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...the Russian are outpacing us with this type.

MUST OUR AIR FORCE BE SECOND BEST?

BY TREVOR GARDNER *America today, this former Air Force aide*

says, is being "dollar-wise and time-foolish." We must insist, he writes, upon the finest Air Force



The author was Assistant Secretary of the Air Force in charge of research and development until February. He resigned to protest "ho-hum" Noah's Ark.

With every tick of the clock, the Soviet Union is moving closer to the capability of knocking this country out. Intercontinental air power and missiles are the new double-edged sword of destruction, hanging by a hair over us all.

The danger America faces has not been apparent to the general public because it has not been revealed. The disturbing facts about the major delays in our continental air defense, the story behind the 137-wing Air Force fantasy and the accurate account of how Russia is outpacing our country in ballistic missiles have been withheld.

These facts should no longer remain the exclusive, private property of a few Government executives whose main mission in life is to balance the budget. All of us share these dangers. The facts must be known and understood by all.

There is no time for "business as usual." We face a crisis as grave as any we have ever confronted in our peacetime history. Its gravity requires President Eisenhower to take the people of this country

into his full confidence. He should disclose openly and realistically what threatens our homes and our very lives.

We can not avert our peril unless we insist upon, and are prepared to pay for, the finest Air Force in the world without further waste of time. This is attainable. The unrealistic obstacles of dollar cost and budget balancing must be brushed aside by decisive leaders capable of understanding that while money is an important commodity, time is priceless. In fact, time is the only resource we cannot afford to waste.

The tragedy in Washington today is that we are being dollar-wise and time-foolish. If we abandon our present business-as-usual, time-consuming, committee-ridden approach, we will make a few of the budget types unhappy; but this is a very small price to pay for the kind of national security we need.

Whether we like it or not, our plans for tomorrow's Air Force are being determined just as much—if not more—by the Kremlin as by the Pentagon. We cannot overlook this fact. This is true because in Russia, as well as in other parts of the world, scientific advances are being made with the speed of light while in Washington bureaucracy continues to move like a turtle. Because we refuse to face the facts, Russian realism is prevailing, and Soviet efforts to fully destroy the thin air-power advantage we have threaten to succeed.

This need not happen. But it will, unless we do two things. First, we must provide adequate funds. Second, we must junk the creaking,

continued



Russian Bears can make round trip between Russia and the U. S. without refueling. Our B-36's can, too, and we have more of them. But Bears may soon outnumber the B-36's. And they are equipped with engines—four turbine jets powering two contra-rotating propellers each—that have no equivalent in our operational bombers. The Bears also appear capable of use as aerial tankers for jet bombers and long-range reconnaissance.

decentralized reviewing and re-reviewing machinery we now so foolishly look to for decisions. In place of this bureaucratic Noah's Ark, we urgently need a streamlined mechanism capable of responding to new dangers as quickly as they become known.

Our Air Force must lead the world both in the quality and in the quantity of its weapons. The status of the race for superior quality is a particularly disturbing one. It started in the World War I era. In 1917, the U. S. ranked only 14th in world air power. Soviet aeronautical science ranked even lower and was-in comparison—still in its swaddling clothes. But the infant Soviet science possessed remarkable vitality. By 1940, it established its own vigorous, independent maturity. This growth was accelerated during World War II and has continued at tremendous speed. During the past few years, the rate of Soviet technological progress has challenged the comprehension of even our most advanced thinkers.

One of the most underplayed facts about the growth of Soviet science is that Russian leaders have established an extraordinarily consistent record of announcing their technical advances. On November 6, 1947, Foreign Minister Vyacheslav Molotov stated that the secret of the atomic bomb had ceased to exist. Very few people took this seriously. Two years later, on September 23, 1949, President Truman announced that an atomic explosion had just occurred in the U.S.S.R. For a time, this fact stunned many of our leaders, since nearly everyone believed it would still take Russia many years to develop this weapon. However, we soon returned to a comfortable state of national complacency. This again was temporarily shattered on August 29, 1953, when the Russians announced, and the Atomic Energy Commission confirmed, that the Russians had tested an H-bomb.

