



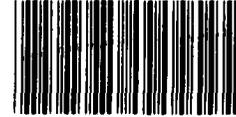
UNITED STATES GENERAL ACCOUNTING OFFICE
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20548

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PROCUREMENT AND SYSTEMS
ACQUISITION DIVISION

DECEMBER 5, 1980

B-201171



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The Honorable Harold Brown
The Secretary of Defense

Attention: Assistant for Audit Reports

Dear Mr. Secretary:

Subject: [Defense's Overall Master Plan for Air Defense
Should Consider Certain Issues in its Develop-
ment] (PSAD-81-15)

This is to inform you of our plans to terminate our survey of the Department of Defense's efforts to defend the continental United States against strategic attack. The assignment was intended to determine the extent to which recommendations made in our prior report on atmospheric defense (PSAD-78-86, "Air Defense Mission Must Be Clarified Before Billions Are Spent On Modernization," May 10, 1978), were implemented and the current status of missile and atmospheric defense systems.

Since the issuance of our report, the Congress, the Office of the Secretary of Defense, and the Air Force have undertaken efforts which appear to coincide with the thrust of our recommendations. Specifically, we noted that during the fiscal year 1980 appropriations hearings, the Congress deferred further funding of selected air defense systems until Defense submitted an air defense master plan for the continental United States. It is our understanding that the plan will be provided to the Congress before the fiscal year 1982 appropriations hearings.

In addition, we learned that the Defense Audit Service recently reviewed the air defense program and is expected to issue a final report in November 1980. We were also informed that the Office of Management and Budget is doing work in the area and recently sent a team to investigate the distant early warning line in Canada.

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In view of the above and the expected air defense master plan which will help to satisfy congressional oversight requirements, we have terminated work in this area. We hope that the air defense plan will (1) identify the atmospheric threat(s) and the probability of occurrence, (2) establish air defense mission(s) priorities reflective of the threat(s), (3) identify and evaluate alternative systems to effectively and efficiently accomplish the mission(s), and (4) be revised periodically to give effect to changing policy, threat, and technological advancements. Depending on the overall threat assessment, we would also hope that the plan considers whether:

- Command, control, and communication modes are sufficiently secure, jam resistant, and capable of withstanding attack.
- Air defense interceptors are adequately equipped and strategically located to effectively carry out these mission(s).
- Surface to air missiles can or should play a major air defense role.
- The over-the-horizon backscatter radar or a space base system offers the best potential for long range, all altitude air defense detection and surveillance capability.
- The current airborne warning and control system aircraft basing mode is conducive to rapid deployment in times of crisis.
- An opportunity exists to reduce the number of radar sites dedicated to North American air defense.

We want to thank your staff and that of the Air Force Systems Command's Electronic Systems Division for their cooperation and assistance which greatly helped our survey efforts.

Sincerely yours,


W. H. Sheley, Jr.
Acting Director