

February 16, 1954

Dear Mr. Record:

Pursuant to our telephone conversation, I am sending you this memorandum on my personal conversation with Secretary of Air Force Talbott Monday afternoon, Feb. 15.

As I told you, our conversation was a very pleasant one after Mr. Talbott had expressed himself with a few choice profane words on the story carried by the Associated Press out of San Antonio, largely quoting Mr. Bellamy of the Express.

He explained to me, and asked me to be sure and convey his profuse apologies to Mr. Carter, that the story apparently was based upon a dinner conversation attended by only fifteen persons, including Mr. Bellamy, during which he assumed the conversation was purely social and off-the-record.

During the course of the dinner, he was asked where he planned to fly the following day, and he jocularly remarked that he was going north and planned to fly over Amon Carter's lake and see if it had any water in it. He was referring to the reservoir near Grapevine, which he flew over during the drought last summer when it was virtually empty and, according to him, he kidded Mr. Carter about it at that time. I was glad to see and report that the lake has plenty of water in it at this time, he told me.

— He said that this has absolutely nothing to do with the potential Grapevine site for the Air Academy and that he considers the site an excellent one, though he does not intend to commit himself on any site until the Senate passes the academy authorization bill, which has passed the House. In fact, he told me, this whole trip had no real connection with selecting a site for the academy. He explained that he has not completed his committee, which will help him select the site, and certainly does not intend to make a decision until he has received the advice of this committee and the bill has become law. "If I made a site decision now," he pointed out, "I'd have two Senators for the bill and 94 against it."

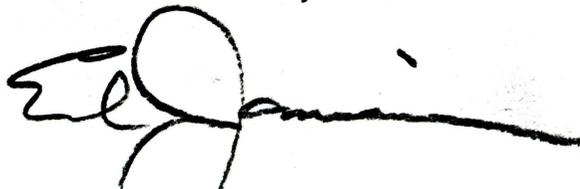
He repeatedly assured me that he considers Mr. Carter a very good personal friend and feels very badly about the AP story. He obviously felt, as I do on such informal occasions, that what was said was merely said in fun and in a social manner, and should not have been used for a story. As I told you, he thought that it would be best, however, not to issue another statement at this time and create what might become a newspaper controversy.

The air force at San Antonio, however, did issue a statement for him on the day he left there, which the UP apparently based most of its story on. I am enclosing a copy in case you did not see it as it was issued.

I checked on the Spanish matter and Talbott did get in real trouble by talking too much over there. He apparently told a reporter under some circumstances that the Air Force planned to store atomic bombs in Spain, implying that it would be a base from which the bombs would be carried to Russia or any other target in that area. It created such a furor that both the White House and State Department denied the statement, and Talbott said that he had been either mis-quoted or mis-interpreted.

sincere I hope that this memo will be adequate and explain to Mr. Carter how ~~xxxx~~ I believe Mr. Talbott is in his regrets over the AP story. He remarked ~~xxxx~~ to me casually that he just has to learn to keep his mouth shut more.

Regards,



Plan to Store A-Weapons in Spain Denied

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WASHINGTON, Nov. 4 (AP).—

Two top administration officials have denied that the United States has plans to store atomic weapons in Spain, and Secretary of the Air Force Harold Talbott contends he didn't say it did.

The denials came Tuesday in quick succession, and in the wake of widely published stories quoting Talbott as saying in Madrid on Monday there were such plans.

President Eisenhower had an opportunity to give his views at a news conference Wednesday afternoon.

Until Talbott comes home about midmonth and gives his official opinion, the government apparently intends to ride along on the basis of:

1. The pronouncement of Secretary of State Dulles, concurred in by Secretary of Defense Wilson, that "we have no plans for storing atomic weapons in Spain" and that if and when such plans materialize "we shall not announce them publicly to the world and to our potential enemy." Wilson is Talbott's immediate superior.

2. Talbott's insistence Tuesday in Athens, Greece, that he had said nothing about storing bombs in Spain "Nor will I ever make statements about atomic weapons." He had been quoted by various correspondents for American and British newspapers and news services as saying there were such plans, subject to approval by Spain.

Up to Tuesday night, no official word from Talbott to the Pentagon had arrived, and a spokesman said the matter apparently would be held in abeyance until the secretary's return.

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Spain Bases

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May Store

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Atom Bombs

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Talbott and Gen. Nathan Twining, Air Force chief of staff, are in Spain studying sites for five bases in this country authorized by military and economic agreements recently concluded by Washington and Madrid.

Talbott said he expects contracts for the bases to be let within four to six months and that some of the bases may be operational within a year. He added that a group of four big American contractors who do not use "5-percenter" intermediaries in winning contracts will handle the whole project, subletting to the Spanish aeronautical industry to provide maintenance for U. S. planes stationed in Spain. The project is expected to be one of improving and enlarging existing bases rather than of building new ones.

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Green, a member of the Senate foreign relations committee, termed that statement by Air Secretary Talbott "another example of people in the administration talking too much and prematurely."

Senator Flanders of Vermont, in a separate interview, said: "I fear we may be compromising ourselves" in foreign policy toward Franco Spain on the one hand and the Tito government of Communist Yugoslavia on the other.

Talbott told a news conference in Madrid Monday the U. S. Air Force eventually will store supplies of atomic bombs in Spain, to have them ready for use against "a common enemy." But it will be done, he added, only if the Spanish government agrees. He said any use of atomic weapons by Spanish forces "is not in the picture at the present time," but will be the subject of negotiations.

Talbott and Gen. Nathan Twining, Air Force chief of staff, are in Spain to study sites for five proposed air bases for joint use by U. S. and Spanish planes. An agreement for U. S. bases in Spain was signed recently after prolonged negotiations.

"I think we are getting into very deep water," Senator Green said. "It seems to me, without regard to other serious questions involved, the secretary has made a great mistake in telling so much at this time unless he is going to tell more. It looks like a case of his talking prematurely, before an agreement is reached."

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