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HISTORY

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Narrative

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coordination and tasking. The further addition of a second bomber planner, two targeteers and an expert in ECM and attrition would have added to staff awareness of B-52 capabilities and improved overall tasking effectiveness. Late announcements of the pre-exercise briefings prevented the participation of aircrews who were already flying missions. These briefings should also have been planned for and included in the exercise OPORDs. Delayed planning affected a variety of missions. Better advance planning among the various agencies would have provided smoother operations and prevented any delayed or cancelled activities. In a similar area, late installation of secure voice equipment and the failure of previously coordinated message procedures at the deployed location hampered initial activities of the ADVON members. As in many of the exercises in Europe, poor early planning, lack of coordination or failure to follow previously established procedures caused the majority of difficulties in effecting a smooth operation.<sup>75</sup>

Able Archer 83 Command Post Exercise

◆ The next activity to include a small SAC ADVON contingent took place from 7 to 11 November 1983. The

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75. Rpt(C/DECL OADR), "CRISEX 83 Trip Rpt", 7AD/DO8/DOO/INT, 24 Oct-8 Nov, 9 Nov 83, Ex 261.

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annual SACEUR-sponsored Exercise Able Archer received token ADVON support from SAC. The command post exercise which culminated the large scale REFORGER series of live exercises emphasized the transition from conventional to chemical and nuclear operations. Since the SAC presence in Europe was limited almost entirely to conventional warfare (tankers in the ETTF retained an EWO commitment) the command avoided any alignment-actual, simulated or otherwise-with nuclear activities. The ADVON provided nine liaison officers for a newly developed conventional build-up portion of Exercise Able Archer 83. These officers came from Headquarters SAC(2), Eighth AF(3), Fifteenth AF(1) and 7AD(3). The ADVON members deployed to the three major support centers (AFNORTH, AFCENT and AFSOUTH), SHAPE Headquarters and the UK RAOC. Strategic Air Command objectives consisted of observation of B-52 and KC-135 employment, interface with SACEUR and NATO staffs, updating location guidance and determining the scope of future SAC participation. The commander in chief European Command originally envisioned a large-scale SAC ADVON at all the major ACE locations. Due to SAC doubts concerning the direction and value of Able Archer and prior commitments, 7AD suggested to SAC that a total of 14 members be deployed as an observer team. When SAC advised of the ability to augment the team

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with only nine people, the division notified 5ATAF that noone could be deployed to that location (Vicenza, Italy). This notification on 9 August 1983 outlined the level of participation occurred.<sup>76</sup>

◆ The overall tone of the low key conventional buildup during the first three days of Exercise Able Archer argued heavily against future SAC ADVON participation. Due to the low-key aspect many sub-command centers failed to respond to message traffic and other centers did not participate at all. Very little realistic tasking of SAC bombers took place effectively preventing the exercise of B-52 procedures training. The observers at SHAPE Headquarters felt that Able Archer was not only too short for effective ADVON training, but also it remained primarily a nuclear procedures exercise. Beyond the limited play of conventional bomber tactics and execution, tanker planners had even less activity. The exercise used primarily preplanned numbers of tankers

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76. Msg(S/DECL OADR), 7AD/DO to HQ SAC/DOO, "Exercise Able Archer 83", 231630Z Dec 82, Ex 281; msg(S/DECL OADR), 7AD/DO to SHAPE/OPS, "Able Archer", 211615Z Jan 83, Ex 282; msg(S/DECL OADR), USCINCEUR/ECJ3 to 7AD/DO, "Able Archer 83", 252031Z Jan 83, Ex 283; msg(C/DECL OADR), 7AD/DO to SHAPE, "Able Archer", 281104Z Apr 83, Ex 284; msg(C/DECL OADR), 7AD/DOX to USCINCEUR/ECJ3-EX, "Able Archer", 081215Z Jul 83, Ex 285; msg(C/DECL OADR), 7AD/DO to COMFIVEATAF, "Able Archer 83 augmentee requirements", 091300Z Aug 83, Ex 286.

and sortie capability and did not allow for reallocation of assets. For instance, one AFCENT request to disperse KC-135s to an alternate location did not produce any response because the locked in scenario required future chemical and airfield attacks on the base in question. For these and a variety of similar reasons, the 7AD after action report advised against future SAC participation in Exercise Able Archer. A further change in emphasis and allowances for making simulated bomber and tanker employment more realistic left open the possibility for future participation. Primarily, 7AD and SAC became familiar with the basic tenets and activities of Exercise Able Archer and knew what type of information needed to be built into the exercise during future planning conferences.<sup>77</sup>

Crested Eagle/Dense Crop 84

●) From 8 to 14 March 1984, the SAC ADVON took part in the simultaneous command post exercises Crested Eagle and Dense Crop 84. Crested Eagle a CINCENT exercise, tested organizations throughout the Allied Command Europe (ACE) in the conduct of conventional warfare. Dense Crop 84, scheduled and conducted by CINCSOUTH, took place at

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77. Rpt(S/DECL OADR), "Ex Able Archer 83 SAC ADVON After Action Rpt", 7AD/DOO, 1 Dec 83, Ex 287.