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"ADVISABLE IN THE NATIONAL INTEREST?"

THE RELIEF OF GENERAL GEORGE C. KENNEY

by

ALEXUS GREGORY GRYNKEWICH

B.S., United States Air Force Academy, 1993

A Thesis Submitted to the Graduate Faculty

of the University of Georgia in Partial Fulfillment

of the

Requirements for the Degree

MASTER OF ARTS

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1994

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"ADVISABLE IN THE NATIONAL INTEREST?"

THE RELIEF OF GENERAL GEORGE C. KENNEY

by

ALEXUS GREGORY GRYNKEWICH

Approved:

Major Professor

July 13, 1994

Date

Approved:

Dean of the Graduate School

Date

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Despite the many positive contributions others have made to this thesis, the reader is reminded that the opinions expressed herein belong solely to the author. Likewise, any errors or shortcomings in this thesis are his responsibility.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

page

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.....iii

INTRODUCTION: The Relief.....1

CHAPTER 1: Foundations of a Crisis.....9

CHAPTER 2: Wartime Exacerbations.....25

CHAPTER 3: The B-29 Controversy.....43

CHAPTER 4: Passed Over.....66

CHAPTER 5: Conclusion.....86

BIBLIOGRAPHY.....92

INTRODUCTION

THE RELIEF

In early 1948, growing concern over the threat posed by the Soviet Union prompted Secretary of Defense James V. Forrestal to query each military service regarding its operational plans and capabilities. In the Air Force, the responsibility for answering the secretary's inquiries rested with General Lauris Norstad, Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations. But although he could present Forrestal with ready assessments of fighter and airlift capabilities, Norstad had reservations concerning the Air Force's strategic bombardment units. Lately he had received disturbing reports regarding the readiness of Strategic Air Command (SAC). Recognizing how critical it was that he provide Forrestal accurate information, Norstad dispatched Brigadier Generals Charles A. Lindbergh and Paul W. Tibbets, the pilot of the aircraft which dropped the first atomic bomb on Hiroshima, to evaluate his concerns.

After just three days at SAC the two men returned to Air Force Headquarters to present their preliminary findings. Lindbergh spoke with General Norstad first. His conclusions confirmed the operations chief's fears. "In general," Lindbergh observed, "personnel are not sufficiently experienced in their primary mission."[1] After Lindbergh completed his report, Norstad called Tibbets into his office. "What did you learn?" the deputy asked.

"General, I learned a whole lot," replied Tibbets. "I've got my opinions. I can't prove anything that I tell you."

---

1. Charles A. Lindbergh, "Report to General Vandenberg," 14 September 1948, 2, quoted in Harry R. Borowski, *A Hollow Threat: Strategic Air Power and Containment Before Korea* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1982), 146.

"Paul," Norstad counseled, "you don't have to prove it. What did you come up with as a finding?"

Norstad's prodding convinced Tibbets to be direct. "There isn't anybody out there that knows what the hell they are doing," Tibbets began. "The crews don't know how to fly an airplane. The staff officers don't know what they are doing."[2]

The reports of Lindbergh and Tibbets deeply distressed General Norstad, and he immediately shared their findings with his close friend, General Hoyt S. Vandenberg, the Air Force Chief of Staff.[3] After a mid-1948 meeting with Secretary Forrestal, Norstad gave Vandenberg a strong recommendation. The operations chief placed ultimate responsibility for SAC's poor condition on its commander, General George C. Kenney. "You're gonna have to make a change in [the] Strategic Air Command Commander," advised Norstad.

The deputy's statement apparently caught the Chief of Staff off guard. After a brief pause, he responded with a question. "Who should I put in there?" asked Vandenberg.

"Well," Norstad replied, "who would you put in there in time--in case--of war?"

Vandenberg answered immediately: "LeMay."

Betraying the degree of urgency with which he regarded SAC's present crisis, Norstad admonished his superior: "You better put him in there now because its too late

---

2. The above dialogue comes from Paul W. Tibbets, Interview by James S. Howard, Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama, 7 February 1985, USAF Oral History Interview 1634, transcript, 44. Tibbet's account has General Nathan F. Twining in place of General Norstad. This, however, seems an unlikely scenario as Twining was then serving as the commander of Air Material Command. It is doubtful that he would have had anything to do with an investigation of SAC's combat readiness. Additionally, Lindbergh most definitely reported to General Norstad, and Tibbet's mentions talking briefly with Lindbergh outside "Twining's" office prior to giving his report.

3. Norstad and Vandenberg had roomed together during World War II. Lauris Norstad, Interview by Edgar F. Puryear, location unknown, 22 August 1977, USAF Oral History Interview 1473, transcript, 10.

after the war starts to get SAC in shape."[4] Vandenberg agreed. It had taken Norstad only fifteen minutes to convince him to reassign Kenney from command of SAC to Air University, and to replace him with Lieutenant General Curtis E. LeMay.[5]

II

Several factors enabled Vandenberg to reach his final decision so quickly. The Air Force leadership had suspected that problems existed in SAC since March 1948. Noting the command's low number of operational aircraft, General Carl A. Spaatz, Vandenberg's predecessor, wrote to General Kenney that this "may be symptomatic of other difficulties such as below standard organizational training."[6] Kenney, however, had not taken an active role in SAC's training program. His superiors had encouraged him to spend much of his time on the publicity circuit, and the responsibility for running SAC's day-to-day operations, including training, had fallen to Kenney's deputy commander, Lieutenant General Clements McMullen.

Kenney had tapped McMullen as the SAC deputy because of his reputation for efficiency. The SAC commander believed that McMullen could use his background in logistics and administration to increase the command's combat capability and improve readiness.[7] Almost immediately after he reported to SAC, the new deputy commander began "to reorganize the command, trim manpower at all levels, and centralize command jurisdiction." Some of McMullen's efforts did improve efficiency. For example, his reorganization of SAC Headquarters resulted in a reduction in the number

---

4. The above dialogue is based on J. B. Montgomery, Interview by Harry Borowski, location unknown, 14 July 1975, cassette tape, Series II, Box 2, Borowski Papers. This conversation is also recounted in Borowski, 148-49.

5. Norstad, Puryear interview, 11.

6. Letter, Spaatz to Kenney, 2 March 1948, quoted in Borowski, 145.

7. Borowski, 58-59.

of staff elements from twenty-three to six.[8] McMullen's other attempts to increase efficiency, however, failed. Perhaps the most infamous of these endeavors was the deputy commander's cross-training program.

The low level of authorized military manpower which characterized the immediate postwar period caused McMullen to perceive a need for modification of SAC's training program. Unfortunately, the deputy's answer to the problem was to qualify all flying officers for multiple aircrew positions. Pilots should learn to perform the duties of both navigators and bombardiers, and vice versa. McMullen believed this would allow him to reduce the required number of officers per aircraft from five to three, and that this, in turn, would enable him to cut squadron officer strengths by one third.[9]

When McMullen implemented his cross-training program in early 1948, he devastated unit morale and readiness. "The net result [of cross-training] was that he didn't have anybody who could do anything," one officer recalled.[10] Indeed, in his final report Lindbergh identified McMullen's effort as a pernicious influence: "an intensive cross-training program . . . [has] seriously interfered with training the primary mission."[11] Little wonder, then, that SAC personnel assigned their deputy commander the ignominious nick-name of "Cement-head McMullen."[12]

Of course, other factors limited SAC's operational readiness in 1948. The personnel shortage, which McMullen intended his cross-training program to address, did exist. Budgetary constraints limited not only manpower levels, but also the quality

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8. J. C. Hopkins and Sheldon A. Goldberg, *Development of Strategic Air Command, 1946-1976* (Omaha: Office of the Historian, Strategic Air Command, 1976), 8.

9. Borowski, 58-59.

10. Tibbets, Howard interview, 43.

11. Lindbergh report, quoted in Borowski, 146.

12. Tibbets, Howard interview, 43.

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AFIT Student
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ALEXUS GREGORY GRYNKEWICH, 2LT, USAF

Thesis Title: "Advisable in the National Interest?": The Relief of General George C. Kenney

Year Completed: 1994

Pages: i-vi, plus 96

Degree Awarded: Master of Arts (History)

Institution: University of Georgia

Abstract:

In October 1948, President Harry S Truman approved the relief of General George C. Kenney from his duties as the first commander of Strategic Air Command (SAC). The most obvious reason for this action was that Kenney had not performed his duties at SAC to the satisfaction of the Air Force leadership. The nation's strategic forces were simply not combat ready. Nonetheless, other factors were almost certainly at play.

A biographical study of Kenney's career reveals that he failed to develop close personal ties with other senior Air Force personnel. His career is marked by physical and intellectual isolation from other important air officers. Kenney's stubborn and egoistic personality and the fact that he offered his primary loyalty to his World War II theatre commander, Douglas MacArthur, estranged Kenney from his Air Force peers. Had Kenney instead nurtured a strong bond with other senior air officers, they would not only have been more tolerant of his shortcomings but also their improved communications with Kenney would have pre-empted his poor performance at SAC. Instead, Kenney received few substantial warnings that his job was in jeopardy until it was too late.

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The secondary works most useful for this study include Harry R. Borowski, A Hollow Threat: Strategic Air Power and Containment Before Korea (Westport, Connecticutt: Greenwood Press, 1982); and Murray Green, "Stuart Symington and the B-36" (Ph.D. Diss., American University, 1960).

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and quantity of SAC's equipment.[13] Nonetheless, McMullen's policy of cross-training, coupled with other misguided personnel programs, had a significant effect. For instance, the deputy instituted discriminatory policies against non-flight rated officers, attempting to limit severely their numbers in SAC. This policy forced flying officers to man support units and ravaged both unit and individual morale. McMullen, the master of efficiency, initiated profoundly inefficient policies.[14]

SAC Headquarters also neglected its operations and planning responsibilities. One former SAC pilot recalled that if ordered to attack the Soviet Union, "[w]e had a list of targets, but apparently someone was going to assign us [which] targets [we were to attack] before we took off."[15] The new operations officer under General LeMay remembered his initial encounter with his predecessor's "very sketchy, very weak" war plan. "[T]he officer that brought it over to show it to me the first time . . . had it in his pocket." He later offered an evaluation of SAC in 1948: "The problem with the McMullen regime [was that] it wasn't pointed toward the goal of getting airplanes and crews that could take bombs across the seas and bomb targets in Russia."[16] Despite his frequent absences from SAC Headquarters, responsibility for his command's performance rested with General Kenney. SAC's lack of capability, especially in the face of increasing Soviet intransigence in Berlin, could alone justify Vandenberg's decision to relieve Kenney.[17] Nonetheless, other factors, such as Kenney's personality, merit consideration.

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13. Borowski, 149-150.

14. Montgomery, Borowski interview.

15. "Remember that this was the wartime method of the past." C. S. Irvine, Interview by Robert M. Kipp, March Air Force Base, California, 17 December 1970, USAF Oral History Interview 734, transcript, 22.

16. Montgomery, Borowski interview.

17. Borowski, 149.

In 1928, a flight surgeon at Langley Field prepared a psychological profile of Captain George C. Kenney. He described the future general as a "[s]table introvert, controlled hypertension type, creative, stubborn, strongly egoistic but plays fair, imaginative, optimistic, self-reliant, . . . [possessing a] durable personality."[18] Kenney manifested these traits repeatedly throughout his career. When assessing the causes of his relief from command of SAC, one cannot ignore the impact they had on his personal relationships with the leadership of the Air Force. This thesis examines this effect through a biographical profile of Kenney's military career, beginning with his enlistment in the Army at the outbreak of America's involvement in World War I.

Upon completing flight training, Kenney received his commission and reported for duty on the Western Front with several other future generals. After the war, however, Kenney worked in virtual isolation from other important members of the Air Service. While Henry H. "Hap" Arnold, Carl A. "Tooey" Spaatz, and Ira C. Eaker found themselves assigned together throughout the interwar period, Kenney had only brief encounters with these contemporaries. At the Air Corps Tactical School in 1929-1930, Kenney further distanced himself from the mainstream of the Air Corps through his advocacy of attack aviation. Kenney's zealousness for his favorite subject was exceeded only by that of other air officers for strategic bombing. Following this assignment, the recalcitrant Kenney was separated from the mainstream not only intellectually but also physically. In 1936, the War Department assigned Kenney to the Infantry School at Fort Benning, Georgia, a less than coveted assignment for any airman.

