

Blockade Gave Impetus To B-36, General Says

WASHINGTON, Aug. 10 (AP).—Russia was credited with an assist Wednesday in this country's production of the B-36 long-range bomber.

Maj. Gen. Frederick H. Smith, Air Force requirements chief, said the Soviets helped influence the U. S. decision to continue the controversial super-bomber program when they clamped their

blockade on Berlin last summer.

Smith gave this testimony to the House armed services committee which is investigating the B-36's history to see whether any political or business influence was involved in the 100-plane contract with Consolidated Vultee Aircraft Company.

The Air Force officer was recalled to the stand to continue

his opening day account of the ups and downs the B-36 program underwent before it became the prized package in the Air Force's arsenal.

Even as late as April 1948, Smith said, there was "considerable difference of opinion" among the air staff on the value of the mammoth bomber which can lug blockbusters or atom bombs 10,000 miles.

He reported that Gen. George C. Kenney, then chief of the Strategic Air Command, favored using the B-36s as aerial tank cars to refuel medium bombers for long-range missions rather than putting them on actual bombing assignments.

Smith said that in June Air Secretary Symington, who had just returned from an inspection of the Consolidated Vultee plant at Fort Worth, called a meeting of the Air Force commanders and technicians to go over the entire B-36 project.

Just as the conference got under way the Russians put the squeeze on the German capital, and the Western powers began the airlift operations to counter the Soviet pressure move.

'Clearly in Favor.'

"After review," Smith said, "the decision was clearly in favor of carrying out the full B-36 contract."

Those at the meeting decided, he added, that it would not be wise to drop the program and lose the industrial potential of the government-owned Fort Worth plant "just when new production miracles might be due." **Turn to B-36 Inquiry on Page 2.**

B-36 Ceiling Proved 'Above 45,000 Feet'

The commander of the only two groups of B-36s the Air Force has in use thus far—Col. William P. Fisher—confirmed Wednesday that the big bomber now has proved it has a service ceiling "above 45,000 feet."

Heretofore, Air Force and Convair statement have described it as capable of operating at 40,000 feet.

Fisher, 7th Bombardment Wing and Carswell Air Base commander, told the Fort Worth Advertising Club in a luncheon talk that "we have flown missions proving the B-36's capabilities, and when the gentlemen in Washington get down here, we will have some facts and figures for them."

'Fine Plane.'

He emphasized that "we make no extravagant claims for the B-36—but we do say it is a fine airplane. It has its troubles and 'bugs,' but it is rapidly approaching operational status with excellent characteristics."

For instance, he cited, it has proved that it has a combat radius of at least 4,000 miles, and a speed of 350 miles an hour, with excellent reserve power.

Fisher predicted that B-36 trips

Turn to Ceiling on Page 2.

EAST SIZZLES IN 101 DEGREES

NEW YORK, Aug. 10 (INS).—The Atlantic seaboard heat wave sent temperatures rocketing to record heights Wednesday, topped by a reading of 101 degrees in Boston.

New York City, with 98.7 had a record high for the date and for 1949, surpassing the old mark of 97.8, set on July 29.

Hartford, Conn., reported 99.7, while Providence, R. I., came up with 99.

In Philadelphia, the high mark for the day was 96 degrees.

Washington reported 94. Readings in the mid neties were reported from Macon, Charleston and Atlanta.

Return of Heat Around Corner For Fort Worth

Fort Worth's great air conditioning duct from the Gulf of Mexico, which has been pouring it to us as cool as a seagull's brow, was fast becoming clogged Wednesday.

It meant a return to normal summer weather—hot.

But it still will be cool compared with the sizzling 112.2 degrees recorded here on this date



Gracie Allen

SAYS:

SOMEWHERE ON ATLANTIC OCEAN, Aug. 11.—Well, I've been visiting all over the Queen Elizabeth except down

MORE ABOUT B-36 INQUIRY

Continued from Page 1.
manded—as they were after Pearl Harbor.”

Smith then related subsequent efforts to keep the Fort Worth plant busy, including a proposal by Floyd Odlum to merge its operations with Northrop Aircraft, Inc., makers of the B-49 “Flying Wing” jet bomber.

Odlum is head of the Atlas Corporation which controls Consolidated Vultee. His name figured in statements by Representative Van Zandt of Pennsylvania which led to the B-36 investigation.

Van Zandt told the House he had heard “disturbing reports” about top defense officials and aircraft companies. Among these rumors he said was one that Air Secretary Symington planned to resign soon to head a big merger of plane makers reportedly being arranged by Odlum. Symington hotly denied the report.

Van Zandt also said that Odlum had helped Secretary of Defense Johnson raise funds for the Democratic campaign last fall and that Johnson had been an official of Consolidated before taking the defense post in March.

General Smith gave this account of Odlum’s effort to bring about a merger with Northrop:

At the June conference of Air Force commanders, Gen. Joseph T. McNarney, then chief of the Air Material Command, suggested that Consolidated and Northrop officials get together to see what they could work out to speed up production of the “flying wing.”

Smith said the Air Force wanted the jet craft for reconnaissance and for use as a companion bomber to the B-50, a speedier version of the B-29 Superfortress. He added that Northrop’s plant at Hawthorne, Cal., was not considered large enough to handle the desired production.

In July, he said, Odlum conferred with Northrop officials in Los Angeles and proposed a merger to build the B-49. This suggestion was turned down for the time being, Smith reported, and a temporary arrangement was made whereby Consolidated would handle part of the B-49 work on a subcontract.

Later however, Smith said the Air Force revised its plans for buying the B-49 and the entire program was cut down to concentrate more on the B-36.

This decision to step up use of the B-36s, he said, was made last December by a four-man board of senior Air Force offi-

cers with the aim of achieving the “ability to launch a strategic offensive.”

Despite the fact that General Kenney had opposed the B-36 when he was chief of the Strategic Air Command, Smith said that Gen. Curtis LeMay, who now heads that group, asked for two groups of B-36s to supplant two medium bomber groups. Also, he said LeMay asked for one group of B-36s for reconnaissance service to replace the flying wing type.

Smith further reported that a new \$269,761,000 contract was signed with Consolidated in April of this year for 36 of the B-36s which have been modernized with special jets to give them added speed if needed over a target area.

This presumably is in addition to the nearly half billion dollars already invested in the super-bomber program.

Smith indicated that the Air Force decision to put major stress on the B-36 as its chief offensive weapon stemmed from President Truman’s order last year for a sharp cutback in total planes and personnel.

He said development of the B-36 from 1941 to mid-1948 was “influenced very little by the overall aircraft procurement program of which the B-36 was but a small part.”

But he declared “this situation was changed completely” after Truman told the Air Force it was “not to exceed aircraft inventory of 9,800.”

Government Controls Hawaii's Stevedoring

HONOLULU, Aug. 10 (AP).—Governor Stainback Wednesday signed orders bringing all of Hawaii’s strikebound stevedoring companies under government control. The action came as CIO mainland unions solidified resistance to dock seizure by the territory.

Orders signed by the governor Wednesday covered five of the islands’ seven struck stevedore firms—two on Hawaii island, two on Kauai and one of Maui. The two on Oahu were affected in orders signed Tuesday.

DOUBLE FILTERED FOR EXTRA QUALITY, PURITY

This name, Moroline, guarantees highest quality. Only 10c.

MOROLINE
PETROLEUM JELLY

Fine for:
BURNS
MINOR-
CUTS
CHAFE
SCRAPES