

LeMay, Kenney Term B-36 Best Bomber in the World

Staff Chiefs Headed by Gen. Bradley

WASHINGTON, Aug. 11 (AP).—Gen. Omar N. Bradley was selected by President Truman Thursday for the nation's No. 1 military post—permanent chairman of the joint chiefs of staff. In that position he will be the highest ranking American military officer. Selection of "the GI's general" now serving as Army chief of staff, had been widely anticipated. It caps a career which included service in two world wars, command of the largest body of troops ever to serve un-

MISS AMERICA YIELDS TO VENUS

PARIS, Aug. 11 (INS).—"Miss America," whose comments on falsies, necking and other world problems have upset her father and jarred her Atlantic City sponsors, posed hesitantly beside the Venus de Milo in Paris Thursday. Bebe Shopp hesitated about posing for a photograph beside the centuries-old goddess of love whose chilly marble is as bare as a Folies Bergere chorine—but then consented because she remembered "there was a picture of Venus in my Latin book in high school." That made it okeh.

New Storm

General Says Jet Planes Will Take Over in 5 Years

WASHINGTON, Aug. 11.—The B-36 heavy bomber is the best plane in its class in the world today, but will be obsolete within five or six years, the two Air Force officers best qualified to speak Thursday told the House armed services committee.

They were Lt. Gen. Curtis LeMay, commanding general of the Strategic Air Command, and Lt. Gen. George C. Kenney, who preceded him in the same post.

An earlier witness, Maj. Gen. Frederick H. Smith, chief of the USAF requirements division, disclosed that the B-52 heavy bomber, now under design, is to be the successor of the B-36 as the principal heavy bombing plane of the Air Force.

Both LeMay and Kenney declared that the B-36 is virtually invulnerable to interception by present day fighter planes during night operations and would be extremely difficult to shoot down even in the daytime.

LeMay, however, differed with Kenney on whether the B-36 should be used for daytime bombing. While Kenney, who declared that nighttime bombing has now become just as effective as that in daytime, said he would confine use of the B-36 to missions either at night or during bad weather, thereby minimizing the risk of losing crews and men.

LeMay, who followed Kenney to the witness stand, declared he would reach his decision on this question when the time comes.

"Our plans include training for night bombing, daytime bombing, bombing by single planes or groups of planes. It is my responsibility to determine which of these methods will be best under the circumstances at the time. Then I will make my decision."

170 Now on Order.

LeMay, final witness called Thursday as the House committee continued its inquiry into the B-36 bomber, disclosed that it was on his recommendation that the Air Force decided to buy the additional 75 B-36s which were ordered this year, making the total on order now 170 planes.

At the same time, in response to questions put to him by Joseph B. Keenan, committee counsel, he emphatically denied that any political influence had been exerted upon him to secure his recommendation. He also specifically denied that he had been approached by either Floyd Odum, chairman of the board of Consolidated Vultee Aircraft Company, producers of the plane, or Secretary of Defense Louis Johnson, then a director of the company, before he submitted his recommendation to the board of senior officers, who acted upon it.

LeMay told the committee he has always been an advocate of the B-36 since he first came into contact with it and it was obvious that his recommendation weighed heavily with the senior officer board, as well as the joint chiefs of staff in their decision to increase the number of B-36s this year. LeMay was in command of the B-29 bombing attack on Japan and is considered the Air Force's leading authority on long-range bombing.



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By the Associated Press
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GENERALS CHAMPION B-36 AS WORLD'S BEST

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ed. While he declined to discuss detailed performance records of the bomber in public session, Kenney earlier told the committee that the plane now has a range of 12,000 miles, which is the highest public claim made for the plane up to this time.

Both LeMay and Kenney, under questioning by members of the committee, insisted that neither the United States nor any other nation has a fighter today which can be really effective against the B-36.

While LeMay admitted that it could be shot down, he insisted that it would be almost accidental. He agreed with Kenney that at night, the possibility of a fighter intercepting a B-36 flying at an altitude of 40,000 feet and shooting it down is so remote as hardly worth considering.

