

~~TOP SECRET~~

063479

HEADQUARTERS STRATEGIC AIR COMMAND
Offutt Air Force Base
Nebraska

1 NOV 1957

General Thomas D. White
Chief of Staff
United States Air Force
Washington 25, D. C.

C/S has noted

Dear Tommy:

In light of recent events I am increasingly disturbed over the requirement which directs me to maintain a conventional bombing capability in my B-47 force. You are fully aware that the size and configuration of the strategic force does not permit the use of World War II type weapons without severely penalizing my capability to fight either an effective local or general war. In the event that B-47 aircraft equipped with conventional weapons are committed to a local war, this command's primary general war capability would be impaired in direct ratio to the number of conventionally equipped aircraft committed. This contingency would arise because SAC's effectiveness in general war resides in its instantaneous nuclear strike capability. Further the size of the present strategic force equated against minimum target assignments will not permit the diversion of any conventionally equipped B-47 aircraft to a local war. (TOP SECRET)

The B-36 was the last aircraft designed for both a conventional and nuclear weapons capability. The B-52, B-47, and even more so, the B-58, were designed to deliver nuclear weapons only under local or general war conditions. Nuclear weapons do exist which can be effectively used in localized wars of any magnitude. I believe we can no longer afford a completely outmoded capability in SAC aircraft which were specifically planned for nuclear weapons, without requiring a vastly increased force to offset combat degradation. (TOP SECRET)

Today I am required to maintain weapons loading and servicing personnel in the overseas areas to support the conventional weapons requirement. I firmly believe this operation is far too expensive when compared with the tangible combat potential it represents, and could be eliminated by the deletion of the HE requirement. Appropriate yield atomic and thermonuclear weapons should be stockpiled in overseas areas to meet local or general war conditions. My staff personnel are preparing a cost analysis of the entire conventional weapons program both past and future, which will be forwarded for your consideration in the near future. (TOP SECRET)

EXCLUDED FROM AUTOMATIC DOWNGRADING
DOD DIR. 5200.10 DOES NOT APPLY

DECLASSIFIED
20/20/8
By *[Signature]* Date 12/24/82

Copy No.

~~TOP SECRET~~

0150423

REPRODUCED FROM THE COLLECTIONS OF THE MANUSCRIPT DIVISION, LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

)TOP SECRET)

003423

On many occasions over the past three years this headquarters has pointed out the combat sacrifices which must be accepted if the B-47 force is required to have a conventional weapons capability. To date no action has been taken to delete the requirement for SAC to maintain this capability. I would greatly appreciate your assistance in resolving this problem, as I believe we cannot afford to postpone a decision any longer. Recent Russian statements make it amply clear that future wars will not be fought with World War II weapons, and I believe that our capability should be aligned accordingly. (TOP SECRET)

This correspondence is classified TOP SECRET in accordance with Par 30a(2)(d), AFR 205-1. (Unclas)

Sincerely,



THOMAS S. POWER
General, USAF
Commander in Chief

DECLASSIFIED

~~TOP SECRET~~