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Air Defense Radar

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

BV



August 1, 1958

MEMORANDUM FOR DR. KILLIAN

SUBJECT: The Low Altitude Threat

1. The DEW line and its seaward extension are intended to provide early warning against a low altitude surprise attack.
2. It would be desirable to utilize this warning to attack the enemy aircraft before they reach the sea coast. This is especially true since the density of prevailing aircraft traffic at low altitude over continental U.S. is so high that the problem of identification is extremely difficult.
3. No complete weapons system able to fully utilize such an early warning and able to destroy the enemy attack before the sea coast is penetrated exists or is planned. The BOMARC B (1M99B) will provide a long-range weapon capable of destroying low altitude aircraft several hundred miles at sea. Unfortunately, no funded program exists at present for a data-gathering system to provide data to employ this weapon.
4. Studies show that airborne early warning radar and fire control radar could permit the use of the BOMARC long-range weapon at its full range from the sea coast. Even if action were taken immediately to provide the necessary data-gathering system, it could not be operational before 1961 at the earliest.

Recommendation

Low altitude air defense should be reviewed to determine the desirability of providing the necessary data-gathering equipment to permit the use of the BOMARC.

W. E. Bradley

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