The B-52 in Offing.

By the time a night fighter capable of intercepting the B-36 is perfected, LeMay declared, the plane will be obsolete and will be replaced, probably, by the B-52 which is now under design by the Boeing Aircraft Company. The B-52, of which few details have been disclosed, will be powered with jet engines and is expected to be ready in five to six years.

"Meanwhile," LeMay declared, "we have to have the weapons to fight with should a war occur before the new bomber is ready. It is the B-36." He added, however, that B-36s will still be used by the Air Force long after the B-52 is in operation.

LeMay, who became chief of SAC last October, was not involved in the discussions when cancellation of the B-36 was considered by top Air Force officials during May and June 1948, but one of his first actions in his new post was to recommend the purchase of more of the planes.

Increase Recommended.

"I attended a meeting of the senior officers board which started Jan. 3 of this year." He explained to the committee. "At that time, I suggested that the number of B-36 groups be increased from the then authorized two to four. Later I suggested that the size of each group be increased from 18 to 30 planes. Both recommendations were approved.

LeMay also said that he told the board at the same time that if he could not get the additional B-36s, he preferred the B-47 to the B-54, then getting into production.

At the second meeting held Feb. 21, called at his suggestion, LeMay recommended that the contract for the B-54 be canceled, and the contract for the B-36 be increased. Both of these recommendations were subsequently adopted.

Every attempt by Representative James Van Zandt of Pennsylvania, who has been extremely critical of the B-36 and was chiefly responsible for securing the present investigation; to get an admission from LeMay that the B-36 is not the plane which the Air Force has claimed to be failed.

LeMay Is Cautious.

LeMay also declined to be drawn into discussions regarding the merits of carrier-based bombers, although, in reply to one question, he flatly declared:

"I know of no carrier based plane today that could deliver the atomic bomb and return to its carrier."

Kenney, when pressed by committee members on the development of fighters which could successfully attack and shoot down the B-36, admitted that eventually they will be produced. "When that day comes, the B-36 will become a tanker," he declared.

Scheduled to testify when the hearings resume Friday morning are Secretary of Air Stuart Symington and Gen. Hoyt S. Vandenberg, chief of staff of the USAF.

Arnold in California.

A subcommittee plans to go to California next week to take the testimony of Gen. H. H. Arnold, who commanded the Air Force during the war. While this group is gone, hearings in Washington will be suspended.

General Smith's testimony on the B-52, in answer to questions by Joseph B. Keenan, special counsel for the committee, confirmed officially what has been reported for some time.

At the same time, Smith said the Air Force, as outlined Wednesday, in his formal history of the B-36 submitted to the committee, plans to go ahead with the purchase of the 170 B-36 bombers which are being produced by Consolidated-Vultee Aircraft Company at its Fort Worth plant.

Whether additional B-36s will be purchased by the Air Force before the B-52 actually becomes available for operation, Smith did not disclose.

In response to questions by Keenan, however, Smith said it will be probably five or six years before the first B-52 is ready for flight. It is to be manufactured by the Boeing Aircraft Company.

The B-52 will be completely powered by jet engines, Smith said.

When a question was asked regarding the probable performance of the new heavy bomber, however, Chairman Carl Vinson of the committee interrupted and declared such information is still secret.

Additional information on the B-52, as well as the exact performance record of the B-36, are to be given the committee later in closed session.

Patterson Quizzed.

Former Secretary of War Robert Patterson disclaimed any knowledge of political interference or favoritism in connection

with the B-36 program during his incumbency.

He took "full responsibility" for increasing the order for B-36s from two to 100 in 1943, even though done by "irregular procedure."

The increase was decided upon when Tom Girdler, former president of Consolidated, came to see him, Patterson said.

Girdler asked:

"Do you want the B-36 in the war?"

"We certainly do," said Patterson.

"I'm having trouble with subcontractors who are not interested in just two planes," Girdler was quoted as saying.