World War II proved a severe test of Kenney's interpersonal skills. Eventually assigned as the air commander in the Southwest Pacific Area, Kenney had several sharp

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18. The original source of this profile is not known. Kenney's papers contain a typescript of the opinion, but it is without any authenticating notations. Consequently, the genuineness of this document cannot be confirmed. Nonetheless, it presents a picture of Kenney which fully corresponds with his behavior. "Flight Surgeon's opinion on George Kenney (Langley Field--1928)," AFHRC #168.7103-26. Kenney Papers.

disagreements with Hap Arnold, now commanding general of the Army Air Forces (AAF). The Pacific was a secondary theatre with respect to Europe, and as such its commanders had to beg constantly for the required men and materiel. The most serious wartime altercation between Generals Kenney and Arnold erupted over the employment of the B-29 Superfortress. Kenney wanted the B-29 primarily for tactical operations in his theatre. Arnold, however, favored a purely strategic utilization of the new heavy bomber. The air chief fought off each of Kenney's attempts to wrest control of the bomber from the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

The strained courtesy between Kenney and Arnold contrasts sharply with the relationship of the Southwest Pacific airman and his theatre commander, the imperious General Douglas MacArthur. The entrance of this flamboyant and charismatic leader into the matrix of interpersonal relations had a significant impact on Kenney's comity with others. Kenney always offered his primary loyalty to MacArthur, creating a significant amount of friction between the Pacific airman and his AAF bosses.

After the Second World War, the air force leadership twice passed over Kenney for the position of commanding general. Eventually, the War Department assigned him as commander of Strategic Air Command, but this was not his only duty. Kenney also served as a U.S. military representative to the United Nations, where he expected to play a role in the development of a global air force. Following this assignment, air leaders encouraged the loquacious Kenney to accept as many speaking invitations as possible, each time to promote a separate air force. These additional duties kept Kenney away from his primary responsibilities at SAC, and few of his contemporaries warned him about his negligent behavior.

Certainly the poor state of affairs at SAC had a major impact on Vandenberg's decision to relieve its commander. Kenney had failed to attend to his command to the degree the postwar challenges of fiscal discipline and a growing threat of Soviet belligerence required. Nonetheless, one cannot ignore the effect of Kenney's "stubborn

[and] strongly egoistic" personality on his relationships with other Air Force officers.[19] By tracing Kenney's military career, this thesis seeks to determine the degree to which Kenney's character and temperament affected these relationships, and their relative contribution to his eventual reassignment to Air University.

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19. *Ibid.*

CHAPTER 1

FOUNDATIONS OF A CRISIS

On 2 June 1917, at the age of 27, George C. Kenney enlisted in the Aviation Section, Signal Corps Reserve, at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.[1] He began flight training less than two months later at Hazelhurst Field, Long Island, under the expert tutelage of famed aviator Bert Acosta. The instructor initially experienced some difficulty in training Kenney, as the future general performed his first three landings without the benefit of an running engine. Acosta lambasted his student after the first landing: "What's the idea of coming there dead stick?" he asked. Kenney replied indignantly, "Listen, Bert, any damned fool can land it if the motor is running. I just wanted to see what would happen in case the motor quit."[2] Despite this shaky beginning, however, Kenney completed the required twenty hours of flight training and on 5 November 1917 received his commission as a first lieutenant of the Signal Corps Reserve with the rating of military aviator. Two weeks later, he and the rest of the 14th Foreign Detachment set sail for France and service on the Western Front.[3]

Kenney reported for advanced flight training at Issodun, France, where he first encountered a young instructor by the name of Tooey Spaatz. Their first meeting

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1. Military Service Summary, AFHRC #168.7103-2 pt. 2, Kenney Papers; George C. Kenney, Interview by Marvin Stanley, location unknown, 25 January 1967, USAF Oral History Interview 747, transcript, 1.

2. George C. Kenney, Interview by James C. Hasdorff, Bay Harbor Islands, Florida, 10-21 August 1974, USAF Oral History Interview 806, transcript, 13. See also Herman S. Wolk, "The Great Innovator," in John L. Frisbee, ed., *Makers of the United States Air Force* (Washington: Office of Air Force History, 1987), 128.

3. Military Service Summary.

created a lasting impression in Kenney's mind. Second Lieutenant Spaatz ordered Kenney to render him a salute, as instructors at Issodun had temporary authority over their students regardless of rank. Kenney, however, balked at the order: "Well, goddamn you, I am a first lieutenant, and you are a second. Snap to it." Spaatz then repeated his request, to which Kenney responded by ordering a formation of men forward, running the instructor off the sidewalk. The end result: Spaatz's "nice peel boots, all nice and shiny, all went to hell in the mud," and Kenney received ten demerits for refusing to recognize the instructor's authority.[4] His insubordination notwithstanding, Kenney graduated from Issodun and subsequently reported to the 91st Aero Squadron, stationed in Amanty. Before the end of the war in November 1918, Kenney had downed two German aircraft and earned both the Distinguished Service Cross and the Silver Star.[5]

Promoted to captain on 8 March 1919, Kenney returned to the United States four months later to command the 90th Aero Squadron at Kelly Field, Texas. Here he first met James H. Doolittle, already demonstrating his characteristic bravado in the aircraft test program.[6] The War Department next assigned Kenney as "Commanding Officer and pilot" of the 8th Aero Squadron at McAllen, Texas, where he demonstrated his innovative spirit by developing a new communication network using aircraft on border patrol missions.[7]

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4. Kenney, Hasdorff interview, 17-18.

5. Military Service Summary; Herman S. Wolk, "George C. Kenney: MacArthur's Premier Airman," in William M. Leary, ed., *We Shall Return: MacArthur's Commanders and the Defeat of Japan, 1942-1945* (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1988), 89. Wolk notes that Kenney served as squadron commander of the 91st, but Kenney's Military Service Summary indicates that he became only a flight commander. Given that the Summary was in Kenney's possession and that he had made some pen-and-ink corrections to it, it seems unlikely that he served as squadron commander.

6. Kenney, Hasdorff interview, 103-4.

7. Military Service Summary.

In July, the War Department reassigned Kenney to Camp Knox, Kentucky, where he served as the air detachment commander. Here he again demonstrated his capacity for innovation, developing a new system for the spotting of artillery fire. Following this assignment, Kenney served at McCook Field, near Dayton, Ohio, as a student in the Air Service Engineering School from November 1920 to July 1921.[8] Lieutenant Doolittle arrived a short time later, one or two classes behind Kenney.[9]

After graduating from the McCook program, Kenney became the government representative at the Curtiss Airplane factory at Garden City, Long Island. From 1923 to 1924, he returned to McCook Field as the Chief of the Inspection and Factory Sections of the Air Service Engineering Division. Here Kenney assisted in the first outer wing mounting of machine guns, eliminating the problems inherent in synchronizing fire through the propeller arc. In 1925, Kenney's demonstrated capacity for improvisation led the War Department to assign him to the Air Corps Tactical School (ACTS) at Langley Field, Virginia, where promising young air officers honed their understanding of aerial warfare.[10]

Although the Air Corps recognized Kenney's promise, his early career developed in isolation from those who would become his World War II Air Corps peers. In 1918, the War Department assigned Major Tooey Spaatz, Lieutenant Ira Eaker, and Lieutenant Jimmy Doolittle to Rockwell Field, San Diego, where they served under the thirty-two year old commanding officer, Colonel Hap Arnold.[11] Eaker worked as the Assistant Adjutant under Spaatz, a 1914 graduate of the United

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8. *Ibid.*

9. Kenney, Hasdorff interview, 104.

10. Military Service Summary.

11. James H. Doolittle, *I Could Never Be So Lucky Again* (New York: Bantam Books, 1991), 60; Ira C. Eaker, "Memories of Six Air Chiefs, Part II," *Aerospace Historian*, December 1973, 191.

States Military Academy and Arnold's new operations officer.[12] Spaatz had earned his wings in 1916 and subsequently served under General John J. Pershing as a member of the 1st Aero Squadron, attached to the Punitive Expedition against Mexico. In 1917, Spaatz reported to France, first for service at Issodun and later as a squadron commander at the Front. The War Department assigned him to Rockwell Field immediately after the war.[13]

In 1920, while still at Rockwell, Arnold reverted from his temporary rank of colonel to his permanent grade, captain. Spaatz had earned the temporary rank of major while in combat, and thus by law kept his insignia. On the day that this juxtaposition of superior and subordinate occurred, Arnold went to work early, moved his belongings to Spaatz's old office, and transferred Spaatz's to his. When Spaatz arrived at work that day he felt "aghast" and went straight to the commanding general to request a transfer so that Arnold could keep his position.[14] Such thoughtful actions provided the basis for a lasting friendship.

Spaatz backed up his amiable personality with military competence. In August 1922, Brigadier General William "Billy" Mitchell, one of only two generals in the Air Corps, visited Spaatz at his new command. The general kept Spaatz's 1st Pursuit Group in the air every day during his stay. After the visit, Mitchell reported on Spaatz's performance to Major General Mason W. Patrick, Chief of the Air Corps: "I don't think we could have a better commanding officer of this group."[15]

A year later, Spaatz found himself waiting for a return visit from Mitchell. The general had planned to review Spaatz's troops, but a crash in the Ohio River caused a

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12. *Ibid.*

13. Baker, "Memories," 192.

14. Henry H. Arnold, *Global Mission* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1949), 99.

15. Letter, Mitchell to Patrick, 3 August 1922, quoted in Richard G. Davis, *Carl A. Spaatz and the Air War in Europe*, Washington: Center for Air Force History, 1993, 17.

delay. On hearing of this, Spaatz dismissed his men for the day. When Mitchell arrived sometime later, he immediately demanded the whereabouts of the formation for review. Spaatz responded, "General, I'll have the men here ready for review just as soon as you put on a dry uniform." Mitchell could not help but laugh.[16]

By 1923 the damp general had already made a name for himself. Mitchell had long agitated both Congress and the War Department for a separate Air Department, constantly stressing the superiority of airpower to land and naval forces. While many knew of the vocal air general, however, few claimed him as a friend.

Spaatz counted himself among the few, as did Hap Arnold, who first met Mitchell in Washington in 1912. First Lieutenant Arnold had translated incoming reports from the Turko-Balkan War for Mitchell, then only a captain. Combatants had experimented with bombing from their antiquated aircraft, which naturally aroused Mitchell's interest. In 1913, Mitchell and Arnold testified together on airpower before the Military Affairs Committee of the House of Representatives.[17]

During his years in Washington, Arnold met another man who would later exert a profound influence on his life: Douglas MacArthur.[18] Mitchell also knew MacArthur, the two having grown up near each other in Milwaukee. Their parents shared a close friendship which brought their families into repeated contact. Indeed, while a lieutenant, MacArthur dated one of Billy Mitchell's sisters, writing a poem for her on the back of a place card: "Fair western girl with life a whirl / Of love and fancy free / 'Tis thee I love / All things above / Why wilt thou not love me?"[19]

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16. Isaac Don Levine, *Mitchell: Pioneer of Airpower* (New York: The World Publishing Company, 1944), 287.

17. Congress, House, Committee on Military Affairs, *Aeronautics in the Army: Hearing before the Committee on Military Affairs*, 63rd Cong., 1st Sess., 12 August 1913.

18. Arnold, 152.

19. "Contrary to a host of published statements, however, William and Douglas did no grow up together, and the early acquaintance was mainly because of the deeper ties between their parents." James, 65. See also Levine, 9, 72.

The friendly acquaintance between MacArthur and Mitchell continued during the 1920s. One example serves to demonstrate not only MacArthur's regard for Mitchell, but also the former's early appreciation of airpower. Shortly after becoming superintendent of West Point, MacArthur invited Mitchell to address the corps of cadets on the uses of aviation during the recent war. Never one to turn down an opportunity to speak, Mitchell accepted.[20]

Events during 1925 tested the strength of the ties between these two men. In that year, President Calvin Coolidge ordered the court-martial of General Mitchell, accusing him of conduct prejudicial to the good order and discipline of the Army. Mitchell had publicly charged the "bungling amateurs" of the Navy Department with "incompetency, criminal negligence, and almost treasonous administration" of the national defense after the crash of the naval airship *Shenandoah*. The War Department called Mitchell's statements "utterances contemptuous of his superiors and the War and Navy Departments," therefore constituting insubordination.[21] Mitchell's childhood acquaintance, Douglas MacArthur, found himself appointed to the court which would try the recalcitrant air general.

II

During the interwar period, many in the Air Corps shared Billy Mitchell's appreciation of airpower's potential. These same airmen also agreed that the War Department had neglected the air arm and that this had hampered the overall effectiveness of the military establishment. They favored the creation of a separate air department as a means for correcting this deficiency. But while Mitchell and his most

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20. Levine, 9, 72.

