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Justification for

F-108/GAR-9 Weapon System

It has been stated repeatedly that too much of our defense budget has been programmed into what appears to be a fading threat, i.e., the manned bomber. The Air Force, in fact, has reduced its goals for manned interceptors drastically. Specifically, in 1957 we were planning on 5200 fighter interceptors for 1963; in consecutive adjustments we have cut from this figure to 2000 in 1963, with further reductions by 1970. For the foreseeable future, however, it appears that there will continue to be, in significant degree, a Soviet bomber threat against this nation. The projected capability of that threat is 65,000 feet altitude at speed of M 2.0 - 2.5. Accordingly, there will continue to be the requirement for a modern manned interceptor to perform those air defense operations beyond the capability of the air defense missile, and to provide flexibility which will allow us to concentrate fire power in areas where missiles have been expended.

What is perhaps not clearly understood is that the F-108 represents a complete departure from contemporary aircraft design. It is constructed to cruise at 2000 MPH (to its full range). By new techniques we are able to make this high performance aircraft behave properly at lower speeds for safe takeoff and landing. Of special interest to you, I believe, is that the basic design of the F-108 permits its use as an offensive weapon as well as an exceptionally versatile defense fighter. In the offense role it can carry the recently developed family of small, high yield weapons, or modern reconnaissance devices. Its missile bay is equal in size to one of the two bomb bays in a B-47 bomber. Here we have additional application to the problem of limited war. The range and speed of the F-108 permits its deployment to Formosa, for example, in ~~4.3~~ <sup>4.3</sup> hours.

You will note there are no funds in our FY-60 program for contemporary interceptors. FY-59 bought out the last of the F-106 and F-101 series. We are placing dependence on the F-108 to meet the requirements for a multi-purpose fighter aircraft for the future. Our funding requested in our FY-60 program provides for development of this aircraft as a long-range interceptor and air defense missile launcher. Its ability to cruise out or patrol far beyond fixed defenses and challenge marauders far from our borders is in consonance with the Air Force approach to air defense in depth. The advanced performance of the F-108 from both military and technical standpoints is also consistent with the vital need for the U. S. to maintain an optimum balance and effective relationship between offensive and defensive air capabilities. In short, the battle against Soviet nuclear offensive forces threatening the West, whether manned aircraft or missiles, should start in Soviet territory, not ours.

In summary, it is the only really new fighter aircraft in the Air Force development program. Its growth to a truly global fighter capable of rapid deployment to fight or to fend off attack makes it, in my judgment, one of our most important new weapons.

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