

Fighter Planes Still Needed, Briton Says

London, Feb. 20 (CP)—Britain will replace her Canberra bomber forces attached to NATO with new Valiants, Victors and Vulcans, Air Secretary George Ward said today.

His announcement, in a memorandum attached to estimated RAF costs of £490,000,000 for the year beginning April 1, said the four-engined swept-wing jet bombers "will give NATO the power to deliver atomic weapons beyond fringe areas in any future war."

The air secretary also said the age of fighter aircraft is not over despite improvements in missiles.

Mr. Ward contended that the range of present guided missiles fired from the ground still is "considerably less" than that of manned fighters.

"Fighters will continue to be needed to deal with manned aircraft," his memorandum said, "especially at longer range, to investigate unidentified movements and to deal with the stand-off bomber and jammer so long as these threats continue."

(The stand-off bomber fires missiles while out of range of the target. A jammer is a radio instrument that seeks at close range to jam the radar system of surface-to-air guided weapons.)