21. *New York Times*, 18 December 1925, 22 (charges); 1 October 1925, 1 (Mitchell's statements).

zealous supporters engaged in direct confrontation with the War Department General Staff in order to obtain their end, others viewed this strategy as counter-productive.[22]

This second group of airmen, led by Benjamin D. Foulois, recognized that the Army would further air interests only if afforded a certain degree of consideration. Two factors guided War Department behavior: the budget for the air forces could not increase at the expense of ground units, and the general staff would not allow the Air Corps to gain any autonomy beyond its control.[23] Foulois, who served as Chief of the Air Corps from 1931-1935, believed that, given these constraints, the air arm could "have lost a number of years in [its] development just due to Billy's tactics at that time."[24] While Foulois himself utilized confrontational tactics during his first two years as chief, the resultant setbacks quickly reaffirmed his faith in working within the system. A preference for tactful argumentation, however, does not imply that Foulois and his followers remained any less committed than Mitchell to the creation of a separate air arm.[25]

Even the reserved Foulois saw the trial of Billy Mitchell as damaging to the Air Corps cause. For many others Mitchell's court-martial meant much more. Ostensibly concerning only military offenses, the trial came to symbolize the military establishment's alleged repression of the Air Corps. For Mitchell himself, the court-martial offered a wide-reaching pulpit from which he could preach the merits of airpower. Reporters quickly noted that his trial had become a public hearing on the

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22. John F. Shiner, *Foulois and the Army Air Corps, 1931-1935* (Washington: Office of Air Force History, 1983), 256-265.

23. *Ibid.*, 258.

24. Benjamin D. Foulois, Interview by Alfred Goldberg, location unknown, December 1965, USAF Oral History Interview 766, transcript, 56.

25. Shiner, 256-265.

state of American air forces, and airmen from around the country descended on Washington, D.C., to lend support to their idol.[26]

Yet George Kenney, stationed at ACTS in nearby Langley, Virginia, chose not to attend.[27] Kenney later claimed to "belong to the crowd that idolized Billy Mitchell." As he put it, "[I]f Billy Mitchell said the moon was made out of green cheese, it was made out of green cheese. . . ." After the war, Kenney had quietly worked for a separate air department, "[w]riting bills and buttonholing congressmen--trying to help Billy put the thing across."[28] In admitting the unobtrusive nature of the support which he offered his "idol," however, Kenney betrayed that he did not in actuality belong in the ranks of Mitchell's most zealous apostles. His behavior instead marked him as being more inclined toward Foulois' reserved style of agitation. Kenney's conspicuous absence from Mitchell's trial surely suggested to those who put their careers on the line on the witness stand that he did not share their same level of commitment to the airpower cause.

Despite a warning from General Mason Patrick, Chief of the Air Corps, that they "must be very careful or [they] might jeopardize [their] entire military careers," Arnold inspired Spaatz and Eaker to assist Mitchell.[29] After talking it over, they decided that only the two most senior officers would testify.[30] General Patrick had previously instructed Eaker to "assure that Mitchell got the records he needed for his

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26. *New York Times*, 11 November 1925, 22.

27. Doolittle, 296; *New York Times*, 28 October to 18 December 1925, *passim*.

28. Kenney, Hasdorff interview, 34; Kenney, Stanley interview, 8-9.

29. Ira C. Eaker, Interview by Arthur Marmor, location unknown, January 1966, USAF Oral History Interview 626, transcript, 28.

30. James Parton, *"Air Force Spoken Here:" Ira Eaker and the Command of the Air* (Bethesda: Adler and Adler, 1986), 46-47.

defense."[31] Eaker recalled working with Arnold and Spaatz during the trail: "We sort of made a team, coming to Mitchell's aid. . . . [We] worked a lot together at night, getting facts and figures, and making suggestions about the questions he should ask of the witnesses."[32]

Mitchell readily admitted making certain remarks critical of the War and Navy Departments. In his defense, he questions the prosecution's contention that his words were improper. In making this challenge, Mitchell attempted to prove the validity of his statements, in effect placing the War Department on trial for its neglect of the air forces.[33] In pursuit of this goal, Arnold took the witness stand on 10 November and testified that only 12 of the 517 recent Air Corps deaths due to airplane crashes had occurred in new aircraft. The remainder of the fatalities had occurred in antiquated World War I-vintage planes. Arnold closed his testimony with a stinging indictment of the War Department, declaring that America's development of airpower lagged far behind that of leading European nations.[34]

Arnold's testimony certainly benefited the defense, but Spaatz scored even more points in Mitchell's favor. At one point the defense counsel asked Spaatz whether he believed "that the organization of the tactical units of the Air Service [was] being retarded by the War Department." The prosecutor "leaped to his feet" to object, but "[b]efore he could utter a word" Spaatz intoned an unequivocal "I do." Hearing this response, "the crowd in the courtroom roared."[35]

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31. Eaker, Marmor interview, 29; Ira C. Eaker, "Memories of Six Air Chiefs, part I," *Aerospace Historian*, June 1973, 58.

32. Ira Eaker, interview by Joe B. Green , 28 January 1972, U.S. Military History Institute, Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania, quoted in Parton, 46-7.

33. *New York Times*, 31 October 1925, 10.

34. *Ibid.*, 11 November 1925, 2.

35. *Ibid.*, 10 November 1925, 1-2.

The audacious airmen who took the stand in Mitchell's defense did not capture all the attention of the observers in the courtroom, however. Reporters noted the uncharacteristic reticence of Douglas MacArthur, who did not break his silence during the seven weeks of proceedings.[36] Mitchell, too, described MacArthur as stoically observing the proceedings from the bench, "his features cold as stone."[37] Despite this demeanor, "[f]or a long time . . . whenever MacArthur's name was mentioned in Air Corps circles, it was recalled that he had been a member of that court."[38]

To no one's surprise, the court found Mitchell guilty. It sentenced him to four years in the District of Columbia at half pay, with those four years not to count toward promotion. The air officer promptly resigned.[39] Only years later did MacArthur reveal that he had voted against the court majority and in favor of Billy Mitchell.[40]

III

Just prior to the court-martial of Billy Mitchell, Spaatz had testified before the House Military Affairs Committee on the issue of an independent air arm. After the trial, he continued to actively pursue increased Air Corps autonomy, testifying before a vast array of Congressional committees and independent boards.[41] In 1929, Eaker

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36. *Ibid.*, 28 October to 18 December, *passim*; Levine, 347.

37. Burke Davis, *The Billy Mitchell Affair* (New York: Random House, 1967), 295.

38. George C. Kenney, *The MacArthur I Know* (New York: Sloan and Pearce, 1951), 21.

39. *New York Times*, 18 December 1925, 1 (sentence); 26 January 1926, 1 (resignation); 28 January 1926 (Coolidge commutes sentence to half-pay); 30 January 1926 (resignation accepted).

40. Douglas MacArthur, *Reminiscences* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1964), p 85-86. For a brief summary of the various accounts of MacArthur's vote, and how others learned of it, see Davis, 327*n*.

41. Dewitt S. Copp, *A Few Great Captains* (New York: Doubleday, 1990), 40-42, 154.

joined Spaatz for a publicity flight as a pilot on board the aircraft "Question Mark." On this flight the airmen used in-flight refueling to set a new endurance record.[42]

The most significant gains in air autonomy, however, resulted from an occurrence entirely unrelated to Spaatz's efforts. On 21 November 1930, President Herbert Hoover appointed General Douglas MacArthur Chief of Staff of the United States Army.[43] Despite the imposition of the court-martial five years earlier, MacArthur and Mitchell remained close acquaintances. Shortly after taking office, the Chief of Staff wrote to his childhood compatriot hoping to set up a hunting trip. MacArthur closed the letter with a shot of humor: "I am afraid you will have to tie the ducks down and mark them with my name but I will certainly enjoy it."[44]

The two men maintained a professional regard for each other as well. Mitchell, who had remained active in agitating for a separate air service, wrote Arnold in February 1931:

> There was nothing done by Congress for air at this session. The navy, however, did not get the coast defences [*sic*] away from the army. . . . If Douglas MacArthur had not been there as Chief of Staff, I think they might have put it over. There is a much better set up in the war department [*sic*] than there used to be."[45]

While Mitchell could have blamed the lack of favorable activity on MacArthur, he instead took the opportunity to credit him for the lack of *unfavorable* activity.

During this time, Hap Arnold returned to San Diego to become the commanding officer of March Field. He called on Major Spaatz to serve as his executive officer, recalling that together they made a "strong team."[46] Ira Eaker joined them in

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42. Ira C. Eaker, Interview by Richard Tobin, location unknown, March 1974, USAFA Oral History Interview, Department of History, transcript, 3.

43. Kenney, *MacArthur*, 22.

44. Letter, MacArthur to Mitchell, 1931, quoted in Levine, p 386-87.

45. Letter, Mitchell to Arnold, February 1931, quoted in Levine, 387.

46. Arnold, 133.

September 1933 as commander of the 34th Pursuit Squadron. While there, the three men often took time to go flying or enjoy recreation together.[47] Indeed, Arnold and Baker had gone golfing in 1934 when Spaatz called from Washington to inform them that the Air Corps had acquired a new mission: to carry the mail. Arnold gained responsibility for all routes on the West Coast. Baker later described his mentor's selection of personnel for the new mission: "Well, the same old elements of that so-called 'Arnold's boys' occurred again."[48]

While Spaatz testified and Arnold mobilized, George Kenney held a variety of staff positions, but none of these assignments placed him in close contact with his future peers. Nonetheless, his career continued to follow the path reserved for highly-qualified officers with recognized potential. During the 1920s and 1930s, Kenney attended all the requisite schools, including both the Command and General Staff School and Army War College.[49] In 1927, he again reported to the Air Corps Tactical School, this time for duty as an instructor.[50]

Most of Kenney's lectures at ACTS concerned attack aviation, which interested him more than any other method of aircraft employment.[51] He had first conceived his ideas on the subject during World War I, when he realized that "flying at low altitude was much safer than being up high."[52] At ACTS, Kenney conducted a series of twenty-two conference classes on the subject, leading his students from the birth of attack aviation in the "trench strafing" of World War I to the conclusion that "attack

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47. Baker, Marmor interview, 30.

48. Baker, Tobin interview, 26.

49. Wolk, "Kenney," 90.

50. Military Service Summary.

51. Kenney, Stanley interview, 6.

52. Kenney, Hasdorff interview, 35.

aviation today is sold everywhere."[53] Despite this primary interest, however, Kenney later claimed that he felt the emphasis on the long range bomber was "really not enough."[54] Kenney had even corrected the translation of the copy of Guilio Douhet's *Command of the Air* owned by ACTS.[55] Still, the record of Kenney's lectures at Langley indicates clearly that his main interest while at the Tactical School was not strategic bombardment, but rather attack aviation.

Nonetheless, several Air Corps leaders appreciated Kenney's enthusiasm and energy. In 1933, he reported for duty in the Plans Division in the office of the Chief of the Air Corps, General Foulois. Two years later, the War Department created the General Headquarters (GHQ) Air Force, a semi-independent combat air arm, and appointed Brigadier General Frank M. Andrews as its commander. Andrews requested that Kenney serve as his Assistant Chief of Staff for Operations and Training.[56] In this capacity, Kenney was responsible for getting GHQ Air Force combat ready. He "wrote all the tables of organization," "detailed, planned, and executed" maneuvers, and generally stayed busy. "During the first year," Kenney recalled, "I was home at Langley Field something like 39 days; the rest of the time [I] was all over the country."[57]

Kenney's tour at GHQ Air Force ended abruptly in 1936. Both he and General Andrews had supported the acquisition of the B-17, a new four-engine bomber opposed by the Chief of the Air Corps, now Major General Oscar Westover. Additionally, Kenney had participated in the Air Corps' sensational interception of the Italian

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53. George C. Kenney, notes for first conference on Attack Aviation, Air Corps Tactical School. AFHRC #248.2201B-1, 1929-1930.

54. Kenney, Stanley interview, 10.

55. Wolk, "The Great Innovator," 130.

56. *Ibid.* See also Military Service Summary.

57. Kenney, Hasdorff interview, 36.

oceanliner *Rex*, much to the chagrin of the War Department General Staff. The simulated air attack implied that the Air Corps should have responsibility for coastal defense, not the Navy, and it threatened to undermine much of the delicate interservice cooperation of the interwar years. Although the Air Corps eventually decided to purchase the B-17 and the *Rex* affair did not produce the expected fallout, Kenney's participation in these activities resulted in his subsequent "exile" to "live with the doughboys" at Fort Benning, Georgia, as an instructor at the Infantry School.[58]

While Kenney relearned how to use a machine-gun, Arnold and Eaker busied themselves by espousing strategic bombing doctrine.[59] In 1936, the two men published their first book, *This Flying Game*, which prefigured much of the doctrine that the Army Air Forces utilized during World War II.[60] Shortly before the advent of American involvement in the war, Eaker and Arnold collaborated on two additional books, *Army Flyer* and *Winged Warfare*.[61]

The interest in airpower shown by these two military authors only barely surpassed that demonstrated by General MacArthur. In the summer of 1934, the Chief of Staff berated the superintendent of West Point: "I have told you on several occasions that I want an airfield located or secured to be used in conjunction with the instruction at the Military Academy, and I am becoming impatient with the progress you have made."[62]

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58. Wolk, "The Great Innovator," 131-32; Kenney, Hasdorff interview, 37.

59. *Ibid.*, 38.

60. Henry Arnold and Ira Eaker, *This Flying Game* (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1936), *passim*.

61. Henry H. Arnold and Ira C. Eaker, *Army Flyer* (New York: Harper, 1942) and Henry H. Arnold and Ira C. Eaker, *Winged Warfare* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1941).

