
The Laser Attack Aircraft

From: awacs@juno.com (Mickey W Kopanski)
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For those who are unfamiliar. The USAF has been working on this for sometime. The program "YAL-1A" is being headed by Boeing with TRW and Lockheed-Martin to produce a flying Attack Laser aircraft using a 747-400F with a nose mounted high-energy laser. The current issue of "Air Force" published by the Air Force Association has a good synopsis of it. The aircraft will be operated by Air Combat Command and will be able to detect, track, and shoot a ballistic missile in a range described as "hundreds of kilometers". Seven aircraft are planned with the first test aircraft ready to fly in 2002. Three operational aircraft will be ready in 2006. Cost per aircraft is estimated at \$750 million USD. No home base has yet been determined, but initial test will be conducted at Edwards AFB, CA. The aircraft will maintain a crew of six (large plane for six people) which the crew will have between 40-100 seconds to locate, track, and fire on a missile. Cost per laser fire \$1000.

Mickey Kopanski
awacs@juno.com
Chicago, IL

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