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6 JUN 1955

General N. F. Twining, USAF
Chief of Staff
United States Air Force
Washington 25, D. C.

Col Rya
4290

Typed 3Jun55/aww

Dear Mate,

After studying the nuclear weapons allocation for U.S. forces for FY 1956, I am convinced that political considerations and inter-service disputes have resulted in a decision which does not best serve national interests.

The simple fact is that while no nuclear weapons are provided for more than 200 combat ready SAC bombers and the entire SAC fighter force, there is evidence that some theater commanders have been allocated more than one weapon for every aircraft which may become atomic capable during the period.

This command has the only force with a proven capability to deliver an atomic weapon regardless of weather or time of day. It has the only force capable of striking the enemy if our advanced bases are destroyed by surprise attack and/or sabotage, or are denied us by political considerations. It has the only control structure which will permit launching a fully coordinated strike. And yet one-third of the combat ready SAC force is left without weapons in order to satisfy the desires of theater commanders.

I cannot see how this decision can be justified. In effect, it indicates that more weight is being given to holding a defensive line in Europe than to the prevention of atomic attacks on U.S. cities. It implies that there is as great a threat involved in retreat in any theater as in loss of the air battle. It means the American people have invested millions of dollars in aircraft and air crews for which collateral plans have not provided ample weapons.

I feel certain that the FY 56 allocation is a result of compromise. And when the survival of the nation is at stake, no compromise can be justified.

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As you are aware, I have never committed atomic weapons to my strategic fighter wings. This was not because these wings lack the capability to deliver weapons, but rather because careful analysis discloses that the B-47 can match every capability of the fighter, is not restricted by weather and range considerations, and provides at least 100% more yield for the critical material invested. So long as nuclear material is critical, good judgment dictates that the bomber be given priority in weapon assignment ahead of any other delivery vehicle. If the task of winning the air battle is to enjoy the priority it deserves, those strategic fighter wings which can be maintained on rotation in forward areas should be furnished weapons before the support of ground combat is considered. Through the SAC control structure, attacks by SAC fighters can be coordinated so as to enhance the penetration by the bomber force. Targets they can attack include communications centers, air defense forces, and enemy radars.

But not one weapon should be allocated to these fighters, or to the theater, until every combat-ready SAC bomber is furnished a high-yield weapon to perform its initial mission.

I strongly urge that the following action be taken on an emergency priority basis:

- a. All Charlie and Dog capsules and all TN weapons in the JCS reserve be specifically allocated to this command through 30 June 1956.
- b. An additional 70 Baker capsules in the JCS reserve be allocated to this command through 31 December 1955.

Only through this action can we be assured that each SAC bomber and each SAC fighter on rotation have at least one atomic weapon allocated to accomplish the first assigned mission and are supported by realistic deployment and pickup schedules.

Sincerely,

CURTIS E. LEMAY
General, USAF
Commander in Chief

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