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HISTORY OF STRATEGIC AIR COMMAND

JANUARY-JUNE 1968

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VOLUME II

NARRATIVE

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HISTORY & RESEARCH DIVISION

HEADQUARTERS STRATEGIC AIR COMMAND

FEBRUARY 1969

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(U) (FOUO) To insure the penetration of the ICBM force, the Soviet ABM system would be attacked first. Knicuteman B* and P**, and Polaris missiles would first hit the Dog House early warning radars and their Tallin system defenses. Then the Dog House radar and the Triad system around Moscow would be attacked. More than 100 Knicuteman would be involved in ABM suppression.³⁰⁸

During the first three months of 1963 those suppression sorties were spread throughout the force.

On 1 April 1963 sorties were deleted from this role because of the relatively slow reaction time of these sorties if the medium frequency (MF) radio system had to be used for a launch. For this and other reasons 166 sorties were to be retargeted and 278 retired.³⁰⁹

(U) (FOUO) With tanks and recoil-rockets.

** (FOUO) With MI 110 R/V, and MI 1 penetration aids when available.

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(U) During the first half of 1966 SAC operations planners showed renewed interest in the use of nuclear bursts to black out enemy radar and enhance penetration of his defenses. This could be done by putting a high altitude fuze on some Minuteman missiles and bursting them in the exoatmosphere. Radar blackout might also occur as a result of Soviet ABM bursts. Development of a high altitude fuze for the MX 11B/C had been directed in December 1967, but by June 1968 it was more likely that it would be developed for MX 12. Although the development of such a radar blackout technique would be expensive, SAC favored development of a fuze and further study of radar blackout as a fractionation tactic.³¹¹

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~~UNCLASSIFIED~~Sentinel Integration

(U) ~~(S)~~ In addition to the hazards posed by Soviet offensive and defensive systems, SAC's ICBMs would face a new threat in the early 1970s, the U. S. Sentinel ABM system. For two years SAC had been cooperating with Continental Air Defense Command (CONAD) and Army Air Defense Command (ARADCOM) to determine the amount of interference between U. S. ICBMs and ABMs, and to develop an integration concept for them. X-intercept/Sentinel integration would have serious impacts on the SIOP. Sentinel integration would affect the already serious timing limitations imposed by the CTI concept. Defense suppression and damage limitation sorties were very sensitive to the possibility that the offensive force might be prevented from flying as soon as possible. Hardened communications links and full incorporation of PDCS/ALCS were essential to the integration concept.

(U) ~~(S)~~ By the end of 1967 it was clear that there would be considerable interference between the Spartan high altitude area defense missiles and the unshielded ICBMs. In December SAC, CONAD, and ARADCOM developed a broad integration concept similar to one already forwarded by SAC to the Air Staff. The key to this concept was the use of a continuously updated National Defense Priority List, which would assign relative values to all potential targets in the U. S., to determine whether to inhibit our offense or defense in the event of an unavoidable interference.

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On the positive side for SAC, the proscription on Spartan detonations in front of Sentinel's long range Perimeter Acquisition Radar (P.R.), planned for deployment at Malmstrom and Grand Forks, automatically created safe passage corridors for some Minuteman. On the negative side, the existence of unhardened Titan II and Minuteman in the force in 1973 would severely complicate the interference problem. The worst case of interference would occur if the offense and defense attempted to fire on warning. With future warning systems this might become possible. Some of SAC's plans in this direction have already been mentioned. CINCPAC was trying to get authority to use nuclear weapons to intercept an attack before any enemy missiles impacted in the U. S., and possibly before the national command authority could act. Also, current planning seemed not to be consistent with the system's announced objectives. The currently approved Sentinel deployment model (I-00) was designed to be a "light" system oriented to a Chinese attack, while the integration concept was being designed to combat a heavy, sophisticated Soviet attack.

(U) ~~(S)~~ At the same 21 June meeting, already mentioned above, SAC commented that its Concept A gave priority to the offense. During interference situations safe passage for Minuteman would be provided whenever possible. A further attempt to limit interference would be the use of low altitude Sprint terminal defense missiles* for interception. Unhardened Minuteman and Titan IIs could be withheld by the SAC crews when necessary. Potential interference indications would be used, as EIDS information would be, to stop the fire out. Concept B, the AFACOM plan, was the least sophisticated and the least acceptable to SAC. As expected, the defense would predominate.

* ~~(S)~~ All references to Sprint were speculative as a decision to deploy it had been deferred to October 1968.

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Minuteman would be allowed to launch safely through preassigned 4x1-muths (corridors). Too much emphasis was placed on Sprint defense of Minuteman, considering that Sprint was not yet authorized. CONAD's Concept C was closest to the originally agreed upon concept. It was the only one of the three to specifically mention the national value matrix, and was thus the most complex.³²⁶

(U) By 1968 the Sentinel deployment plans relating to Minuteman bases had changed somewhat. Grand Forks and Whiteman would still be first and second, but Malmstrom was moved ahead of Warren. The IOC for Grand Forks would be delayed a full year to 1 July 1973. Warren would be done by January 1974, as the schedule was compressed. Although not approved, Sprint was expected to be deployed only at the two bases with the Perimeter Acquisition Radars, Grand Forks and Malmstrom.³²⁷ Early in February AFDDON conducted a detailed site survey of the Whiteman area, as it had done at Grand Forks in 1967. Although the currently approved Sentinel plan (Deployment Model 1-68) authorized one four-face Missile Site Radar (MSR) and 30 Spartans, an option for the deployment of four Remote Sprint Launch (SSL) sites (18 missiles at each SSL and 20 at the MSR) was retained in the survey. Since the 50th SWS contained the IRS missiles it would receive defense priority. AFDDON estimated that 49 of the 50 launch facilities and all five control centers in the 50th could be protected. An additional 29 sites and three control centers in the other two squadrons would also be protected.³²⁸

(U) ~~Despite these plans, defense of urban areas and not~~ Minuteman was the primary goal of the Sentinel system. The Air Staff analyses (October 1967) on improving strategic missile force effectiveness indicated two other options besides defense of Minuteman. These were: (1) to relocate in harder sites part of the existing force of 1000, or (2) to increase the number of Minuteman by placing more missiles in the harder sites. Secretary McNamara did not eliminate any of them at that time. The Air Staff favored option 2.³²⁹ SAC and never officially voted a position for or against the defense of

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Titan II or Minuteman but it had backed the defense of AB-120%. If
Soviet CEP's approached .in m. 330

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