"If you will give us an order for 100," Girdler continued, "I will beat your schedule by 10 months. Then I can get subcontractors really interested."

Gave the Order.

Patterson said he called in Gen. Oliver Echols, then head of procurement, and gave the order.

Ordinarily, he said, in response to questions, large orders were not made for planes until they had been tested fully in quantities of three or 13.

The order for 100 was not canceled in December of 1945 when other plane building was halted, Patterson said, because "it presented, to my view, our best dependence for long-range air power in the next few years."

The first B-36 was not delivered until 1946, Patterson said, some months behind schedule.

The delay was due to the fact that the B-29 had priority, he said, over the B-36.

The larger order for 100 did expedite the delivery date "by nine or ten months," Patterson told the committee.

"Did you give an order for 100 before any tests were made?" Keenan asked.

Exceptional Procedure.

"Yes, it was most exceptional procedure."

"You took full responsibility for varying the regular procedure?"

"I do," Patterson responded.

Patterson said he knew only a few of the Consolidated officials, and had not met Girdler prior to their office meeting.

"I did not have the faintest notion who might be financially interested in the company," Patterson added.

General Kenney explained how he was converted to the B-36 in June 1948, when he was head of the Strategic Air Command. Kenney also disclaimed any knowledge of favoritism or political pressure in the final decision to carry out the B-36 program.

Kenney said frankly he was originally "not too happy" about the B-36.

"It did not seem to live up to our original expectations," he told the committee.

Propeller Trouble.

It did not have the range expected and there was trouble with the propeller and overheating of the engines. In addition, it did not have good visibility for the pilot, he said, and lacked altitude expected.

This was the basis of his 1942 recommendation suggesting abandonment of the plane, he said.

He said he received "a lot of arguments in December 1946 in favor of the plane. They were good but not entirely satisfactory."

Improvements in the plane came about with installation of the VDT engine, which gave an additional 500 horsepower, permitting shorter takeoff, more speed and higher altitude, he said.

The propeller problem was cured, and a change in the nose design gave greater visibility.

Trouble with the flaps and landing gear was also cured, he said.

"The airplane astounded me," he said, frankly.

He explained that his original misgivings about improvements grew out of experience which showed that models "seldom get any better after the first month."

"This turned out to be one of those freaks," Kenney said.

Back in 1946, Kenney went on, it looked as if the Air Force "would be lucky" if the B-36 got above 30,000 feet and kept cool long enough to stay there.

Overheating Corrected.

With the added power, and correction of overheating, the airplane went to 40,000 feet and kept there, he said.

On June 24, 1948, he said he finally came around to give his support to the B-36 and incorporated his decision in a letter to Secretary of Air Symington.

General Smith came in for a few words of hostile questioning, at the tag end of his appearance, when Representative Gavin of Pennsylvania demanded to know why the Air Force was "not concerned about lay-offs in other plants, outside of Fort Worth."

Cancellations led to wholesale lay-offs in other plants, especially North American, said Gavin.

"Some 2,600 employees were laid off at North American, but you did not seem concerned with anything but keeping the Fort Worth plant open. Why nobody else?"

Smith said the Air Force was "seriously concerned" over the effects of cancellations on the whole industry.

He referred other questions to Gen. K. B. Wolf, head of Air Force procurement, who will appear before the committee later.

Time Questioned.

Gavin was also critical in questioning Smith about the length of time before delivery of the first model. Smith said that the six years before the first B-36 was flown, in August 1946, was not unusual.

"There is evidence in the Air Force of a general inability to reach a decision and to get a new plane into operation in less than six years," Gavin said.

Smith's contention that the time was not exceptionally long was backed by former Secretary Patterson later.

Gavin also asked if the intercontinental bomber would "eliminate all bases outside of this country."

Smith referred the question to higher officers because it involved matters of security.

"What about carriers?"

Smith complained this was out of his field.

"You do admit they exist?" Gavin asked.

