Japan studies oceanic air defence options
Japan is studying methods of
extending its air defences to
cover the sea lanes as it draws
up its next five-year defence
strategy plan.
The Japan Defence Agency
has established a Defence
Power Study Committee to
draw up a skeleton five-year
plan, which is scheduled to start
in Fiscal Year 1991.
The scheme follows a 1987
study by the Ocean Air Defence
Research Group.
To defend the Japanese
islands effectively, air-defence
radar coverage needs to be
improved—especially long-
range, low-level coverage.
The basic strategy is to install
an over-the-horizon backscatter
(OTH-B) radar on Iwo Jima to
detect either missiles or their
launch aircraft at long range.
The OTH-B radar will be
backed up by airborne early
warning (AEW) aircraft to
refine target tracking further.
The targets would be
engaged by flight-refuelled
McDonnell Douglas F-15J
Eagles, preferably before the
aircraft launch their missiles.
Aegis-class cruisers would be
used to defend against attacks
on sea-lane traffic. Under the
plan the Maritime Self-Defence

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The JASDF is looking for a long-range AEW supplement to its E-2Cs

Force is to buy the OTH-B
radar, while the Air SDF will
buy more F-15s, AEW aircraft,
and aerial tankers.
The JASDF has bought 163
F-15s for seven 18-aircraft
units, and another 28 will be
purchased to bring squadrons
up to 22 aircraft under present
expansion plans. Additional
F-15s will be needed to cover
the proposed deep defence plan.
The JASDF operates eight
Grumman E-2C Hawkeye
AEW aircraft, and has plans for
another five, but the oceanic air
defence scenario calls for longer

range and more time on station
than the E-2C can offer, so the
service is reviewing other AEW
types available. The AEW plat-
form choice is closely allied to
the selection of a tanker.
AEW candidates include the
Boeing E-3 Sentry, Lockheed
P-3 Sentinel and a Lockheed
C-130 Hercules variant with the
E-2C radar system. Tankers
under review include the Lock-
heed KC-130 Hercules if the
AEW C-130 is selected, a
Boeing KC-3J based on the E-3
airframe, and possibly a modi-
fied DC-10 or tanker MD-11.

CASUALTIES

• United States
A United States Air Force
Boeing KC-135 Stratotanker
of the 96th Bomb Wing
crashed just after take-off
from Dyess AFB, Texas, on
January 31. All 19 on board
were killed.

D United States
A United States Army Bell
AH-1 Cobra and a Bell OH-
58 Kiowa of the 123rd
Combat Aviation Brigade
collided at Fort Ord on
February 1. One crewman
was killed and three injured.

• United States
A United States Air Force
General Dynamics FB-111
crashed into woods in north-
east Vermont on February 2.
The two crew escaped.

• United States
Human error has been
blamed for the crash of a
B-1B at Ellsworth AFB last
November. According to the
USAF, the pilot (who ejec-
ted safely with the rest of the
four-man crew) descended
below standard altitude on
the approach, striking three
wooden poles, a high-voltage
power line, and an approach
light stanchion. The weather
ceiling was slightly below
minima, and the pilot was on
his second approach after
executing a missed approach.

Bush opts for no-growth defence budget
President Bush last week settled
a major policy question in his
new administration by opting
for no real increase in the
FY1990 defence budget.
This means that significant
cuts will have to be made in the
$315-2 billion Reagan budget
submitted earlier this year,
which asked for a 2 per cent
increase (after inflation) for the
next four years.
Bush has yet to reveal precise
details of his defence spending
plans. One of his easiest options
is to cut the amount requested
for the Strategic Defence
Initiative, for which Reagan
wanted a 41 per cent spending
increase next year. Reducing
SDI funding to keep pace with
inflation would provide about a
third of the needed 1991 cuts.

Beyond that, Bush is faced
with stretching out or elimi-

nating altogether one or more of
the major new weapons systems
for which procurement money
is now needed. Reagan placed
high priority on introducing a
series, of new-generation weap-
ons, creating a huge pressure on
defence funding in the early
1990s. His insistence on
preserving the entire list of
weapons programmes in the
1990/91 budget leaves the
Bush administration with tough
choices if it is to retain long-
term control over spending.
Conventional weapons mov-
ing rapidly towards production
in the Reagan budget include
the USAF's C-17 airlifter (six to
be procured in 1990, and a
further ten in 1991), the Navy/
Marine Corps V-22 tiltrotor (12
in 1990, 24 in 1991), and the
Navy's A-12 attack aircraft. The
Army's forward area air defence

system and the USAF's
JSTARS battlefield surveillance
and communications aircraft
are also funded for production
startups in 1990 and 1991.
Heavy research and devel-
opment funding is also required
for *a number of programmes,
including the USAF Advanced
Tactical Fighter and Army
LHX light attack helicopter.
Several new research and devel-
opment initiatives were also
requested by Reagan, including
a chemical warhead Nfor the
Multiple Launch Rocket
System, and a new medium
surface-to-air missile.

A further difficult question
facing Bush is what to do about
strategic nuclear missile basing.
This week marks the deadline,
set by Congress last year, for a
decision on whether to proceed
with the MX rail-garrison

basing system, to adopt
the Midgetman single-warhead
road-mobile system, or adopt a
mix of both.

A recent report by a highly
influential defence policy group
(which included Brent Scow-
croft, now Bush's national secu-
rity adviser, Sam Nunn, and Les
Aspin, respectively chairmen of
the Senate and House Armed
Services Committees) recom-
mended going ahead with the
road mobile system and stretch-
ing out strategic modernisation
during the 1990s. Midgetman is
not favoured by the USAF,
however, because it is con-
siderably more expensive than
road-mobile MX.

Reagan also left Bush with
large funding increases for
"black" or classified pro-
grammes, details of which are
withheld from Congress.

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