62. Orval R. Cook, Interview by Hugh N. Ahmann and Richard Emmons, Washington, D.C., 4-5 June 1974 and 6-7 August 1974, USAF Oral History Interview 740, transcript, 103-4. The same story is relayed later in the interview using different wording but conveying the same general idea. See p. 317.

In October, MacArthur demonstrated his acceptance of the equality of air and ground forces, directing a review of air doctrine "with a view to a broader understanding of the Air Corps place in the scheme of national defense and in expectation of doing away with misconceptions and interbranch prejudices."[63] Furthermore, in January 1931 the Chief of Staff reached an informal agreement with Admiral William V. Pratt, Chief of Naval Operations, on each services' aerial responsibilities. This agreement limited the Navy's air role to those missions directly relating to fleet movements, and the Air Corps gained the mission of coastal defense, which it had coveted since the 1920s.[64] Even so, MacArthur's interest in the Air Corps did not extend to the act of flying itself. As Chief of Staff, he refused to fly with any pilot except Ira Eaker. The air officer later recalled that while MacArthur got nauseous on his first ride, on subsequent flights "[h]e got green or very pale but wasn't sick again."[65]

Most Air Corps leaders admired MacArthur, and many recognized the considerable talents of his future airman. But in addition to his knack for improvisation and a willingness to work hard, Kenney had shown himself an outspoken and stubborn individual. Furthermore, although General Arnold, who became the new Chief of the Air Corps after the death of Westover, had removed Kenney from exile at Fort Benning, the erstwhile machine-gunner belonged more in the company of officers like Foulois than the more activist air chief and his protégés. "Arnold always carried his people with him," Eaker later recalled.[66] Arnold's "people" included Eaker and

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63. Memo, Brigadier General C. E. Kilborne, AC/S, WPD, for the Chief of the Air Corps, 21 December 1934, quoted in W. F. Craven and J. L. Cate, eds., *The Army Air Forces in World War II* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948), 1:48.

64. Unfortunately, this understanding "did not endure because Pratt's successor, Adm. William H. Standley, repudiated this agreement." Herman S. Wolk, *Planning and Organizing the Postwar Air Force, 1943-1947* (Washington: Office of Air Force History, 1982), 18.

65. Quoted in Parton, 67.

66. Eaker, Tobin interview, 26.

Spaatz, but not Kenney. While the later felt strongly on the issue of an independent air force, this emotion failed to translate into an impassioned activism. For the kind of significant action they desired on behalf of airpower, Arnold and his followers did better to look to the Army Chief of Staff, General Douglas MacArthur.

CHAPTER 2

WARTIME EXACERBATIONS

The advent of the Second World War threw Kenney's interpersonal relationships into high relief. Until 1942, the pattern of interaction between top airmen in the Air Corps followed a familiar pattern. In 1938, the deteriorating situation in Europe prompted General Arnold, now Chief of the Air Corps, to reassemble his team. He called both Ira Baker and Carl Spaatz to Washington to assist in making plans for the possible wartime expansion of the Air Corps.[1] When Germany invaded Poland in September 1939, Arnold took swift action, dispatching Spaatz and Kenney to England and France, respectively, as combat observers.[2]

Kenney immediately began sending Arnold detailed reports on the technology and tactics of the *Luftwaffe*. His recommendations, based on interviews with British and French officers as well as personal observations, included upgrading the machine guns on fighter aircraft from .30 caliber to .50 caliber, eliminating the observation balloon, designing leak-proof fuel tanks, armor plating fighter cockpits, and developing a fuel-injected engine.[3] Upon his return from Europe after the fall of France, Kenney thought others misinterpreted his recommendations: "I was quoted as saying we ought to throw all our stuff in the ash can."[4] Although he denied this charge, Kenney did

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1. Craven and Cate, 5:430.

2. *Ibid.*, 7:480.

3. Memo, Colonel J. M. Churchill, acting Asst. Chief of Staff, G-2, subj: Air Corps Procurement, F.Y. 1941, 18 April 1941, AFHRC #248.501.

4. Kenney, Stanley interview, 13. "In France in 1940 [Kenney] riled other military observers by recommending that the U.S. throw its Air Force into the ashcan--'It's so out of date for the kind of war the Germans are going to have here.'" *Time*, 18 January 1943, 28.

admit that he "raised hell about [his recommendations] until we got them going." This agitation eventually resulted in an assignment to the Air Corps' main engineering and design facility at Wright Field, Ohio. Once there, Kenney continued to "[fight] with everybody until [he] got this stuff going."[5]

General Arnold and others certainly agreed with Kenney's recommendations. After the war, the air chief wrote that "the reports of Spaatz, Kenney, and the others indicated that while our own tactical school theories seemed to be generally in accord with German tactics, most of the American airplanes were obsolete."[6] Nonetheless, Kenney's loud and boisterous manner of expressing his opinions caused the Air Corps to view his reports with some skepticism. The air staff received Spaatz's suggestions, with his "modest and self-effacing" manner, much more readily.[7]

Although Kenney's actions upon his return from Europe did not draw him closer to the inner circle of Air Corps leadership, neither did they further remove him from Arnold's counsels. Kenney remained one of the air chief's most loyal and capable subordinates, albeit not to the degree of Spaatz and Eaker. In the summer of 1942, however, events conspired to place Arnold and Kenney at increasing odds. General Douglas MacArthur, now commander of the Southwest Pacific Area (SWPA), requested a new air commander from Army Air Force (AAF) Headquarters. Arnold sent the SWPA commander a list of three names: General Frank M. Andrews, General James H. Doolittle, and General Kenney. Andrews, one of the contenders for overall command of the European theatre, had differences with MacArthur that went back many years; MacArthur declined his services. The Army general also rejected Jimmy

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5. Kenney, Hasdorff interview, 43, 45.

6. Arnold, 199.

7. Cook, Ahman and Emmons interview, 296.

Doolittle, who later speculated that his "public image as a so-called daredevil racing pilot got in the way."[8]

MacArthur instead selected Kenney for the position. Several factors weighed in this decision. Kenney had proven himself a capable air officer, unafraid of innovative tactics. Of equal importance, MacArthur knew the air general would not detract from his public image. Furthermore, MacArthur admired Kenney's rebellious personality. "In time of war you need a rebel and a sonofabitch," Kenney recalled MacArthur saying. The airman responded characteristically: "I don't mind being called a rebel."[9]

Soon after arriving in the Southwest Pacific, Kenney called on his new commander. After a brief introduction, MacArthur invited Kenney to sit down. Then, for the next half hour, the SWPA commander vented his frustration with his air force's performance. "As [MacArthur] warmed to the subject, the shortcomings became more and more serious, until finally there was nothing left but an inefficient rabble of boulevard shock troops." While he admitted that the pilots could most likely fly, MacArthur doubted their ability to find any targets. Indeed, he questioned not only the competence of the air force personnel, but also their loyalty.[10]

At this point, Kenney decided to "lay [his] cards on the table." Figuring MacArthur a "big man," he rose from his chair and began his rebuttal:

> I told him that . . . I knew how to run an air force as well or better than anyone else and . . . I intended to do a real job. As far as the business of loyalty was concerned, I added that . . . I would be loyal to him and I would demand [the same] from everyone under me. . . . If at any time this could not be maintained, I would come and tell him so and at that time I would be packed up and ready for the orders sending me back home.

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8. Doolittle, 296.

9. Kenney, Hasdorff interview, 50.

10. Kenney diary, entry for 29 July 1942, Kenney Notebooks, AFHRC #168.7103, Kenney Papers.

MacArthur listened silently to Kenney. When the air officer stopped speaking, the army general approached Kenney and put his arm around the latter's shoulder saying, "George, I think we are going to get along together all right."[11]

Even as Kenney took command of the SWPA air forces, Washington had bestowed secondary status to the Pacific theatre. Arnold wrote President Franklin D. Roosevelt from Europe on 1 June 1942 that "England is the place to win the war. Get planes and troops over as soon as possible."[12] In August 1942, General Spaatz became concerned about the diversion of resources to other theatres. He wrote Arnold of the grave consequences of such action: "The war can be lost and very easily if there is a continuation of our dispersion. It can be won and very expeditiously if our air effort is massed here and combines its strength with the RAF [Royal Air Force]."[13] As plans for operation TORCH, the invasion of North Africa, got underway, the scarcity of personnel and equipment became more evident. Nonetheless, the Chief of the Air Staff, Major General George E. Stratemeyer, counseled against diverting resources from England. He argued that the needed aircraft should instead come from the Pacific theatre.[14]

By September, Kenney began to get frustrated with what he perceived as interference from Washington. He wrote Arnold, "asking him to stop his staff from trying to tell me how to run my show out here." The air chief agreed to halt the interference, but Kenney confided to his diary that even if Arnold failed, "Douglas

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11. George C. Kenney, *General Kenney Reports* (Washington: Office of Air Force History, 1987), 29-30.

12. Arnold Diary #3: England, May-June 1942, 2 vols, entry for 1 June 1942, Series IV, Box 88, Envelope 3, Arnold Papers.

13. Letter, Spaatz to Arnold, 27 August 1942, quoted in Doolittle, 306.

14. Letter, Stratemeyer to Spaatz, 25 August 1942, Arnold Papers.

MacArthur believes in me and will not let me down."[15] By mid-October, the continued diversion of resources had brought Kenney's frustration to a head. On the 18th, he wrote sarcastically in his diary that "between being in a forgotten theatre and being hijacked by the South Pacific I'm having a good time."[16] A few days later he added that the South Pacific command (SOPAC) under Admiral Chester Nimitz "seem[s] to think and it looks as though the JCS [Joint Chiefs of Staff] agree that [their] effort is the big show in the PACIFIC."[17]

The situation prompted Kenney to send a lengthy memorandum to General Arnold. He began by telling the air chief that the last letter he had received from Washington "was decidedly discouraging," adding that "[y]our schedule of deliveries of airplanes for the next nine months sounded as though you thought you were trying to remind me that this is a defensive theatre." Kenney did not think that the number of bombers would prove sufficient for him to sustain operations against the Japanese. Even if "my luck holds," Kenney wrote, "I will steadily go down. . . . If, on the other hand, my luck should go sour and I get caught on the ground all above bets are off."[18]

The SWPA airman added several items to his list of grievances: the AAF had underestimated the strength of the Japanese aircraft industry; bomber crews had arrived in theatre without sufficient training; and the "business of grabbing off my ten transports, by the way, really raised the devil with me." This diversion of aircraft had forced MacArthur to cancel plans for an offensive when Kenney could not guarantee

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15. Kenney diary, 25 September 1942. Kenney had a habit of blaming Arnold's staff for certain failings. A diary entry for 20 October 1942 is revealing: "Arnold wires me that I can't call the P-38 squadron the 17th as that organization is still in the Philippines. Seems like a funny reason. He never saw the message. Some dumb staff officer thought up a new reason to say No. I have a spare number for a service squadron. Just for the fun of it I'll tag the outfit with that and then see what happens some day when I report a service squadron equipped with P-38's shooting down some Nips."

16. *Ibid.*, 18 October 1942.

17. *Ibid.*, 28 October 1942.

18. Letter, Kenney to Arnold, 24 October 1942, Series VIII, Box 104, Folder 6, Arnold Papers.

adequate air support. Kenney warned Arnold that "[i]n this war either you go forward or you go back; if we go backward it will be all the way to Australia. . . . On the other hand, if you will let me have the show I asked you for and will get a couple more divisions of doughboys out here, by Christmas you can take the Jap apart."[19]

Kenney's letter caused a flurry of activity at AAF Headquarters. Arnold, understandably concerned by Kenney's appraisal of the situation in the SWPA, immediately ordered General Stratemeyer to report on the number of aircraft which the AAF had sent and planned to send to Kenney's theatre.[20] The AAF commander also quickly sent a response to the SWPA, admitting that Kenney's recent letter "caused me considerable apprehension for under no circumstances do I want to lose the supremacy of Australia once we have gained it." Nonetheless, Arnold outlined the worldwide strategic situation, reminding Kenney that the defeat of Germany remained the top priority. "My aim is to keep your forces at sufficient strength to enable you to support yourself defensively and to carry out a limited offensive against the Japanese." Still, the air chief assured Kenney that "every effort is being made to expedite the movement of [an additional] Troop Carrier Group to the Southwest Pacific."[21]

Arnold recognized the validity of Kenney's concerns. He saw a definite need to reinforce the SWPA, as "Kenney ha[d] been forced through circumstances over which he had no control to utilize practically every aircraft available to transport troops and supplies."[22] Given this evaluation, a cable from Arnold to MacArthur on 1 December 1942 praising Kenney's "[g]rand leadership, careful training, and aggressive spirit"

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19. *Ibid.*

20. Memo, Arnold to Stratemeyer, subj: Replacements for General Kenney, 28 November 1942, Series VIII, Box 104, Folder 6, Arnold Papers.

