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Description of document: Special Historical Study - Growth of USAFSS (United States Air Force Security Service) ACRP (Airborne Communication Reconnaissance Platform) in Terms of Tasking and Mission Aircraft and Historical Resume of Hostile Reaction to U.S. Reconnaissance Activities, 1966

Request date: 07-September-2008

Released date: 12-November-2014

Posted date: 22-December-2014

Source of document: Mandatory Declassification Review
Department of the Air Force
HAF/AII
1000 Air Force Pentagon
Washington DC 20330-1000

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DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
WASHINGTON DC 20330-1000

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

November 12, 2014

SAF/ AAI (MDR)
1000 Air Force Pentagon
Washington DC 20330-1000

This is in response to your 7 September 2008 Mandatory Declassification review request.

The appropriate agencies conducted a review of documents 1, 3, and 5 and recommend withholding portions of these documents (redacted) from public disclosure under Executive Order 13526, Section 1.4 (c) and 3.5 (f).

The document responsive to #4 is withheld in full the information is properly classified in accordance with Executive Order 13526. The documents response to #2 the Air Force conducted a search for the document and no was found therefore a no record determination is made.

Should this decision be appealed, write to the address listed below within sixty (60) calendar days from the date of this letter. Please include your reason for reconsideration and attach a copy of this letter:

Secretary of the Air Force
THRU: SAF/AAI (MDR)
1000 Air Force Pentagon
Washington, DC 20330-1000

Address Questions concerning this review to the undersigned at (703) 693-2560 and refer our case number 09-MDR-007.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "PJ", written over a white background.

PENNY JENKINS
Mandatory Declassification Review
Program Manager

Attachment:
1, 3 and 5

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DM film

USAF REVIEWED 22 OCT 2013 NO OBJECTION TO RELEASE AS SANITIZED

A SPECIAL HISTORICAL STUDY

Growth of USAFSS ACRP in Terms of Tasking
and Mission Aircraft

and

Historical Resumé of Hostile Reaction
to U.S. Reconnaissance Activities



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The information contained in
this document will not be dis-
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1966

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UNITED STATES AIR FORCE SECURITY SERVICE

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Growth of USAFSS ACRP in Terms of Mission Aircraft

Shortly following the end of World War II, Communist nations began converting their communications links to voice operation on VHF frequencies. This conversion progressed to such an extent that an appreciable loss of COMINT was experienced. To recover this loss, the ACRP was initiated.

The USAFSS ACRP actually began in March 1954 with one RB-29 flying productive VHF intercept missions in the Far East theater. This was the only aircraft actively engaged in the program until early FY57.

An evaluation of the ACRP at that time indicated that it was essential not only to continue the program but to increase the capability considerably. Therefore, plans were finalized and approved for the use of RB-50 aircraft in the ACRP in Europe as well as in the Far East.

The RB-50 program was to consist of ten aircraft modified and equipped for VHF intercept operations. Five aircraft were to be utilized in the Far East and five in Europe. By July 1957, USAFSS had five RB-50s in place; three in Europe and two in the Far East. All aircraft were in place by October 1957.

By 1958, the ACRP had proven so valuable to the National COMINT effort that Headquarters USAF readily approved the allocation of eight C-130A aircraft to USAFSS to replace the RB-50s in an effort to further improve the effectiveness of the program. The C-130s were equipped with 10 positions, seven of which were ^{operational} ~~operational~~. The other three were spares, to be used for training or replacements when regular positions became inoperative.

The first two C-130 ACRP aircraft arrived in Germany in July 1958, and

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and by July 1959 the European ACRP consisted of eight C-130A-2 aircraft. At that time, the Far East ACRP consisted of nine RB-50-2 aircraft. However, these were replaced by C-130 aircraft during 1961.

With these in place, the Far East and Europe, for the time being, were adequately covered. However, a buildup of Soviet air, nuclear, and guided missile activity [25x1] created a need for ACRP aircraft in that area. To bridge this gap, Project [25x1] was conceived in May 1958. At that time, Security Service established a requirement for four KC-135H aircraft equipped with ACRP equipment for COMINT collection [25x1]

[25x1] However, it wasn't until almost three years later that Air Force directed SAC to operate three aircraft to meet the reconnaissance requirements of that area. Following a test in December 1962, the first KC-135 was on station in February 1963. The other two were in place by _____.

