Warning and Control Study (SABER SCAN - BRAVO) were forwarded on July 20, 1973. The attached three volumes include Volume I - Executive Summary: Study of AWACS Operational Requirements and Force Structure for DSARC IIB (SABER SCAN); Volume III - Evaluation of the AWACS in a NATO/Warsaw Pact Conflict (SABER SCAN - TACTICAL); and Volume VI - Analysis of Tactical Command and Control Systems in the Middle East (SABER SCAN - CHARLIE).

(S) The completed analysis shows that AWACS would play a key role in enhancing the effectiveness of both strategic air defense and general purpose tactical air forces.

15 Aug 73

~~Classified by Hq USAF, Dir Con Prog & Alst Stds. Subject to General Declassification Schedule of Executive Order 11652. Automatically downgraded at two year intervals. Declassified on 31 December 1981.~~

SEC DEF CONTR No. X- 3650

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18-M-2077

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Page determined to be Unclassified  
Reviewed Chief, RDD, WHS  
IAW EO 13526, Section 3.5  
Date:

Office of the Secretary of Defense  
Chief, RDD, ESD, WHS  
Date: 19 Sep 2018 Authority: EO 13526 + 5 USC § 552  
Declassify: X Deny in Full: \_\_\_\_\_  
Declassify in Part: \_\_\_\_\_  
Reason: \_\_\_\_\_  
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(S) With regard to air defense of the United States, the AWACS is shown to make a major contribution to force effectiveness, and therefore to strategic deterrence, as the command and control element of any of several alternative air defense forces. For example, the AWACS would provide major enhancement of the effectiveness of current and programmed Century Series interceptors. It would also fully exploit the far greater potential of an Improved Manned Interceptor (IMI) force.

(S) Regarding tactical air operations, the recent demonstration of the AWACS Brassboard in Europe showed clearly the feasibility of AWACS operation in that environment. Analysis of warning and control in Southeast Asia reveals that a major contribution to improved fighter exchange ratios resulted from introduction of effective warning in the later stages of the air war. Our quantitative analysis shows that the AWACS is survivable and is the most cost-effective alternative for improvement of surveillance, warning, command, and control in NATO. Of particular importance is the capability of the AWACS to provide surveillance of mobilization patterns of Warsaw Pact forces, thus reinforcing the fundamental concept of strategic warning in NATO strategy and adding to the strength of our deterrent posture in Europe. Should deterrence fail, the AWACS will make a significant contribution to the effectiveness of NATO air operations. Many other applications of the tactical AWACS, although not quantified, are discussed in detail in the study.

(S) Costs for the core AWACS and for the alternative aircraft for use in the tactical air mission were calculated on an incremental basis on the assumption that a force of 30 aircraft would have been procured for the strategic defensive mission. Should the tentative decision by the Secretary of Defense to relocate all funds for AWACS to general purpose forces remain unchanged, the conclusions in the relative cost effectiveness portions of the tactical AWACS study would not be altered unless total procurement were reduced below the current level of 34 aircraft shown in the Air Force POM.

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(U) A schedule of briefings for your staff on the SABER SCAN study has been arranged. These briefings are available for presentation to you should you desire to hear them.

*John McLucas*  
JOHN L. McLUCAS  
Secretary of the Air Force

**3 Attachments**

1. SABER SCAN Executive Summary ~~(S)~~
2. SABER SCAN-TACTICAL ~~(S)~~
3. SABER SCAN-CHARLIE ~~(S)~~

cc: Secretary of Defense

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