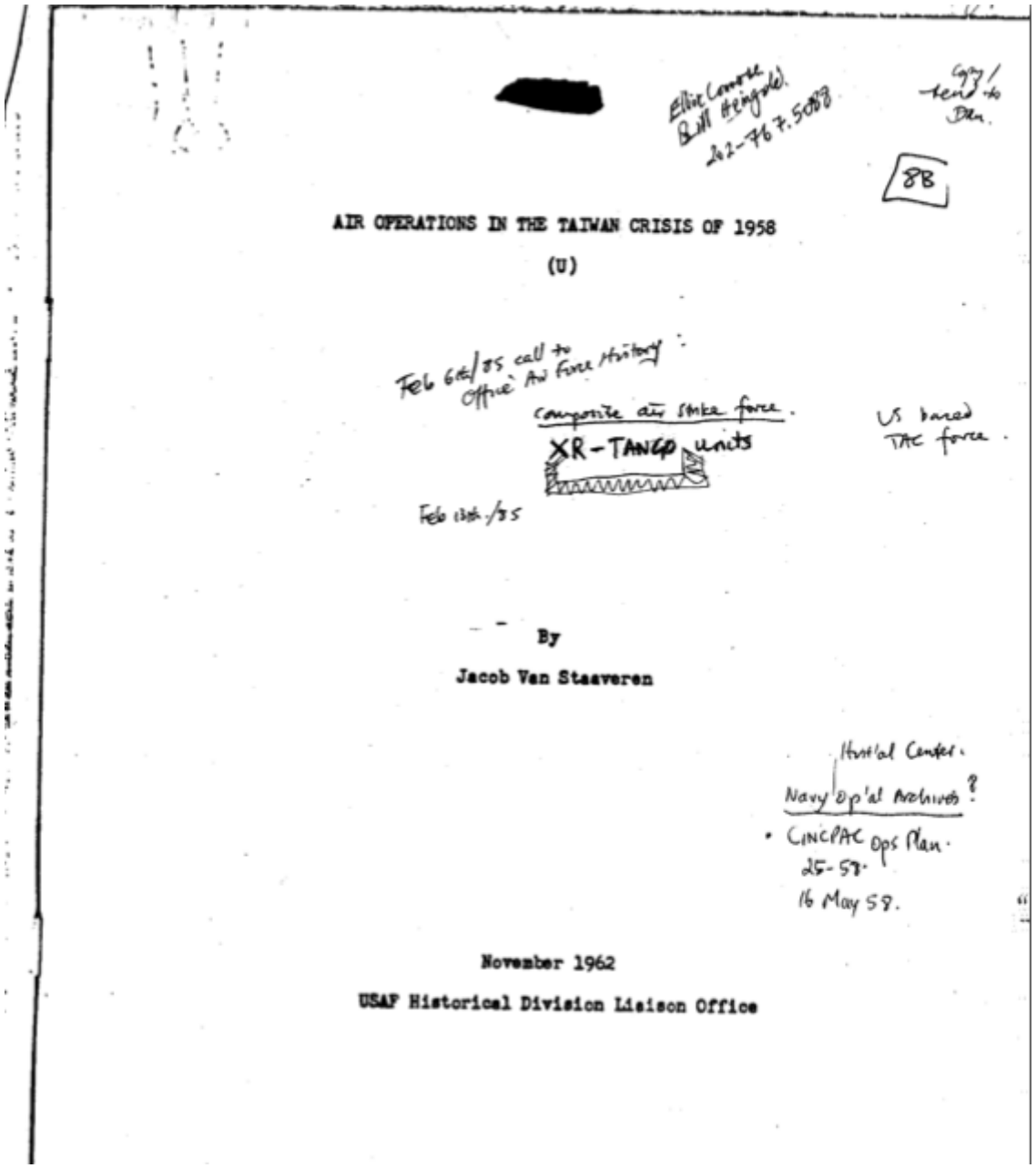
Air Operations in the Taiwan Crisis of 1958



AIR OPERATIONS IN THE TAIWAN CRISIS OF 1958

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By

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November 1962

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Recommended Citation

"Air Operations in the Taiwan Crisis of 1958", September 17, 2012, https://nautilus.org/foia-document/air-operations-in-the-taiwan-crisis-of-1958/

The issue over Taiwan's sovereignty has long been a source of conflict between China and the small island nation, whom it considers a renegade province, occasionally resulting in armed clashes between the two. Considered strategically important to U.S. interests in the region during the Cold War, the U.S. signed a bilateral mutual defense treaty with Taiwan, assuring its defense of Taiwan and its offshore islands from the ever-present threat of a Chinese attempt to re-capture the island. Such attempts materialized with China's artillery bombardment and aerial attacks on Taiwan's Kinmen islands in 1958, and occasional clashes prior. The conflict over Taiwan's territorial sovereignty continues to this day, with the occasional issuance of threats and increased build up of armed forces by China, who has grown increasingly assertive in its territorial claims with Taiwan over the disputed Senkaku Islands, known in Taiwan as the Taioyutai Islands.

Staaveren's 1962 report examines the Taiwan Crisis of 1958 in regards to the historical context and build up to the event, by analyzing the successful role of involvement by the U.S. military in the defense of Taiwan, the logistical and communications failures which proved obstructive to a better defense, as well as the lack of firm defense policy by Washington towards Taiwan's defense.

Staaveren writes:

"There was evidence that U.S. weapon policy was not firm and that a balance in tactical and logistical strength to conduct nonnuclear as well as nuclear operations remained to be achieved. Failure to achieve this balance could deprive the United States of a choice of weapons - nonnuclear or nuclear - to deal with a future military crisis. [page 58]

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