Since 1961, when C-130s replaced RB-50s in the Far East, world conditions have dictated augmentation of the ACRP fleet. Currently, the ACRP program consists of 22 aircraft; 8 C-130As, 11 C-130Bs, and 3 RC-135s. Ten C-130Bs are operating in the [25x1] Seven C-130As in [25x1] a C-130A and a C-130B at [25x1] and three RC-135s in [25x1]

Six additional RC-135 aircraft have been programmed and scheduled for operation in the [25x1] during 1967.

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Growth of ACRP in Terms of Tasking and Mission Accomplishment

As previously mentioned, the airborne reconnaissance program had its beginning in the early 1950s when the Air Force adopted the concept of using airborne collection platforms for close support purposes in order to cope with increased Soviet use of VHF communications. In the ensuing years the Air Force operational commands together with USAFSS not only developed a practicable basis for a collection program but also kept improving the capability of the platforms involved. Other agencies soon became interested in this collection method and before long requests for ACRP support began pouring in. As a natural consequence, the Air Force airborne SIGINT program evolved from a strictly direct support role to one in support of national interests. In this new role, the ACRP program remained under Air Force management with NSA providing the collection guidance and technical support.

As a result of its initial success, tasking continued to be levied against ACRP aircraft to provide coverage on a world-wide basis. ACRP operations were extended to Thailand, Vietnam, [REDACTED] 25x1

[REDACTED] 25x1 to satisfy national emergency and special search requirements.

Meanwhile, the Soviets were progressively increasing their use of newer and more complex forms of communications, which, with very few exceptions, could be intercepted only from an airborne platform. For example, as technological developments in the communications field continued, there was an increasing trend toward the use of low-powered, directional, and more complex

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VHF/UHF/Microwave transmissions by target countries. Since the line-of-sight principle governed these frequency ranges, most of these communications were not available to fixed intercept sites and seaborne platforms, even though either might be in the area. Consequently, more and more intercept requirements had to be placed on aerial platforms with their capability to penetrate 300-400 miles further inland.

Furthermore, in view of the proliferation of new communications systems being encountered, early detection was imperative if a detection capability were to be developed. Consequently, periodic technical search of the signal environment in every geographic area of interest became a necessity.

In mid-1962, USAFSS sent its requirements for additional ACRP aircraft to Hq USAF. The requirement was based on tasking in support of national requirements which were not originally included in the programming for ACRP fleets. Additional requirements levied on ACRP aircraft far exceeded the original programmed flying hours. In order to support all tasks, USAFSS said it needed more airplanes.

The requirement for additional ACRP resources was based on the value of ACRP-derived SIGINT and its contribution toward satisfaction of national and defense intelligence needs. This value was clearly illustrated in the Airborne/Seaborne Collection monthly evaluation reports submitted by NSA to DIA. To be more specific, the following were some significant findings based on operations during the first six months of 1963:

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1. An estimated 95 percent of VHF multi-channel communications associated with Soviet Cuban-based missile activity was intercepted by airborne platforms operating against Cuba. The proximity of this target to the airfields involved provided a proving ground to test the efficiency of aerial reconnaissance under almost ideal conditions.



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[Redacted]

25x1

Aerial reconnaissance provided virtually all VHF intercept on military transport aviation unit activity in the Black Sea area together with much unique material concerning Soviet Air activity. ACRP was the primary source of collection for the

[Redacted]

25x1

this activity and determination of the air order of battle in the USSR was dependent upon aerial reconnaissance.

[Redacted]

25x1

[Redacted]

25x1

ACRP was the only source of intercept for certain Soviet air activity and provided much of the material from which details of Soviet Naval/Naval Air tactical operations were derived.

By the beginning of 1965--in response to the ever-increasing intelligence requirements--ACRP aircraft were flying missions in the following areas:

[Redacted]

25x1

Since that time, some adjustments have been made in various orbits, but missions are still being flown in these general areas.

Because of increasing requirements being levied on the ACRP program, as well as the proven success of the program, USAFSS is scheduled to receive six RC-135 aircraft during 1967-68 to augment its existing ACRP fleet.

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