During the past six months, there have been new Russian statements pertaining ominous things for our national security. On July 30, 1958, one day after a White House announcement that the U. S. had begun development of a space satellite, the U.S.S.R. announced that the Soviet Interplanetary Commission had been formed three

months earlier, and that rapid progress was being made on space vehicles. This commission includes one of Russia's greatest physics scientists, Dr. Peter Kapitsa. In August, Prof. G. I. Pokrovsky announced that, "not far off" in the future, Russia would be launching space ships on regular schedules. Four days after Christmas, 1958, Prime Minister Nikolai Bulganin greeted the New Year with the statement that rocket missiles had already been under development for several years and were now becoming intercontinental weapons. On February 18, 1956, Marshal Georgi Zhukov stated that if attacked, Russia would hurl atomic bombs at American cities with large jet planes and "mighty missiles."

Based on past performance, these announcements cannot be regarded as mere hollow boasts. Many of Russia's earlier claims were frighteningly validated at the 1955 atom-for-peace convention at Geneva. There, the representatives of the Western World were startled by the quality of the technical papers presented by the Soviet scientists, and by the understanding of electronics and nuclear implicit in the Russian exhibits.

This sweeping, fundamental scientific advance has been reflected in the quality of Soviet air weapons. Within a single year, the Russians have shown us six new types of advanced aircraft. All compare well with the most advanced types now in operation here. These new aircraft are powered by six new types of engine, two of them of extremely advanced design. Their intercontinental turbo-prop bomber known as the Bear, discloses Russian advances in at least one technical area which we have only belatedly explored. For a background that became acquainted with modern technology less than 40 years ago, this progress in the quality of Russian aeronautics science is astounding. It is equally astounding, one might add, whether Soviet progress is due to invention or theft.

Perhaps even more disturbing is the Russian ability to produce large quantities of air weapons. This brings us to the race for quantity. No one can walk away from the fact that the Russians have demonstrated an impressive mass-production capacity. They actually display substantial quantities of new aircraft in what has come to be known as their annual "May Day fly-by"—the military demonstration they make on their equivalent of the Fourth of July.

Our Fliers Saved Us in Korea

They have done something even more impressive. They have exported, by gift or sale, large numbers of IL-28's, MIG-15's and MIG-17's.

These exports are full of bad news for us. The MIG-15, for example, gave the best American planes we then had (like the Sabre jet) quite a surprise in Korea. It was the quality of our fliers that saved the day. We know that the MIG-17 is an even better airplane than its predecessor. It is a radar-equipped fighter with better engines and capable of higher altitudes than even the MIG-15. And these are the planes the Russians are giving away!

This speaks most eloquently for both the quality and the quantity of their planes. It also telegraphs the distasteful fact that their supporting factories are running in such high gear that they can treat a lot of complicated, hard-to-make items as surplus. This includes the armament, electronic, navigation and gunnery systems associated with the planes they now export. Any nation that can afford to treat these associated systems as "spares" has licked some of the most sophisticated mass-production problems of our day.

The best testimony on the quantity race is by Gen. Nathan F. Twining, chief of staff of the U. S. Air Force. He says the U. S. now has many thousand fewer jet aircraft than the Russians. The brutal fact is that we now clearly outnumber the Russians in only one class of airplane, the B-47 medium jet bomber. In all other categories, they either do or can outnumber us.

Today's Air Force was bought three years ago. It is behind the Russians' in quantity. Its quality lead is also slipping dangerously.

bruously, since the Russians have already begun to outpace us, we just find a way to pick up and maintain enough additional speed the race, not only to close the gap, but to forge ahead of them.

No one questions the patriotism of the civilians who think the way to pick up this kind of speed is to slow down on men, money, search and planes. But there is every patriotic reason to challenge air judgment.

Although our air power is lagging, the American people have usually been killed into believing that by July, 1957, we will have achieved the goal of 137 wings of combat aircraft. This is a tragic illusion. Nothing could be less realistic. It is well known by responsible Air Force leaders that the 1956 and 1957 budgets can only adequately support a 120-wing Air Force.

Any serious effort to support 137 wings under these budgets could compel the Air Force to postpone modernization of the striking force. The training of personnel would have to be reduced. Additional units would have to be squeezed onto existing air bases, thereby increasing their vulnerability to attack. Finally, expenditures for maintenance and supplies would have to be slashed, thereby jeopardizing the safety of American airmen. To support a 137-wing Air Force, without downgrading already austere Air Force standards, the air budget would have to be increased at least 4 billion dollars over its present 18½-billion-dollar level. Without this increase, it is impossible to achieve 137 combat wings of modern aircraft.

