

EMERGENCY AIR DEFENSE COMMITTEE

1226 NATIONAL PRESS BUILDING

WASHINGTON 4, D. C.

November 12, 1947

Mr. Amon Carter, Publisher
FORT WORTH STAR TELEGRAM
Fort Worth, Texas

Dear Mr. Carter:

This letter is being sent only to a few nationally-known citizens who are identified with aviation but do not derive their income from it.

The Emergency Air Defense Committee is a coalition of key men of several national groups, to drive for immediate expansion of the air forces. It is a continuation of much the same teamwork that was behind unification.

As the enclosed statement explains, such a working coalition is urgent and it is practical as demonstrated both in the unification campaign and in earlier support of the Civil Aeronautics Act of 1938.

No official sanction can be given us. But you may be sure we would not be undertaking a project contrary to air force interests.

Industry backing will not be sought or accepted because we feel that any commercial tinge would weaken us. We are not in a position to lend our names on any other basis nor, we assume, are you.

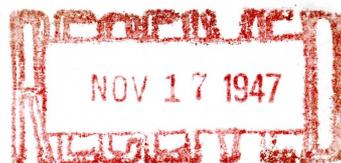
We are financing the work by a few contributions of \$500 each from people with a patriotic interest. This money is not tax exempt. We will conserve it and make every penny count. It will go mainly for printed matter.

Due to the special session, we must start now rather than in January. We will probably try for an amendment to carry air force funds in one of the first appropriations bill. We are prepared to lose at first and try again.

Will you help us? May we list you as an adviser of the committee? With your aid, we think the modest budget required can be raised in a few days.

Please let us hear from you by air mail, phone or wire. We must complete all plans before the National Aviation Clinic next week in order to arrange the cooperation of groups that will be represented there.

Frankly, it is not easy for us to undertake this job. We are heavily loaded with other work. But we must do it because of our deep concern for the dangerous situation of our air defenses. We trust you will



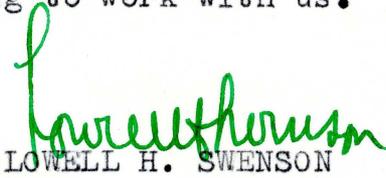
Mr. Amon Carter

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feel the same way and that is why you are among the very few we are
inviting to work with us.

Sincerely yours,


LOWELL H. SWENSON

Encl.


KENDALL K. HOYT


WILLIAM LEWIS

November 12, 1947

THE AIR POWER BUDGET

A Plan for Congressional Action

Aviation people have failed to arrest the decline in American air power because they have not brought the issue squarely before Congress. The cure is entirely a matter of federal budget which Congress alone can decide.

Hundreds of thousands of dollars have been spent by aviation groups and allied interests to take the general story of air power to a public already sold on the effectiveness of this arm. Opinion polls clearly show that the people want adequate air defense and are willing to pay for it.

Had a small fraction of the money that has gone in general sales effort been intelligently directed to get the story to Congress, our nation would be farther along the road to the regaining of air supremacy.

--Action is Urgent--

Unless such a drive is now launched, there is no assurance that even at this late stage in world affairs there will be any substantial boost to air power until the start of the 1949 fiscal year next July. Even then, there is no guarantee that funds will be adequate.

Congress wants to do the right thing. But Congress is now confronted with proposals which will squeeze all federal budgets. Fantastic demands for foreign aid, to bolster nations that would afford us not one ounce of protection in event of war, have caused the Administration to direct the cutting of estimates below the current year. Republicans want economies for tax reduction.

The current efforts to shape national air policy are a factor of delay. The President's commission will report in January. But on the point that counts the most, it can only say as did the Air Coordinating Committee that aircraft procurement and other urgent steps are not half what they should be. Congress will be inclined to wait till it hears from its own joint Senate-House board in March. By that time not much can be done except through regular appropriations not available till July.

The obvious, frantically urgent needs are these:

1. A supplemental appropriation for the present fiscal year so that new work can start at once without waiting till July. While the over-all need of the air forces may be debatable, it is beyond question that present budgets are not enough and that any substantial increase will be a step in the right direction. A suggested interim sum would be half a billion dollars divided, perhaps 60-40, between the Air Force and Naval aviation.

2. Strong support of 1949 budgets for all phases of air power.

Money is all that counts. Plans, policies, programs, and propoganda are nothing and worse than nothing since they build a false sense of security, unless or until Congress votes a supply bill and the President signs same.

--Price of Indecision--

Yet there is no evidence of preparations among aviation groups and patriotic backers of air power. In some quarters there are worries lest the war contract investigations cast doubts on some of the aircraft people, a minor factor at most that must be swept aside.

Many who should be supporting air power first are joining a great drive for universal military training. UMT can be of little help to the air forces and, if passed, will be a heavy drain on the budget, to be offset by cuts elsewhere. With this and foreign aid, we are in the ironic position of giving priority to measures in the name of defense at the expense of air power which must be our first and last protection.

Do we ever learn? In the past year, the same disunity and indecision almost wrecked all chances of releasing the Air Force through passage of the unification bill. A united-front drive with proper timing could have swept forward also to the battle of the budget.

As it was, all was muddlement until the last few weeks when a coalition was hastily rallied, too little and too late for a two-front fight. Budget had to be abandoned to concentrate all efforts on unification which passed on the very eve of adjournment after many weakening compromises. Without adequate funds, the separate air force can mean little.

--A Fighting Coalition--

This experience demonstrates, however, that when the friends of air power for a time bury their petty differences and work together -- as the friends of sea power and land power have worked through the years -- they can prevail.

The most effective backing for air power is among civilian aviation groups. The aircraft industry is handicapped through self-interest and has seen fit to await the formulation of official policy rather than act on its own. The veterans groups, which the industry has wooed at great expense, are giving lip service to air power but plainly are giving first attention to universal military training. Officials are tightly gagged against even hinting that present funds are not enough.

Best support is through those air enthusiasts, private flyers, and reservists across the country who have a crusading zeal for aviation; who know enough about it to speak with authority; and who, for the most part, are putting into aviation far more than they can ever get out of it.

Since these men and women, including many who are nationally prominent in all types of industry and occupation, are organized in several national groups, the forming of a coalition is quick and inexpensive. The job is not to sell the public but to convince a majority of the 96 Senators and 435 Representatives. Many of them are strongly for air power anyhow, so to get a majority, less than 100 need to be swung from a neutral to an active position.

As in the unification campaign, a small, inexpensive operation in Washington, to send factual material to Congress and to key men across the country, can do much. All branches of aviation stand to gain for the secondary problems tend to log-jam back of the big issue -- that of funds for the big phases of air power. So that is the focal point for the efforts of all.

The drive must begin in the special session and continue in full force until the cause is won.

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