21. Letter, Arnold to Kenney, 3 December 1942, Series VIII, Box 105, Folder 1, Arnold Papers.

22. Memo, Arnold to Stratemeyer, 6 January 1943, subj: Utilization of General Kenney's Airplanes for Troop and Supply Transportation, Series VIII, Box 104, Folder 6, Arnold Papers.

does not seem inconsistent. Indeed, Arnold admired the accomplishments Kenney had made, especially in light of the limited resources available for the Pacific.[23] Within months after reporting to MacArthur, Kenney had built an effective air force which enjoyed the confidence of the theatre commander. He clarified the chain of command and elevated the logistical situation from its reprehensible pre-1942 condition. As a result, Kenney's air forces struck blow after blow against the enemy's ground forces at Papua, his aircraft at Lae and Sualamaua, and his supply lines from Rabaul. This aerial activity contributed significantly to MacArthur's advance and the liberation of Buna in early 1943.[24]

Despite Arnold's reassurances, Kenney continued to worry about the attention afforded to his theatre by those in Washington. He again wrote the AAF commander on 1 January 1943, stating that he "[was] convinced that America, including the War Department, has no conception of the problem confronting them in this theatre." Arnold again tried to ameliorate Kenney's concerns, writing that he had "long since abandoned any underrating of him [the Japanese]."[25]

Still, the secondary status of the Pacific theatre remained painfully clear to Kenney. On 19 June 1943, Kenney requested from the JCS the construction of a dummy aircraft carrier as bait for a Japanese air attack. Arnold and General George C. Marshall, Army Chief of Staff, transmitted their approval to the SWPA airman on 4 July. They stated, however, that they could not obtain the materials for the project, and suggested that Kenney use resources already in theatre. "I was disgusted," Kenney

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23. Cable, Arnold to MacArthur for Kenney, 1 December 1942, filed under 28 December 1942, Kenney Notebook, Kenney Papers.

24. Wolk, "Kenney," 100, 114.

25. Letter, Kenney to Arnold, 1 January 1943, and undated response, Arnold to Kenney, Series VIII, Box 105, Folder 1, Arnold Papers.

wrote. "MacArthur was as disgusted as I. . . . I decided that I'd better stick to ideas that I could implement myself."[26]

That same month, Kenney and Arnold clashed over air doctrine. The former Air Corps Tactical School instructor remained committed to attack aviation, despite Arnold's attempts to "[wash] the word 'attack' out."[27] Responding to a proposal from Kenney that "attack aviation be put back in the Air Corps dictionary," Arnold wrote that he did not agree: "information that I have received from various theaters does not give support to your recommendations." The air chief devoted most of his letter to refuting Kenney's contention. "Attack tactics have *definitely not* as you state proven sound 'every day all over the world [*sic*; emphasis in original].'" Kenney's insistence on the use of the term "attack" instead of "low-altitude bombardment" irritated Arnold, who firmly believed in the supremacy of the bomber.[28]

Despite this disagreement with Kenney, Arnold's letter also praised his accomplishments in the SWPA. "My only regret is that we are not able to send you everything you need. . . . I am afraid that we will have to get along as well as we can with priorities and allocations."[29] Arnold recognized Kenney's need for increased supplies, and two months later, while telling the SWPA airman that fifty more bombers were on their way to his theatre, Arnold told Kenney not to think that he "[was] continually crabbing." The air chief closed his letter by stating that "the least we here can do is smooth out the rough places where possible."[30]

Arnold could not smooth out all of Kenney's supply shortages, however. On 7 September, Kenney wrote that he had learned that the JCS had prevented delivery of a

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26. Kenney, *Reports*, 268-69.

27. Kenney, Hasdorff interview, 35.

28. Letter, Arnold to Kenney, 5 July 1943, Kenney Notebook.

29. *Ibid.*

30. Letter, Arnold to Kenney, 31 August 1943, Kenney Notebook.

proximity fuse he ordered. He scorned Arnold: "[A]s a member you helped make the decision. . . . It sounds as though someone wanted to give Tooey Spaatz and Ira Eaker a good sporting chance with me so that I would not get ahead of them."[31] Arnold responded a month later that "*[t]he proximity fuse for bombs* is still in an experimental stage [emphasis in original]." Additionally, because the Germans had recently tried to perfect such a fuse for rockets, to which the large formations of American bombers in Europe "[were] so vulnerable," the JCS had restricted the use of this fuse. "It is believed at the present that the enemy would have more to gain than we through use of proximity fuses."[32] Given the existence of this rationale, Arnold undoubtedly did not appreciate Kenney accusing him of petty favoritism.

Arnold tolerated Kenney's behavior because the SWPA airman produced results. In January 1944, he wrote Major General Lewis W. Brereton, commander of the Ninth Air Force, on Kenney's accomplishments. Arnold relayed in detail the methods Kenney employed in attacking heavily defended airdromes, and he encouraged the Ninth Air Force to adopt the same. Although he denied "hold[ing] one Air Force Commander's operations up as a model to another," Arnold clearly expected Brereton to follow Kenney's example.[33]

That same month, Kenney visited Washington and called on Arnold to request the assignment of additional P-38s to his theatre. Arnold filled this request, but not until "he told everyone that I had wept real tears so copiously all over his office that his own eyes were beginning to water."[34] Given the acute nature of Kenney's supply crunch, he probably did not appreciate Arnold's flippant attempt at humor.

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31. Letter, Kenney to Arnold, 7 September 1943, Series VIII, Box 105, Folder 3, Arnold Papers.

32. Letter, Arnold to Kenney, 8 October 1943, Series VIII, Box 105, Folder 3, Arnold Papers.

33. Letter, Arnold to Brereton, 19 January 1944, Series VIII, Box 105, Folder 5, Arnold Papers.

34. Kenney, *Reports*, 341.

In February 1944, a dispute over another plane, the B-25, climaxed between the two generals. Kenney had requested, and Arnold had approved, the shipment of 65 light weight cannon to install in these bombers. Then, apparently sold on the merits of the 75 mm cannon with which the AAF had originally fitted the B-25s, Kenney wired Arnold that he wanted only twenty light cannon and to cancel the remaining forty-five. Arnold noted that Kenney's inconsistent requests had "add[ed] to the confusion of the B-25 issue. This matter of whether to put the cannon in, take the cannon out, whether to put in large or small cannon, has caused all of us here to sweat blood for the past six months." Arnold advised Kenney that he planned to "half the flow of B-25's to [the SWPA] . . . until May or whatever time you complete your tests. At that time it is assumed that you will definitely know what sort of plane you want and notify me accordingly."[35] The air chief's patience had worn thin. Kenney's indecision on this one relatively minor issue had forced his attention away from more significant concerns. Arnold expected a greater degree of consideration from his air force commanders.

The following month, Arnold concerned himself with yet another issue in the Southwest Pacific. Alarmed at the high casualty rate among aces in the SWPA, he told Kenney he wanted him to "weigh very carefully the potential value of [his] heroes." Arnold suggested grounding pilots after a certain period of time. Kenney, however, opted not to alter his policy. Citing the value of individual heroes to other fliers, he also rejected Arnold's contention that high-scoring aces damaged overall squadron performance. Arnold respected Kenney's decision, but he remained concerned with this issue through October.[36]

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35. Letter, Arnold to Kenney, 26 February 1944, Series VIII, Box 105, Folder 4, Arnold Papers.

36. Letter, Arnold to Kenney, 21 March 1944, Series VIII, Box 105, Folder 4, Arnold Papers; Cable, Arnold to Kenney, 15 April 1944, Kenney Notebook; Letter, Arnold to Kenney, 19 October 1944, Series VIII, Box 106, Folder 2, Arnold Papers. See also Doolittle, 392-93. Ironically, Arnold

Arnold continued to hold Kenney's analytical abilities in high esteem. The air chief respected the SWPA airman's strategic and tactical evaluations, and often solicited opinions from him on a variety of air issues.[37] Late in 1944, Arnold proposed to Kenney and MacArthur that the AAF deactivate one of their air forces, the Thirteenth, and combine its forces under the other Southwest Pacific air force, the Fifth. This consolidation would free several staff officers, and Arnold noted that he desired the services of General St. Clair Streett in a new stateside unit, Continental Air Command, which he had charged with directing redeployments from Europe to the Pacific.[38]

Kenney and MacArthur adamantly opposed both the combining of the Fifth and Thirteenth Air Forces and the transfer of General Streett. Consequently, Arnold backed down from his plans for consolidation, but he still required Streett's transfer. The air chief had become frustrated with Kenney's refusal to appreciate the world-wide picture. He wrote the Southwest Pacific airman and delineated what he perceived as the root of this limited perspective: "It has been apparent to me for some time [*sic*] that your loyalty . . . to your Command results in your enunciation of [opinions that] are not strictly in line with those we are working on up here." Arnold regretted that his directives, based on a total view of the air war, conflicted with Kenney's needs in his theatre. "Now once again," the beleaguered chief wrote, "I am at the parting of the ways."[39]

The friction between the AAF commander and the SWPA airman continued through the beginning of 1945. As Germany appeared almost defeated, AAF

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was especially concerned with the fate of Major Richard I Bong, the leading ace of the Pacific theatre, who died in a crash after Kenney had transferred him back to the United States.

37. See, for example, letter, Arnold to Kenney, 31 October 1944, and letter, Kenney to Arnold, 14 November 1944, Series VIII, Box 106, Folder 1, Arnold Papers.

38. Letter, Arnold to Kenney, 23 [287] December 1944, Series VIII, Box 106, Folder 2, Arnold Papers.

39. *Ibid.*

Headquarters had begun making plans to redeploy units from Europe to the Pacific. Surprisingly, Kenney objected, stating that he felt the units in the European theatre did not pass muster, especially when compared to the air units in the Southwest Pacific. Furthermore, Kenney questioned the AAF's plans to rotate personnel from Washington to combat theatres. Arnold, who had recently suffered a heart attack and had gone to Florida for recuperation, believed Kenney's concerns both ill-founded and arrogant. He quickly dispatched Brigadier General Frederick H. Smith, Deputy Chief of the Air Staff, to the Southwest Pacific to meet with Kenney.[40]

Smith explained Arnold's position in no uncertain terms. After a four-hour meeting, Kenney wrote in his diary: "Freddy thinks I should go to Washington to make peace with Arnold, who is still peeved about my letter reference redeployment plans."[41] Although Kenney did not visit Arnold, he did send a lengthy letter to the air chief, completely reversing his opinion on the AAF's plans for both unit redeployment and personnel rotation. Smith had convinced Kenney that "a lot of [his] fears were . . . groundless."[42] Kenney's reversal "pleased" Arnold, who wrote that the former's letter "remove[d] some questions--and doubts--from my mind."[43]

Although Kenney had again worked through his differences with Arnold, the frequency and intensity of the two generals' disputes had irreparably damaged their personal and professional relationship. Whereas in the past Arnold had often solicited Kenney's opinion on various air issues, he did not do so after the spring of 1945.[44] Arnold's lessened reliance on Kenney's analysis coincided with the end of the European

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40. Letter, Kenney to Arnold, 10 February 1945, and letter, Arnold to Kenney, 3 March 1945, Series VIII, Box 106, Folder 6, Arnold Papers.

41. Kenney diary, 8 February 1945.

42. Letter, Kenney to Arnold, 10 February 1945, Arnold Papers.

43. Letter, Arnold to Kenney, 3 March 1945, Arnold Papers.

44. Kenney initiated most discussions on wartime strategy after this time. Letter, Kenney to Arnold, 20 May 1945, Series VIII, Box 106, Folder 3, Arnold Papers.

war. The defeat of Germany had released the air chief's two favored protégés, Spaatz and Eaker, for service in other theatres. Arnold appointed Eaker as his deputy, and, due to continued problems with his heart, the AAF commander assured Kenney, "I am piling plenty of work on Ira's desk."[45] Likewise, Arnold scribbled a response to Kenney's concerns about the Pacific supply situation in the margin of one of the SWPA airman's letters: "New policy to send Spaatz out will fix this."[46] Kenney's stock had declined considerably since his assignment to MacArthur's command in 1942.

II

While Kenney later tried to blame the deterioration of his relationship with Arnold on his association with MacArthur,[47] the imperious Army commander had a much more complex impact on the matrix of interpersonal relations than Kenney acknowledged. Kenney's comments notwithstanding, Arnold had always considered MacArthur one of America's "top-notch" military leaders. The AAF commander recalled being called down by MacArthur in late 1941. The Japanese had launched a surprise attack on Clark Field, in the Philippines, hours after their attack on Pearl Harbor. Arnold wrote to General Lewis Brereton, the SWPA air commander prior to Kenney, accusing him of making a "mistake" which allowed the Japanese to catch U.S. airplanes on the ground. MacArthur defended his air commander: "Every possible precaution . . . was taken with Far East Air Forces. . . . Their gallantry has been conspicuous, their efficiency good. . . . You may take pride in their conduct." This reply reminded Arnold that "there is a great deal of difference between sitting at a desk

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45. Letter, Arnold to Kenney, 4 June 1945, Series VIII, Box 106, Folder 4, Arnold Papers.