Efforts of committee members to obtain the cost of the B-36 procurement program up to this time also failed, when Smith said he did not know the amount. He told the committee that these figures are now being prepared by the Air Force and will be available later.

Change in Views Probed.

Vinson asked Smith why Lt. Gens. Lauris Norstad and Kenney changed their minds with respect to the ability of the B-36, disclosed during testimony Wednesday.

"I feel that it was because at the time they did not favor the B-36 (prior to May 1948.) They had no assurance that the plane would have range, altitude and speed over targets which they believed was necessary for the ideal heavy bomber. They then found, when real tests could be made of the plane, that it did have that ability."

Questioned by Representative Brooks of Louisiana, Smith also admitted that at that time the Air Force had no other heavy bomber available or in sight.

"Was it not true," Brooks asked, "that when the decision was reached in June 1948 to continue the B-36 bomber, that we had no other heavy bombers for long range use in event of an emergency?"

"That is correct," replied Smith.

Long Distance Targets.

Smith had earlier described all other bombers now in production as medium or light bombers, including the B-29. He said that either the B-29 or the B-50 is capable of carrying and dropping atomic bombs, but said they would have to operate from advanced bases.

Only the B-36 would be able to carry the bomb from the United States to maximum distance targets, he added.

Smith, questioned about the two meetings earlier this year of the senior officers board when it was decided first to buy 39 additional B-36s, and then 35 more,

said that the board had been unanimous in each instance. He added, however, that the board each time discussed the whole program and merits of the plane at great length.

Questioned Briefly.

Surprisingly, Representative Van Zandt of Pennsylvania, whose charges were largely responsible for the committee initiating the present inquiry, only questioned Smith briefly.

He attempted to show by his questions that Smith had violated an order of Secretary of Defense Johnson by failing to submit the record of the B-36, read Wednesday to the committee, to Johnson for review and clearance.

Smith had earlier said emphatically that the report had never been sent to Johnson, nor had any of its contents been reviewed or cleared by anyone in the defense establishment.

Church Bells Foe Charged

A charge of using abusive language over a telephone was filed in Justice Boyd's court Thursday against H. W. Greene, private investigator, by Miss Jane Hartwell, secretary to Rev. J. Frank Norris of First Baptist Church.

The action came one day after a letter of complaint by Greene was read to City Council protesting that music from First Baptist Church carillons disturbed the neighborhood of his office at 410 Lamar.

Miss Hartwell's complaint alleged that on July 17 of this year Greene "wilfully used vulgar, profane, obscene and indecent language over and through a telephone, to-wit: telephone 2-8171, located at First Baptist Church."

Miss Hartwell, accompanied by Rev. Mr. Norris, appeared before Assistant District Attorney Tolbert in connection with the complaint Thursday.

Greene's letter to the City Council stated that carillons on the church, at 4th and Throckmorton, caused "vibrations so intense" that conversation could not be carried on in his office, a radio could not be heard and window panes rattled.

The council referred the matter to City Manager Jones for investigation.

House OKs Truman In Job Service Shift

WASHINGTON, Aug. 11 (AP).—The House by voice vote Friday in effect approved President Truman's reorganization plan No. 2. That plan would transfer the U. S. Employment Service and the Unemployment Compensation Service from the Federal Security Agency to the Department of Labor.

The action was on a resolution by Representative Hoffman of Michigan to reject the reorganization plan No. 2. Hoffman's resolution was shouted down.

Under the executive reorganization act, either House or Senate can veto a presidential plan to reshuffle government agencies. A Senate committee has recommended that plan No. 2 be rejected, but the Senate has not yet acted.


State Official Under Restraining Order

AUSTIN, Aug. 11 (AP).—Commissioner of Agriculture J. E. McDonald was put under a restraining order and faced a divorce suit here Thursday.

An hour and a half after his wife, Mrs. Anita McDonald, filed the suit alleging "cruel and harsh treatment," Judge Charles O. Betts issued the temporary restraining order in 126th District Court.

A hearing was set for 9 a. m. Aug. 19 on a temporary injunction against McDonald.

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