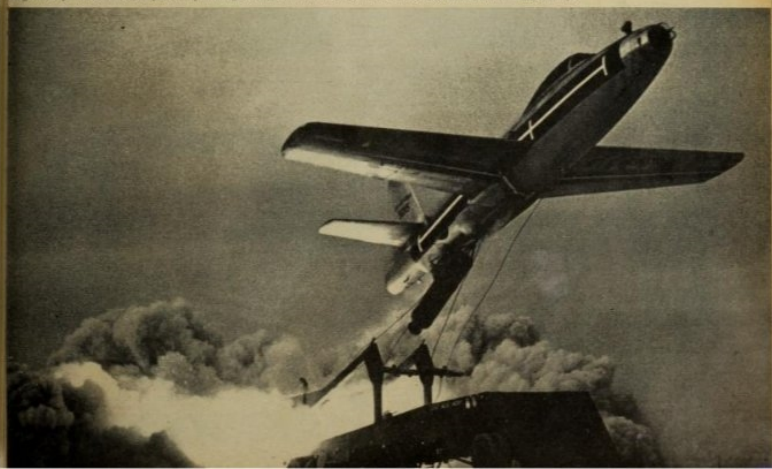
When General Twining recently testified before the Congress that "... 137 is just a number ..." and that "... this increase is continued



In the face of Red strength, says Gardner, Secretary of Defense Wilson "reflects the same complacency" in the Pentagon that provoked Gen. Billy Mitchell's revolt against the defense planners of his time.

Billy Mitchell at his court-martial.

budget cuts prevented full development of piloted fighters like this, which can rocket off a truck platform without needing runways.



but readiness is a goal we are aiming at—not a reality," the cat was out of the bag.

Unhappily, this fact is much better known to the Russians than it is to the American people.

The Soviet Union has arrived at its threatening qualitative and quantitative posture in the air by pursuing, with unwavering determination, the goal of technical supremacy over the West.

Traditionally, our American attitude toward support of research and development has been anything but consistent. Prior to World War II, research and development for air power were the business of private concerns.

As World War II approached, defense budgets for research and development did increase. This, together with industrially sponsored work, allowed us to wage that war with modern equipment. Even so, the astonishing technical developments by the Germans of the turbo-jet, rocket propulsion, ballistic and other guided missiles left us no room for complacency. This was soon forgotten, however, and the peak Air Force research-and-development budget of 1946 was cut in half in 1947.

It was not until 1951, during the Korean War, that the Air Force research-and-development budget again reached its 1946 level. During this 1947-51 period, priceless opportunities were lost and not a few of the seeds of our present peril sown.

Missile Research Dangerously Delayed

The guided-missile programs which were initiated in 1946 could not be vigorously prosecuted. Our scientists were mostly confined to studying what we might build if money should become available. During some of these years, no money was available at all for inter-continental ballistic-missile development, or even for research in this field. The B-52 was carried, during this period, on a similar basis. Study was confined to a number of hypothetical possibilities before money became available in 1951.

The Korean War scare caused a temporary increase in research-and-development funds, which was promptly reduced again in 1953. Since that year, Air Force research-and-development funds have been maintained essentially constant at a figure 29 per cent lower than the 1953 cut. We appear to have entered an era quite like that of 1946-51, the consequences of which will only be fully realized five or 10 years from now.

During the past two years, we have had to face the problem of learning to fly and fight at four times the speeds of World War II, and at altitudes so high there is literally no air left. This involves new problems in aerodynamics, electronics and power plants, problems not just four times as complicated as those of World War II, but more like 40 times as complicated.

America's scientists clearly understand the challenges confronting them. They are acutely aware of the deadly implications of Russian progress. They cannot comprehend, therefore, why we have been prevented from seriously examining a number of fascinating and promising new scientific discoveries. These are called "technological breakthroughs." The real reason is simple enough. The answer is the financial limitations which have held us down.

These same shortsighted limitations have also hamstrung the financial support we may allot to vital basic research, the discovery of fundamental, new scientific facts. This is one of the greatest mistakes of our time.

Had the same "business-as-usual" attitude prevailed in 1941, no money would have been available for the fantastically costly basic-research project sponsored by Albert Einstein: No Manhattan Project would have come into being to unravel one of the great cosmic mysteries. The logic of budget balancing would have supported the continuing development of bigger and better TNT blockbusters.