46. Letter, Kenney to Arnold, 20 May 1945, Arnold Papers.

47. Kenney, Hasdorff interview, 57.

in Washington . . . and being out at Clark Field." He admired MacArthur's loyalty to his subordinates.[48]

Nonetheless, differences did arise between Arnold and MacArthur throughout the war. During a 1942 visit to the SWPA, Arnold noted that the theatre commander "was very battle weary. . . . He did not know the details of what was going on in other theaters. . . . I was sure the statements he made to me as he walked up and down in his office were not the ones he would make six months hence."[49] In July 1945 this scene repeated itself. On the 17th, Arnold and MacArthur had a "long and spirited talk." The air chief learned that MacArthur supported the creation of a separate air force, and that he "is willing to organize Army Air in the Pacific along these lines now." Stating that "there cannot be two dominant characters in the Pacific," the army general added that "he [would] be satisfied with either Kenney or Arnold as C[ommanding] G[eneral], but not Spaatz." From this point, the conversation went downhill. MacArthur's comment had insulted Arnold: "His logic is not quite clear unless I am in another league," wrote the air chief. Several other points of contention arose, including AAF plans to bombard Japanese cities and the possibility of relocating MacArthur's headquarters to Guam. Still, the AAF commander sympathized with MacArthur's disposition: "He gets excited and walks the floor, raises his voice--I thought I was one of the few who did it."[50] Arnold's underlying respect for the army general checked the extent of his criticism, despite the fact that he "was mad as the devil at MacArthur."[51]

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48. Arnold, 272.

49. Arnold also learned on this trip that MacArthur "had implicit confidence in General Kenney." *Ibid.*, 344.

50. Arnold diary #9, Pacific Trip, 6-25 June 1945, entry for 17 July 1945, Series IV, Box 88, Envelope 9, Arnold Papers.

51. Kenney diary, 17 July 1945.

MacArthur himself did not aggravate the worsening relationship between Arnold and Kenney. Rather, Kenney alienated the air chief by placing his primary loyalty in his theatre commander and not the AAF. Arnold firmly believed that airpower alone could force the defeat of Japan through a strategic air offensive, thereby eliminating the need for a costly ground assault. Kenney, echoing MacArthur's opinion, disagreed. He told Arnold that he believed the invasion of Kyushu, the southernmost of Japan's main islands, should go forward as a safety measure in case the bombing offensive failed to bring about Japanese capitulation.[52] Arnold did not appreciate the SWPA airman's lack of enthusiasm for his plan. In Kenney's mind, however, he owed his loyalty to the man to whom he reported: "Every once in a while Arnold would get sore at me about something or other. He thought I was still working for him, but I wasn't. I was working for MacArthur."[53]

Kenney's limited role in MacArthur's failed bid for the Presidency in 1944 demonstrates the personal nature of his loyalty. In early April 1943, Kenney met with Arthur H. Vandenberg, a powerful Republican senator, in Congressman Carl Luce's Washington apartment. Vandenberg made a "vigorous statement" supporting the army general's candidacy, which Kenney apparently carried back to his boss.[54] On the 19th, Vandenberg received a cryptic note from MacArthur, written in the form of a cable but delivered by hand:

> I am most grateful to you for your complete attitude of friendship. I only hope that one day I can reciprocate. There is much that I would like to say to you which circumstances prevent. In the meanwhile I want you to know the absolute confidence I would feel in your experienced and wise mentorship.[55]

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52. *Ibid.*

53. Kenney, Hasdorff interview, 54.

54. Letter, Arthur H. Vandenberg, Jr., to General MacArthur, 26 September 1951, Records Group 5: SCAP, Office of the Military Secretary (OMS), MacArthur Archives.

55. MacArthur to Vandenberg, 13 April 1943, Records Group 5: SCAP: OMS, MacArthur Archives.

This cable, in turn, prompted a series of letters between Vandenberg and Brigadier General C. A. Willoughby, MacArthur's Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence. Vandenberg agreed to direct a campaign for the army general, and asked Willoughby to "[t]ell my friend just to 'get on with the war' and to forget this whole political business back here in the states."[56]

Vandenberg's strategy depended on deadlocking the Republican convention between the two leading candidates, Wendell Wilkie and Thomas Dewey. He would then propose MacArthur as "the best answer under all circumstances."[57] By the time of the convention, however, Vandenberg recognized that Dewey had the momentum required to win the nomination. In early June 1944, he wrote General MacArthur, expressing regret that "our recent presidential 'adventure'" had failed. Nonetheless, the senator noted that he believed the general "yet destined for certain higher responsibilities." In 1948, this encouragement would bear bitter fruit for both MacArthur and Kenney.[58]

Kenney's tacit support for MacArthur's presidential bid demonstrates not only his loyalty but also his admiration for his commander.[59] Other air leaders, while not as personally devoted to MacArthur, shared Kenney's appreciation of the general's abilities. Eaker later admitted that "General MacArthur has no greater admirer than I."[60] Likewise, Spaatz later paid tribute to the SWPA commander as "the greatest

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56. Letter, Vandenberg to Willoughby, 17 August 1943, Records Group 10: Private Correspondence, MacArthur Archives. Vandenberg never mentions MacArthur by name in this letter.

57. *Ibid.*

58. Letter, Vandenberg to MacArthur, 6 June 1944, Records Group 3: SWPA, MacArthur Archives. The story of MacArthur and Vandenberg is also related in Arthur H. Vandenberg, Jr., *The Private Papers of Senator Vandenberg* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1952), 75-89.

59. Significantly, Kenney filed what appears to be a 1948 election news clipping, "MacArthur's Candidacy Is Seen As Fulfilling Hope Held Since '44," under 17 April 1944, in his Notebook.

60. Parton, 436.

general of all times."[61] Kenney's contention that his problems with Arnold stemmed solely from an AAF bias against MacArthur does not stand.

Arnold deserves some of the blame for his poor relationship with Kenney. The air chief cultivated a reputation for being extremely demanding. He noted this in his diary while on a 1942 trip to England: "Learned today that I brought with me the Arnold guillotine."[62] Eaker later described Arnold as "tough as an old boot," a man who "[would] have fired his own mother if she didn't produce."[63] Even the air chief's close friend General Spaatz recognized Arnold's uncompromising personality. On the occasion of his assignment to Europe early in the war, Spaatz told his wife, "Don't worry. Hap'll fire me in six months."[64]

Despite this appraisal of his air commander, Spaatz remained close to Arnold throughout the war. Even when the air chief passed down an unfavorable decision, Spaatz strove to support Arnold. In response to a cable from the AAF commander in December 1944 proposing the redeployment of several bomb group to the Pacific theatre, Spaatz wrote: "I have tried to visualize the problems with which you are faced in the Pacific Theater. . . . I feel the decision must be made by you, balancing all considerations." While expressing his mild opposition to the plan, Spaatz noted that he could carry out the proposed redeployment. "I want you to know that I am very anxious to help in the Pacific Theater."[65]

Arnold replied on 30 December, "thoroughly pleased" with Spaatz's reaction to his suggestion. "Under the circumstances with which you are faced your affirmative

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61. Spaatz, quoted in MacArthur, 357*n*.

62. Arnold diary #3, 30 May 1942, Arnold Papers.

63. Eaker, quoted in Parton, 115.

64. Ruth Spaatz, interview with James Parton, Washington, D.C. 7 October 1983, quoted in *ibid.*

65. Letter, Spaatz to Arnold, 7 December 1944, AFHRC #519.1612.

view of my proposal is further reassurance of your breadth of view and broadness of interest."[66] Spaatz's attitude contrasted sharply with Kenney's failure to see beyond the needs of his particular theatre. While all of the SWPA airman's disputes with Arnold testify to this lack of vision, Kenney's wartime agitation for the assignment of the Boeing B-29 Superfortress to his theatre represents the most severe failure of this limited perspective.

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66. Letter, Arnold to Spaatz, 30 December 1944, AFHRC #519.1612.

CHAPTER 3

THE B-29 CONTROVERSY

On 2 December 1939, General Hap Arnold informed the aircraft industry that the Air Corps required a four engine bomber with an operational radius of 2,000 miles.[1] Over the next six months the Air Corps released additional specifications, including a speed of 400 miles per hour, a range of 5,333 miles when carrying a 2,000-pound load, leak-proof fuel tanks, armor plating, and multiple gun turrets.[2] On 1 May 1940, Boeing submitted a design proposal to the Army. Four months later, Secretary of War Robert P. Patterson approved a contract of $3,615,095 with Boeing for the purchase of three prototypes and the long-term development of the newly designated XB-29 bomber.[3]

By this time Arnold knew that if he followed the War Department's routine procurement process, delivery of the bomber would not occur prior to 1945.[4] Consequently, in May 1941, the Army announced its intention to purchase 250 of the aircraft, increasing this order to 500 in the wake of Pearl Harbor. The government based these orders on a "paper" airplane; the XB-29 would not make its maiden flight until 21 September 1942.[5] Recognizing the chance that Arnold took on behalf of the Army Air Forces when ordering the Superfortress, Brigadier General Kenneth B.

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1. Peter M. Bowers, *Boeing Aircraft Since 1916* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1987), 3.

2. *Ibid.*, 318-19, and Carl Berger, *B-29: The Superfortress* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1970), 25.

3. Berger, 25-26, and Bowers, 318-19.

4. Memo, Arnold to Assistant Chief of Staff, War Planning Division, 30 April 1940, quoted in Craven and Cate, 5:7.

5. Bowers, 319-20.

Wolfe, head of the B-29 project, described the bomber as "a three million dollar gamble."[6]

Both Arnold and Kenney had high expectations for the Boeing B-29 Superfortress, but this was where the similarity between their ideas toward the aircraft ended. General Kenney wanted to use the bomber against targets in the Southwest Pacific, including surface ships and oil in the Dutch East Indies. His desire for the best available materials to support his war effort led him to conclude that the Superfortress should be assigned to his theatre. In contrast, General Arnold saw Japan as the proper target for the new bomber. The AAF chief's inclination toward strategic operations, a product of the interwar years, prefigured his thoughts on B-29 employment.

Hap Arnold had advocated strategic bombing since the 1920s. Immediately prior to World War II, Franklin D. Roosevelt's words and deeds reinforced Arnold's countenance. As early as 1940 the President had expressed to Secretary of the Treasury Henry Morgenthau, Jr., his personal desire to bomb the Japanese home islands in retaliation for Imperial aerial attacks which had damaged American property in China. The political situation, however, stifled FDR's designs for retribution.[7] Even before official U.S. entry into the war, he and other Allied leaders had committed themselves to a strategy of "Germany First."[8] When the Allied governments discussed bombing, they did so in the context of the European theatre. It follows, then, that the first consideration of B-29 employment centered on European plans. On 11 September 1941, the Air War Planning Division completed its first war plan, AWPD/1. This plan

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6. Berger, 33 and Craven and Cate, 5:7.

7. Morgenthau had proposed the bombing and enlisted the President's enthusiastic support. The plan fell through after Secretary of State Cordell Hull, Secretary of War Henry Stimson, and JCS Chairman General George Marshall expressed their opposition. John Morton Blum, *From the Morgenthau Diaries*, vol. 2., *Years of Urgency, 1938-1941* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1965), 367-68.

8. Maurice Matloff, *Strategic Planning for Coalition Warfare, 1941-42* (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1953), 30.

envisioned twenty-four groups of B-29s deployed to the United Kingdom for targets in Germany; only two groups would deploy to the Pacific.[9]

Despite plans to use the B-29 in Europe, the Army Air Forces had long shared Roosevelt's desire to use heavy bombers against the Japanese homeland. The Joint Chiefs had planned several early bombing missions against Japan, although only the plans for the Doolittle raid resulted in an actual attack. Though it tacitly acknowledged that such raids did little physical damage, the Air Staff valued these excursions for their psychological effects, both on the Home Front and in the enemy's trenches.[10]

General Arnold shared these sentiments. In December 1942, he demonstrated his commitment to strategic bombing through the creation of the Committee of Operations Analysts (COA), chartered to study and evaluate bombardment targets.[11] Arnold hinted at his preference for Japanese targets in May 1943, when he wrote to General George C. Marshall, the Army Chief of Staff, regarding his concern that the use of the Superfortress on other targets prior to bombing Japan would ruin the element of surprise.[12] In November 1943, Major General Oliver Echols, the man who had selected the Boeing aircraft over designs submitted by competing contractors, revealed that the air chief's disposition went back even further. According to Echols, "the B-29 airplane was thought out and planned as a high altitude long-range bomber to attack Japan, her cities and industrial keypoints."[13]

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9. AWPD/1, quoted in Haywood S. Hansell, Jr., *The Air Plan that Defeated Hitler* (Atlanta: Higgins-McArthur/Longina and Porter, 1972), appendix IV.

