

Laurence Lynn

Wed, Mar 4, 2020 at 5:37 PM

To: Mark Estabrook [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

THE ORIGINS OF OLAA Laurence E. Lynn

[REDACTED]

The man who wrote the document below:



Laurence E. Lynn, Jr.

Senior Research Fellow

Contact Info

[REDACTED] This phone number is no longer in effect for Mr. Lynn (called 2Sep14). More research info may be available at the University of Texas, LBJ Library. SRH 3.257

Try the email...

Wed 9/3/2014 2:30 AM

Dear Don,

Alas, I have no recollection of writing that memo (and that's not because I don't remember much of anything anymore). My staff was reviewing our programs in Thailand, so I assume that memo was written for me and I signed it and passed it up to Kissinger. But I don't remember who might have written it. I had a couple of U.S. Army officers assigned to my office, and it was probably one of them, but I don't remember who. I'm sorry I can't be of help.

Larry Lynn

On Tue, Sep 2, 2014 at 10:45 AM, Donald L Engebretsen <ice450@bellsouth.net> wrote:

Mr. Lynn:

My name is Don Engebretsen and I was an A-1 Skyraider pilot in Vietnam flying MACV-SOG missions. I was provided the above report by one of the members of the Special Operations Association (SOA) as a result of my research concerning my very unique detachment of A-1's (Spads) that was based in Da Nang during 1969-1970. I am trying to determine the actual origins of my unit and your report explains much of the "whys" of that part of my quest. My hope is that you may know more or be able to assist me in locating specific details regarding the unit that I believe was originated at the JCS level or above.

I was told you may be out of the country by a lady at UT who now has your previous phone number. She indicated that your email may still be current.

Thank you for any considerations you might make in contacting me.

Regards,

Don

[REDACTED]

22. Memorandum From Laurence E. Lynn, Jr., of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)¹

Washington, August 28, 1969.

SUBJECT: U.S. Force Reductions in Thailand

I understand proposals to reduce U.S. strength in Thailand by 7,000 and 10,000 are under consideration.

It is also my understanding that ONCPAC proposes to accomplish the reduction with the following withdrawals.

7,000 man reduction	10,000 man reduction
2 A-1 squadrons	Same as for 7,000, plus:
1 A-26 squadron	3 F-105 squadrons and related support units
2 EB-66 squadrons plus related support units	

These ONCPAC proposals raise important questions regarding the role of the remaining U.S. forces in Thailand. ONCPAC is proposing to take out virtually all of those forces best suited for missions over Laos (to assist the Laotian government and to bomb the Ho Chi Minh Trail), leaving in Thailand the forces best suited to bomb North Vietnam and clearly inferior for Laotian missions.

There are now 16 "fighter/attack" squadrons in Thailand. Twelve of these are high-performance jet squadrons (8 with F-4s; 4 with F-105s). Four are equipped with propeller-driven aircraft (3 with A-1s; one with A-26s).

Either ONCPAC proposal would remove all but one propeller squadron (which would remain primarily for search and rescue operations). According to available evidence on the comparative efficiency of these versus high performance jets, this would be a very poor allocation of our resources in Thailand.

Comparison of the effectiveness of jet aircraft and propeller-driven airplanes in attacking ground targets in Southeast Asia has shown that the prop planes are considerably more efficient than the jets. A recent study (August 1969) indicates that in Laos in 1968 propeller-driven aircraft were roughly twice as effective as jets in terms of targets destroyed per attack.

Prop-Jet Comparison of Targets Destroyed or Damaged per 100 Attacks

<i>Target Type</i>	<i>Prop Planes</i>		<i>Jets</i>	
	<i>A-1</i>	<i>A-26</i>	<i>F-4</i>	<i>F-105</i>
Trucks	46.8	49.0	23.0	18.5
Truck Parks	3.4	5.2	2.5	1.9
Roads	53.6	55.0	25.9	23.3
Logistics Storage Areas	13.2	N/A	6.6	6.8
Air Defense Targets	12.6	12.9	8.3	12.7

Furthermore, the costs per year per squadron are substantially less for prop squadrons compared with jet squadrons.

Total Southeast Asia Operating Costs per Squadron per Year

<i>Prop</i>		<i>Jet</i>	
<i>A-1</i>	<i>A-26</i>	<i>F-4</i>	<i>F-105</i>
\$41 m	\$30 m	\$56 m	\$61 m

The primary combat advantage of the prop aircraft is their ability to loiter, locate a target, and make multiple attacks on it. (Jets have a comparative advantage against sophisticated defenses, but these are not an important factor in Laos.) Prop aircraft also perform as well at night as during the day,² while jets are only half as efficient after dark. Most of the targets appear at night. One study has shown that the cost of destroying a target at night with a jet is 13 times greater than with

a propeller aircraft. Finally, prop aircraft losses per target destroyed are about the same or lower than for jets.

Considering this evidence, it is hard to fathom ONCPAC's rationale for their proposed force cuts. An alternative proposal to take out three more jet squadrons instead of the A-1s and A-26s would provide more manpower reductions, considerably larger budgetary savings, and would have the least impact on the war effort. The disadvantage in doing so is that if bombing of North Vietnam were resumed jets would be preferable. Nevertheless, even an all jet redeployment would leave six squadrons of high-performance jets in Thailand, and if we decide to bomb North Vietnam again we can redeploy additional jet squadrons as necessary.

The proposal recommended by ONCPAC demonstrates again our inclination to attempt to suit the war to our equipment and technological preferences rather than the other way around. Our policies in this respect also serve to indicate to our allies that high-performance jets are better counter-insurgency aircraft than props, when in fact the reverse is true.

1 Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 560, Country Files, Far East, Thailand, Vol. I. Secret. Sent for information. Printed from an unsigned copy.

2 It has been suggested that the reason the effectiveness of prop aircraft does not decline at night is that the enemy cannot make visual sightings at night, there is more truck traffic at night, and the enemy's visually targeted anti-aircraft weapons are less effective at night. These factors permit the low flying, slower prop aircraft to operate more effectively whereas the high-speed jet cannot operate at low altitudes at night without greatly increased risks. [Footnote in the source text.]

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