

Frequent British Fighter Alerts

LONDON, Friday (A.A.P.).—British fighters armed with rockets and air-to-air missiles have been “scrambled” several times recently, to investigate unidentified aircraft and objects.

However, said The London News-Chronicle, which reported this to-day, no laden H-bombers had been involved in the “scrambling” process.

The paper said the fighters were operating from bases in England and Germany.

The News-Chronicle said these alerts had been used to disperse bomber squadrons with their H-bombs in the U.K.

However, they could, if needed, be diverted to an offensive role and H-bombs “armed” during flight.

The paper also disclosed that Britain’s radar screens could record objects up to about 150 miles inside the Iron Curtain.

This was the main reason why British bombers had not been “scrambled.”

The News-Chronicle said part of the East-West war

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of nerves was the Russian
propensity for moving
waves of aircraft to the
Soviet territorial perimet-
ers, and then turning them
back.

British Labour leaders
fear America will not con-
sult with Britain first be-
fore launching reprisal at-
tacks on Russia, the News-
Chronicle said to-day. They
fear, too, such attacks
might be launched from
Britain.

The paper was comment-
ing editorially on the
American admission that
the U.S. Strategic Air
Command had sent H-
bombers northwards to
Soviet targets on numerous
occasions in recent months.

The Labour leaders plan

The Labour leaders plan to question the Prime Minister, Mr. Macmillan, closely on these points, The News-Chronicle said.

It was disclosed in Washington yesterday that a "substantial number" of U.S. jet bombers are "launched" from their North American bases whenever an unidentified suspicious object is spotted on radar screens.

The Air Force spokesman who said this declined to say specifically that the bombers carried hydrogen bombs.

"All I can say is that we

do have the capability," he declared.

The spokesman was describing the Strategic Air Command's newly - disclosed "fail-safe" system to ensure that bombers do not accidentally set off a war.

He said that after taking off on one of the radar "alerts" the bombers were under orders to fly to "certain points."

He did not say where these points were but he

these points were, but he did not deny that they were on the way towards potential enemy targets in time of war.

The bombers were strictly ordered not to proceed beyond these "certain points" without positive radio instructions to do so.

On the contrary, they had standing orders to return to base automatically unless otherwise instructed.

If their radios broke down, this automatic "back to base" instruction still held good.

"The purpose is to ensure that the bombers do not start a war by accident," the spokesman said.

He declined to disclose how often SAC bombers had taken off on "alerts" and when asked whether the same system of alerting bombers under the system applied to SAC bases abroad, he said only that "It is applicable here in the United States."

The spokesman said the stand-by bomber "alert force" had not replaced the round-the-clock air patrols

round-the-clock air patrols maintained by SAC, but the patrol was "rather minute" compared with the alert force.

The spokesman said that on occasion an "alert" had turned out on investigation to have been caused by a flock of geese creating an "echo" on radar screens.