How differently the race for world power would have turned out if the Russians had discovered the secret of atomic energy first! Today, we are faced with exactly the same kind of decision. But now the budget balancers are in control, and basic research is being sacrificed in favor of the improvement of old ideas. This will look good on today's budget books. Tomorrow's history books may well say

that, at this point, the United States gambled irrevocably with the future and passed the dreaded "point of no return."

The lack of funds in the 1957 budget also prevents us from capitalizing on many proved developments. An example is our new experience with the F-54D fighter airplane. We successfully prove our ability to zero-length-launch this aircraft. This means that, with slight modifications, we can shoot this airplane and possibly others into the air like a rocket, with no runway or airfield required. The manned airplane is capable of delivering nuclear weapons at high speed within enemy territory. A few hundred of these aircraft, stationed around the Russian periphery in the countries of our NATO allies, fully equipped with fuel and bombs and with their crews on a 24-hour alert would constitute a formidable additional deterrent to the Russians. Our NATO allies would then be really equipped to be able to carry out a realistic policy of massive retaliation. Unfortunately, because of the lack of funds, our military planners are precluded from even considering such a simple improvement.

Take the relatively elementary question of providing our Air Force with enough bases to operate effectively, and to protect itself from devastating attack. Our Strategic Air Command is now crowded onto 33 bases throughout the continental United States. It is also deployed on many overseas bases which might be denied to us in event or threat of war. Therefore, we now depend very largely on elements of the Strategic Air Command situated on bases within the continental United States.

The Air Force planners within the Strategic Air Command and the Pentagon have repeatedly requested more bases, not only because the Russians have been expanding their base system in Eastern Europe, in the Far East and in the Arctic, but because crowded bases are booby traps. They needlessly endanger both men and planes and jeopardize our ability to retaliate against surprise attack.

The Air Force has also repeatedly asked for funds to train men, modernize its planes and increase the force of combat-ready aircraft. It has petitioned again and again for more B-52 bombers—one of the few planes that will give us a quality advantage in air power. Our Air Force generals have requested more of these planes because they know the Russians not only have a counterpart to their Bisons, but also because they know the Russians have more Bisons than we have B-52's.

Although the State Department for the last 18 months has pro-

continued



"I didn't realize a traffic violation was so serious!"



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"Dad Regulates His Speech," by Douglas Crookwell. Number 129 in the series "Home Life in America."

In a situation like this—
What makes a glass of beer taste so good?



When we're asked to make a speech—or act in a community play, maybe—it's natural to depend on family and neighbors for friendly criticism... and just as natural to depend on good American beer or ale for help in putting both the "performance" and his "audience" more at their ease.



For beer is brewed with easy-going informality in mind. A product of our country's finest malt barley and tangy hops, its distinctive flavor has made beer our national "beverage of moderation"—kept on hand in most American homes ready to make any situation more enjoyable.

aimed a policy of "massive retaliation," the Bureau of the Budget has ignored the pleas of the Air Force for the means to execute it. The ability of the Air Force to retaliate massively is dependent upon:

1. The ability to detect a surprise attack.
2. The capacity to absorb whatever destructive portion of the attack we cannot destroy.
3. The possession of enough remaining strength after we have been hurt to mount a decisive retaliation in the air.
4. Above all, the ability to maintain an overwhelming lead in airplanes and missiles, and the base structure to support them.

Within the Defense Department, the response to these needs has been to maintain a business-as-usual attitude, reduce the budget and limit our expenditures. Meanwhile, the budgeteers have insisted that the research-and-development effort, the force responsible for the strength we have, is wasteful and duplicative.

Both the procedure for establishing the level of expenditure, and the arbitrary manner in which cuts are applied, reflect the same complacency on the part of the civilian leaders in the Pentagon today that provoked Gen. Billy Mitchell's revolt against the defense planners of his time.

Secretary of Defense Charles Wilson has vitalized this wincing complacency into a procurement policy known as "fly-before-you-buy." It is the supreme accomplishment of men who believe in saving dollars even if you have to waste time.

Test Models Never Won an Air War

The "fly-before-you-buy" policy means that each new airplane must be procured in small quantities initially, and be thoroughly tested over a protracted period of time before large-quantity commitments are made. From a budget point of view, this is an excellent procedure. It not only reduces the chances of error but also defers heavy expenses to later years. In the development of automobiles and telephones, this is a necessary and sound business practice. Unfortunately, no battles will be won by hurling one test model of the world's best airplane into the air when the enemy attacks. Such a policy is dangerous to the point of being suicidal. It only assures the Russians that should they take this country over, they will find the budget balanced when they arrive.

