



VF-38 Operation Eldorado Canyon, 1986



After a series of terrorist bombings in Rome, Vienna and Berlin – openly supported by the Libyan leader, Colonel Muammar Ghadaffi, the US President Ronald Reagan ordered air strikes against terrorist-related sites in Libya. The strikes were delegated to the USAF 48th Tactical Fighter Wing based in the United Kingdom.

CMO Note: In the original operation, both Spain and France refused permission for the aircraft to overfly their territories and KC-10 and KC-135 tankers were required, en route, east of the Spanish coast which added 2600nm to the trip. I have “amended” history to avoid air-air refueling.

Suggested Aircraft

General Dynamics F-111F Aardvark (or appropriate aircraft)

Combat range of the F-111 is 1,160nm.

Ferry range is 3,700nm.

Max bomb load is 31,500 lbs.

Mission Legs

1. F-111 aircraft to fly from Lakenheath AB (EGUL) to Luqa, Malta (LMML) – 1,158nm.
2. Load armament. Fly from Luqa (LMML) and perform low level bombing attack at Mitiga (HLLM). Return to Luqa - 374nm.
3. Load armament. Fly from Luqa (LMML) and perform low level bombing attack at Tripoli Intl (HLLT). Return to Luqa - 404nm.
4. Load armament. Fly from Luqa (LMML) and perform low level bombing attack at Misurata (FS9 – HLØV/FSX - HL76). Return to Luqa - 428nm.

NOTAMS:

Total mission distance 2,364nm.
4 flights required for ribbon credit.