10. Craven and Cate, 5:17.

11. *Ibid.*, 26.

12. Memo, Arnold to Chief of Staff, circa May 1943, subj: Initial Employment of the B-29 Airplanes, quoted in Herman S. Wolk, *Strategic Bombing: The American Experience* (Manhattan, Kansas: MA/AH Publishing, 1981), 27.

13. Memo, Echols to S/AS, 6 November 1943, quoted in Craven and Cate, 5:9.

Other ranking officers and civilians shared Arnold's beliefs. At the Casablanca conference in December 1943, General Marshall expressed his concurrence with plans to bomb Japan. FDR also reaffirmed his assent. No longer motivated soley by a desire for retribution, the Commander-in-Chief now conveyed his belief that the "periodic bombing of Japan" would have a "tremendous morale effect on the Chinese people." The President recognized the desirability of keeping China within the Allied fold, and a desire to avoid commiting ground troops to the Asian mainland led him to advocate using airpower to ensure this goal.[14] FDR's politically motivated comments reinforced Arnold's view as to the military necessity of employing strategic bombers against the Japanese homeland.

In addition to the President, others had shared their ideas on the employment of the new superbomber with the AAF commander. General Arnold later acknowledged the pressure he felt from various theatre commanders who scrambled for a piece of the action:

> MacArthur yelled for the B-29's; Nimitz wanted the B-29's; Stilwell [the American Chief of Staff to Chiang Kai Shek] and Mountbatten [the British admiral serving as commander-in-chief of the China-Burma-India (CBI) theatre] wanted the B-29's--all for tactical purposes.[15]

The CBI began to request planes in 1942, and the Navy had desperately grasped for them since Midway. Even Lieutenant General Ira C. Eaker, the 8th Air Force commander in England and one of the air chief's favored protégés, sought the coveted B-29 until Arnold finally informed him, in December 1943, that he would definitely get none.[16] By far the most persistent and nagging requests, however, emanated from the Southwest Pacific Area (SWPA). General Douglas MacArthur and, more specifically, his able and talented air commander, General George Kenney, hassled the

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14. FDR conversation with Marshall, 18 January 1944, quoted in Berger, 41.

15. Arnold, 541.

16. Craven and Cate, 5:11-12.

air chief at the most inopportune times--and, Arnold surely thought, for the most inopportune purposes.

I

In September 1942, MacArthur wrote Arnold, telling him that he considered the British Isles a "besieged citadel" from where "[i]t would be very difficult to establish a Second Front." The redoubted and respected general offered the Southwest Pacific as an optional area from which to launch an offensive.[17] Kenney followed with a letter to Arnold the next month. In this epistle he stated that the Southwest Pacific must have priority "to prevent Japan from exploiting and utilizing the vital resources of the Netherlands East Indies and Malaya,"[18] thereby faithfully echoing MacArthur's sentiments. Kenney sent another letter to the air chief on New Year's Day 1943, in which he described the tenacious fighting ability and resolve of the Japanese soldier and pointed out that the American edge existed only in the air. "The above is not a plea for anything," he concluded. "You know what I want, and I know you are giving me all you can."[19]

The arrival of this second letter in Washington coincided with the Casablanca conference in January 1943, where both FDR and Marshall expressed their support for a strategic air offensive against Japan. The impetus provided by the President at Casablanca apparently outweighed that contained in Kenney's letter, for, at the conclusion of the conference, General Arnold began to make quiet preparations for the deployment of the B-29 to China. Arnold named General Wolfe the 58th Bombardment Wing commander in the early spring, and immediately directed him to

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17. Arnold, 344.

18. Letter, Kenney to Arnold, 29 October 1942, filed in Kenney Notebook, AFHRC Microfilm #27131, 27132, 27133, Kenney Papers.

19. Letter, Kenney to Arnold, 1 January 1943, Kenney Notebook.

prepare the B-29s for possible deployment to China by year's end.[20] Also, the Assistant Chief of the Air Staff for Plans (AC/AS, Plans), began studying options for the use of the VLR bomber against Japan from Chinese bases.[21] At this time, too, the AAF commander first directed his Committee of Operations Analysts (COA) to conduct an "analysis of strategic targets in Japan" that they felt would end the war.[22]

Four months after General Arnold concluded these first tentative plans, General Kenney again fired off a letter to the commander of the AAF. In this communication, Kenney innocently probed for Arnold's current plans on B-29 deployment, requesting airfield requirements for the superbomber so that he might prepare for its arrival.[23] General Arnold assuredly perceived Kenney as a nuisance this time, for the air chief had suffered a heart attack just one month before.[24]

When his innocent and irreproachable letter received no reply, General Kenney sent another to Arnold. This time he was more straightforward: "I assume that I am still to get the first B.29 [*sic*] unit." Kenney made a point of informing the head of the AAF that he would require around six months to prepare an airfield, and that "[a]s soon as even one B.29 can fly out here, I would like to have it to try out our fields."[25] This time Kenney elicited a stiff rejoinder.

In a letter dated 31 August 1943, General Arnold matter-of-factly pointed out that he had not scheduled any Superfortresses for deployment to Kenney's theatre until June 1944. Furthermore, Arnold noted that he had not yet determined the interim deployment of the B-29. "Rest assured," he wrote, "that should it be decided to send

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20. Berger, 37.

21. Craven and Cate, 5:17.

22. History of the Origin and Operations of the COA, 59; quoted in *ibid.*, 27.

23. Letter, Kenney to Arnold, June 1943, Kenney Notebook.

24. Arnold, 442.

25. Letter, Kenney to Arnold, 28 July 1943, Kenney Notebook.

B-29 units to the SWPA, you will be notified sufficiently in advance of their arrival for necessary preparations."[26]

The response from Arnold reflected the state of affairs in Washington at the time. The air chief wrote his reply to Kenney after the August QUADRANT conference in Quebec, where the B-29 had first entered the official planning process. By this time, the AAF had decided that the benefits of striking directly at Japan outweighed the logistical problems inherent in operating from remote bases. At QUADRANT, General Arnold had submitted an "Air Plan for the Defeat of Japan," prepared by General Wolfe, which proposed deploying B-29s to central China, near Chengtu, beginning in October 1944.[27] Although the Assistant Chief of the Air Staff for Intelligence informed the AAF commander that "Chengtu is one of the most inaccessible cities in the interior of China . . . surrounded by mountains on all sides with no connecting railroads, shallow and swift waterways and only limited highway communications,"[28] Arnold chose to downplay the difficulties posed by stationing B-29s in central China. Because no other airfields would lie within range of Japan until 1944, the Combined Chiefs of Staff endorsed Wolfe's plan on 14 August. They agreed with General Arnold: China offered a practical operating range that promised early raids on the Japanese homeland.[29]

Momentum propelled the Chinese plan forward. AAF planners felt that "the initiation of the bomber offensive, and even measures in preparation thereof, [would] tremendously stimulate Chinese morale and unify the people under the leadership of

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26. Letter, Arnold to Kenney, 31 August 1943, Kenney Notebook.

27. Berger, 44.

28. Memorandum, AC/AS Intelligence to Commanding General, AAF, subj: "Defensibility and Vulnerability of Chengtu Bases," 28 January 1944. AFHRC #142.0411-1.

29. Craven and Cate, 5:17.

Chiang-Kai-Shek."[30] On 20 September, a board headed by General Arnold endorsed a modified version of the original plan submitted at QUADRANT. The board based its modifications on the suggestions of Lieutenant General Stilwell, the American Chief of Staff to Chinese forces, who recommended temporary, advance bases in central China. The new plan, known as TWILIGHT, stated that B-29s stationed in Calcutta would stage through Chengtu and other areas for missions against the Japanese home islands.[31] The AAF hoped this arrangement would solve at least part of the logistical dilemma posed by a remote B-29 deployment.

At this point General Arnold again called on Brigadier General Wolfe, directing him to prepare a plan "to initiate strategic bombardment of Japan with the maximum of available B-29's at the earliest possible date." By late September, Wolfe had the main outline finished, and on 11 October he submitted the final plan which called for attacks to begin on or about 1 April 1944.[32] But by this time General Arnold had begun to feel increased pressure from the Commander-in-Chief. On 13 October, when he endorsed Wolfe's proposal, Arnold hastened to pencil in one modification: "I have told the President that this will be started (China to Japan) on March 1. See that it is done."[33]

Amidst these trying times for General Arnold, Kenney sent another letter to the air chief. On 10 October, the Southwest Pacific air commander wrote a concerned appeal. "Possibly my wish was father to the thought, but I understood that the first B.29s were coming to me. . . ." Rumors of B-29 bases in China, Wake Island, and Alaska had distressed MacArthur's airman. If "any argument is needed to bring the

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30. Combined Chiefs of Staff #323, 20 August 1943, quoted in *ibid.*

31. *Ibid.*, 18-19.

32. "A Plan for the Employment of the B-29 Airplane," no date, quoted in *ibid.*, 20.

33. 1st Indorsement to letter, Wolfe to Arnold, Plan for the Operation of the B-29 Airplane, 12 October 1943, quoted in *ibid.*, 21.

B.29 out here I would be very glad to write a long and impassioned letter to . . . give you a detailed plan of how I would use the B.29 to win the war."[34]

Kenney's timing could not have been worse. On 15 October, FDR sent General Marshall a letter expressing his grave dissatisfaction with General Arnold's performance.

> I am still pretty thoroughly disgusted with the India-China matters. The last straw was that report from Arnold that he could not get the B-29's operating out of China until March or April of next year. Everything seems to go wrong. But the worst thing is that we are falling down on our promises every single time. We have not fulfilled one of them yet. I do not see why we have to use B-29's. We have several other types of bombing planes.[35]

Marshall requested that Arnold prepare a reply for the President, which he did, effectively closing the issue.[36] Nonetheless, rumors of his imminent relief, which apparently erupted following this incident, must have distressed the AAF commander.[37]

Under significant stress, Arnold decided to request Kenney's plan for B-29 employment. This action had the effect of postponing Arnold's having to deal with Kenney, thereby relieving the former of a great deal of pressure. It seems unlikely that Arnold ever intended to seriously consider Kenney's proposal. But whether politics or altruism motivated Arnold's query, Kenney eagerly responded. On 29 October 1943, he wrote: "The initial job I will assign the B.29 is to deprive Japan of the one essential commodity which she must have to carry on the war--oil. She conquered the Netherlands East Indies to get it and without it she is through as a serious opponent."[38]

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34. Letter, Kenney to Arnold, 10 October 1943, Kenney Notebook.

35. Memo, FDR to Marshall, 15 October 1943, quoted in Craven and Cate, 5:21.

36. Craven and Cate, 5:21.

37. "There was one story that Roosevelt got mad at [Arnold] at one time and was thinking about replacing him, but that's all I heard." Kenney, Hasdorff interview, 89.

38. Letter, Kenney to Arnold, 29 October 1943, Kenney Notebook.

Kenney felt that the Palembang area of Sumatra, which provided fifty percent of the output of oil in the area, and Balikpapan, Borneo, together made "the finest and most decisive set of targets for bombing anywhere in the world." Kenney also noted that B-29s stationed to accomplish these missions could strike at the massive volumes of Japanese shipping in the South and Southwest Pacific, thereby cutting the enemy's logistical lifelines.[39]

In addition, General Kenney proffered Arnold the inducement of five airfields in northern Australia which already had the capacity to handle the Superfortress: "They do not have to be seized, or further provision made for their defence [*sic*]. . . ." Furthermore, Kenney argued, the use of the B-29s in this area would hasten MacArthur's drive toward the Philippines and would allow the Southwest Pacific air forces to tighten the noose around Japan's supply net. Once in the Philippines, if Japan had not already fallen, attacks against the home islands would surely bring about her downfall. Kenney maintained that using the B-29 as he outlined would end the war several months earlier than other plans for employment.[40]

Kenney began his closing comments: "If you want the B-29 used efficiently and effectively, where it will do the most good in the shortest time, the Southwest Pacific Area is the place. . . ." He recapped his major points, reiterating that denying Japan the precious resource of oil would force her "to sue for peace with certain overwhelming defeat staring her in the face."[41] No sooner had he put his plan in the mail for Arnold than Kenney directed his staff to begin planning to base as many as 100 bombers in Northern Australia.[42]

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39. *Ibid.*

40. *Ibid.*

41. *Ibid.*

42. Letter, Kenney to Colonel E. V. Bertrandias, Air Service Command, 30 October 1943, Kenney Notebook.

In his next letter, dated 6 November 1943, Kenney informed Arnold of these preparations. "Since I wrote you outlining a rough plan in regard to the use of the B-29, my staff has been working on their utilization. . . . Airdromes and depot locations are now being surveyed. . . ." Kenney again reiterated the importance of oil. "If . . . some of those B-29's can smash [Japanese] oil refineries in the Dutch East Indies, it is quite conceivable that this may not turn out to be such a long war after all."[43]

Once again, however, developments in Washington had outpaced General Kenney. On 8 November 1943, the AAF secretly activated XX Bomber Command, the B-29s operational unit, with Wolfe as its commanding officer. The next day, air strategists completed a plan titled the "Early Sustained Bombing of Japan," calling for the basing of B-29s in central China. Four weeks later, the AAF would officially approve this plan and designate it operation MATTERHORN.[44]

During these four weeks, events in Washington proceeded with unrelenting rapidity. FDR demonstrated his support of the plan when, on 10 November, he informed Prime Minister Winston Churchill:

> We have under development a project whereby we can strike a heavy blow at our enemy in the Pacific early next year with our new heavy bombers. Japanese military, naval, and shipping strength is so dependent upon the steel industry which is strained to the limit. Half the coke for that steel can be reached and destroyed operating from the Chengtu area of China. . . .[45]

FDR also wired Chiang Kai Shek, the Chinese nationalist leader, requesting the construction of five bomber fields for use in March 1944. Wolfe lost no time, either. He immediately sent five observers to the Chinese mainland to survey the situation.[46]

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43. Letter, Kenney to Arnold, 6 November 1943, AFHRC #706.311.