During the past two years, we have known enough about many advanced aircraft to abandon our supercautious attitude with a negligible degree of technical risk. We must recognize the threat confronting us and adopt the policy of "buy-then fly them."

The point is illustrated by the development of one of our most advanced fighter aircraft, the Lockheed F-104. This air weapon was conceived by one of this country's most brilliant aeronautical engineers, Clarence E. (Kelly) Johnson. In 1952, Johnson decided that it was time to develop an extremely high-performance day fighter which could clearly outperform any imaginable Russian air weapon.

He sold his idea to the Air Force and was awarded funds for research. With this money, he proved his theory, and by early 1954 had a prototype of this magnificent new air weapon in the air. Under the "fly-before-you-buy" policy, his company, Lockheed Aircraft Corporation, obtained a pitifully small order for seventeen 104's. Had a production order been given in 1954, we could have had these airplanes today in operational quantities.

Instead, we recently placed a cautious order for a small production quantity which calls upon less than one fourth of Lockheed's capacity. These planes will not be operational until the end of 1957. Should we become involved in a little or a big war before then, our airman will have to be content with something less than the best—a dangerous business in this H-bomb age.

As a nation, we have been extremely lucky that so many of our jet-aircraft experiments have worked. We have a large selection of advanced aircraft to choose from. But, unfortunately, the tragic story of the F-104 has been repeated through a wide range of aircraft weapons. We continue to squander time as though we had invented a way of replacing it.

The F-101, a high-performance fighter, the F-102 and the F-105 all must have their production rates dramatically increased to mod-

ernize our fighter Air Force at the winning rate. For in this business of air power, winning is our only aim.

In the field of bombers, where the production rate of the Russian Bison is clearly ahead of the B-52, we must begin to win by procuring approximately 500 additional aircraft, and by doubling or even tripling the present production rate during the next 15 months. Similarly, we must increase the production quantity and rate for the B-52 companion piece, the KC-135 jet tanker.

These are all large, expensive but necessary steps if we are to meet the growing threat of Russia's air force.

Beginning early last June, the annual dismal, bureaucratic procedure of budget preparation was begun in the Pentagon. Air Force officers charged with the preparation of this budget were concerned about the effectiveness of our existing Air Force. They feared that we might lose the air-power race with the Soviets.

The Air Force reflected its concern in early September with a budget which called for 20 billion dollars of new money for 1957. This budget request was met with an order which said in effect: "You can have no more than 18.8 billion dollars. We don't care what you eliminate to meet this figure—but that is all you're going to get!" This was bad, but the worst was yet to come. Between October 10 and December 21, the Air Force was ordered to make eleven separate revisions in its budget. This abnormal series of revisions and cuts finally hacked the eleventh version of the budget to a flat 18 billion dollars for air power.

Dismayed, several senior members of the Air Force management team finally prevailed upon the Secretary of Defense to increase the eleventh version by one-half billion dollars. The twelfth and final version of the Air Force budget, calling for 18½ billion dollars, was submitted to the Congress. However, a great price was exacted in return for even this inadequate increase. The civilian leaders who accepted it were committed to "hold still," to forbear from pleading their case to the public or the Congress.

In the face of this, a concerned chief of staff, torn between his earlier endorsement of a much higher budget and his dedication to the principle of civilian control, characterized the budget before Congress as "austere" and capable only of meeting "our most essential needs on a minimum basis." Least there be any doubt remaining about the real meaning behind his statement, General Twining significantly added, "To keep this minimum program going and to reach and support 137 wings will require an increased budget in 1958."

Prior to writing this article, I resigned as civilian manager of the Air Force research-and-development program over an honest and basic difference of opinion with the Secretary of Defense as to whether budget balancing or air power was the more important. I believe that with all the facts available the people of this country should not be subjected to the dire consequences of possessing the world's second-best Air Force.

THE GUIDED MISSILE MESS

A missile power, Trevor Gardner in a second article analyzes the American missile crisis. He tells: 1) Why our Strategic Air Command needs missiles and planes; 2) the facts behind the threat of Russia's missiles; 3) the story of the juggling of defense funds to support research; 4) how inter-service rivalry created a labyrinth of Pentagon committees and administrators. [Read More](#) also offers a plan of action to overcome the dangers that face the nation.