44. Craven and Cate, 5:22-23.

45. FDR to Churchill, 10 November 1943, quoted in Berger, 45.

46. Berger, 45, 53.

While FDR and Wolfe laid the groundwork for operations in China, General Arnold received the first reports from the Committee of Operations Analysts (COA) on suggested strategic targets in Japan. Significantly, the COA interpreted its charge of evaluating "strategic targets" as one of evaluating "economic objectives." Consequently, the committee's report of 11 November 1943 stated six preferred targets, none of direct military value. These included merchant shipping, urban industrial areas, aircraft plants, the anti-friction bearing industry, the electronics industry, and steel production. For reasons of security the COA put their suggestions in no particular order, but it clearly held an affinity for targeting the steel industry: "Those coke ovens are prime economic targets. They should be attacked as soon as the forces necessary to destroy them in rapid succession become available." The COA further betrayed its preference in a more detailed explanation later in the report:

> The timing of the war against Japan justifies attacks upon industries lying relatively deep in the structure of war production. When limitations of time do not require exclusive concentration upon immediate military effect, the most serious long-term damage can be inflicted by disrupting the production of basic materials like steel.[47]

The COA's report had an immediate impact. On 14 November, the War Department issued the first orders in support of MATTERHORN, directing aviation engineers and dump truck companies to report to India. They arrived only ten days later, on the 24th. Thus by the time Kenney's letter arrived Arnold had not only promised the B-29 to another, but he had begun distributing the dowry. Colonel Barney Giles, Arnold's Chief of Staff, so informed the frustrated and forgotten ex-fiancé on 18 November 1943.[48] Years later, General Kenney expressed his chagrin at the situation: ". . . I thought maybe I could argue Hap Arnold out of them [B-29s],

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47. Report of COA on Economic Objectives in the Far East, 11 November 1943, quoted in Craven and Cate, 5:28.

48. Letter, Giles to Kenney, 18 November 1943, Kenney Notebook.

but Chiang Kai Shek or Madame or somebody did a better job on getting them than I did."[49]

Despite the apparent finality of Giles' message to Kenney, the controvery over B-29 employment continued. On 19 November 1943, the Joint War Planning Commission (JWPC) Home Team released its opinion, stating that staging the B-29s in central China did not make optimal use of the aircraft's capabilities. The steel industry simply did not promise decisive results. Arnold promptly ordered the Team to reevaluate its findings.[50]

On 24 November, the JWPC Home Team again tried to dissuade the proponents of MATTERHORN. This time the Home Team stated that the Superfortress did not have the required tactical radius to reach targets in Japan from the Chengtu staging area. The next day the Joint Planning Staff (JPS) directed the JWPC to quit pointing out problems and instead offer a solution. The JPS instructed the Home Team to draft a study on the "Optimum Use, Timing, and Deployment of VLR Bombers in the War Against Japan."[51]

Perhaps hearing rumors that someone had questioned plans for operation MATTERHORN, Kenney refused to give up hope. With characteristic persistence the Southwest Pacific airman once again wrote to General Arnold in December 1943: "Was very disappointed to get the news from you that the B-29 is not coming my way." Kenney expressed his doubts regarding the effectiveness of the China operation and yet again requested that Arnold send the bombers to the Southwest Pacific.[52] He

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49. Kenney, Stanley interview, 37.

50. Craven and Cate, 5:23.

51. JWPC 147/D, 25 November 1943, quoted in *ibid*, 5:24-25.

52. Letter, Kenney to Arnold, 4 December 1943, Kenney Notebook.

argued in vain. Arnold insisted that "more bombs could be carried . . . to Japanese targets and that more Japanese shipping lay within reach of the China bases."[53]

After New Year's, a series of crises confronted the commander of the AAF and threatened to postpone or even cancel operation MATTERHORN. The first of these problems came from the production lines. By the middle of January, ninety-seven B-29s had emerged from the factory, but only sixteen of these were flight-worthy. The schedule calling for the delivery of 150 Superforts by early March appeared unattainable. A second irritation came from Major General Claire Chennault, the CBI's tactical air force commander. Chennault had written directly to both Arnold and FDR, requesting that they place the B-29s under his command. The Joint Chiefs did not provide a decisive and final answer to this request until mid-year.[54]

In January 1944, in the midst of this turmoil, General Kenney arrived in Washington. When he called on General Arnold, Kenney predictably pressed for the B-29. This time the haggard air chief caved in: he agreed to send Kenney fifty Superfortresses in July if he could "swing it." The Southwest Pacific air commander immediately ordered the modification of an airfield at Darwin, in northern Australia, to accommodate the B-29s.[55]

Arnold still desired sustained attacks on the Japanese homeland, but neither Kenney's base at Darwin nor advance bases in central China afforded him that option. Accordingly, the opinion of the Air Staff began to solidify around the eventual basing of B-29s in the Mariana Islands, which would minimize the range and logistical difficulties of operations against Japan. But the enemy still held the Marianas, and they would not become available as a basing platform for some time. It looked as if General

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53. Maurice Matloff, *Strategic Planning for Coalition Warfare 1943-44* (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1959), 445.

54. Berger, 55, 64.

55. Kenney, handwritten notes, filed at 15 January 1944, and memo, Colonel William L. Richie to Kenney, regarding meeting with General Arnold, 14 January 1944, Kenney Notebook.

Kenney might receive some of the Superforts during this interim period. On 24 January, the Joint Planning Staff recommended that Kenney get half of the bombers originally slated for Chengtu. The following day another Pentagon committee suggested the temporary staging of B-29s in the Southwest Pacific, until bases in the Marianas became available.[56]

At the end of January, Kenney and MacArthur met with several ranking members of the South Pacific (SOPAC) drive, commanded by Admiral Chester Nimitz. Throughout the discussions, members of the SOPAC staff seemed to support Kenney's plan for using the B-29s in the Southwest Pacific.[57] But Kenney forgot to count the three most important votes. Admiral Nimitz and Admiral Ernest J. King, Chief of Naval Operations, lined up against the plan, fearing it downgraded the Navy's role in the Pacific War. In addition, General Arnold lent considerable weight to the South Pacific drive; he wanted those bases in the Marianas, and they lay on Nimitz's axis of attack.[58]

General Kenney still had some diehard supporters. On 15 February 1944, the JWPC again came out in favor of staging B-29s in Australia for use against Japanese shipping and oil. This time, however, the members of the JWPC recognized the political pressure coming from the President in favor of basing the B-29s in Chengtu, and they remarked pointedly that if the AAF used the Superfortress from central China, it should do so with the full knowledge that such use was "not in consonance with detailed studies."[59]

About the time the JWPC restated its position, General Arnold made a personal inspection of the B-29 production line in Marietta, Georgia. This visit eased his

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56. Craven and Cate, 5:28-29.

57. Kenney, diary entry for 27 January 1944, Kenney Notebook.

58. Kenney, *Reports*, 370-71.

59. Joint Planning Staff 381/I, 15 February 1944, quoted in Craven and Cate, 5:29.

anxieties over progress on production of the plane. He wired Wolfe on 1 March that the B-29s would be ready to leave the United States by the 10th.[60]

Another piece of General Arnold's plan fell into place on 2 March when the JWPC finally capitulated to pressure from above. In a report to the Joint Chiefs of Staff the JWPC blandly stated that, due to decisions "at the highest level," MATTERHORN should get the first eight groups of Superforts. Furthermore, the Home Team reluctantly agreed that the AAF should use bombers based in India to hit oil refineries in the Dutch East Indies.[61]

By 12 March 1944, the Joint Chiefs had solidified their plans, setting D-Day in the Marianas for 15 June. This early date meant that the interim basing period for the B-29 would not last as long as previously thought, correspondingly lessening the importance of the decision as to where such basing should occur. Still, the Southwest Pacific leadership would not give in. MacArthur himself requested thirty-five Superforts to hit the oil assets in the Dutch East Indies. General Marshall summarily denied this request.[62]

Thus, in a period of less than two months, the situation which General Kenney had viewed with such enthusiasm at the end of January had undergone drastic changes. A March visit from General Kuter, AC/AS Plans, confirmed Kenney's fears: there would be no B-29s for Darwin.[63] Kenney recalled the story, with significant simplifications and embellishments, in 1974:

> MacArthur said, "Why in the hell don't you give me some of those B-29s so that we can crack those oil fields and refineries over Borneo? . . . Arnold

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60. Berger, 55.

61. Joint Chiefs of Staff #742, 2 March 1944, quoted in Craven and Cate, 5:29.

62. Joint Chiefs of Staff 122d meeting, 12 March 1944; Message, CINSOWESPAC [MacArthur] to WAR [Marshall] 26 March 1944; Message, WAR [Marshall] to CINSOWESPAC [MacArthur], 26 March 1944, quoted in *ibid.*, 31. See also Matloff, *1943-44*, 445.

63. Kenney, diary entry for 29 March 1944, Kenney Notebook.

> hedged and fooled around and finally said, "Well, you haven't got an airdrome." I said, "Goddamn it, I will build an airdrome out at Darwin. I'll build 10,000-foot runways out there for the B-29s if you will give me a couple of squadrons of them." So he said yes, and, goddamn it, I built those runways; and then he didn't give me the B-29s. MacArthur was sore about that.[64]

Kenney's attitude toward the incident some thirty years later reveals the depth of his frustration. His 12 March 1944 diary entry confirms this sense of betrayal: "The Directive arrived today telling us we were a subsidiary show to support the drive across the central Pacific." Kenney felt that General Arnold had ignored his opinions and that the air chief had received bad advice from others regarding the Marianas.[65]

In mid-March, however, General Arnold had other things to worry about besides the quality of his advisors. Because the B-29 had entered production before it completed flight testing, it required several post-production modifications to make it fully combat-ready. The AAF sent the B-29s to Salina, Kansas, for these modifications. Arnold arrived there on the evening of 9 March, hoping to witness the first aircraft deployments the following morning. Instead, he found not a single bomber ready to depart. Colonel I. W. Stephens recalled the general's wrath:

> [He] came in and . . . asked what was happening, who was running the show--and announced he was going to if no one else was . . . and he wanted by morning a list of everything that was short; if it was in the factory; when it was going to be delivered. . . .[66]

Thus began the "Battle of Kansas." Arnold allowed only six weeks for the completion of modifications.[67]

Once again, Kenney managed to send a letter at the worst possible moment. On 1 April he wrote to Arnold that he now suggested Balikpapan and not Palembang as the

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64. Kenney, Hasdorff interview, 59.

65. Kenney, diary entry for 12 March 1944, Kenney Notebook.

66. Quoted in Berger, 55.

67. Bowers, 323.

primary oil target. He again offered use of the Darwin airfield for the accomplishment of the mission, this time without requesting operational control of the bombers.[68] But Kuter and Arnold both saw Palembang as the more important target, and they left Balikpapan on the back burner. In his response to Kenney, Arnold restated his opinion that no other strategic targets existed in the Southwest Pacific Area, making it wasteful to station the B-29s there. This rebuff infuriated MacArthur and Kenney, but they could do nothing more.[69]

Though he had finally given the commanders of the Southwest Pacific an unequivocal response to their requests, Arnold still had significant problems with the implementation of MATTERHORN. The Japanese launched operation ICHI-GO in April, with the express mission "[t]o forestall the bombing of the Japanese Homeland by American B-29s."[70] In addition, by 30 April 1944 the Chinese had completed only two of the Chinese bases from which AAF planned to operate the B-29s. By 7 June, however, the situation appeared good enough for General Marshall to inform General Stilwell that the Joint Chiefs felt "that the early bombing of Japan will have a far more beneficial effect on the situation in China than the long delay in such an operation that would be caused by the transfer of those stocks [B-29s] to [Major General Claire] Chennault."[71] General Hap Arnold had his own grand plans for the employment of the Superfortress, and finally nothing stood between him and the realization of his goal.

II

On 10 April 1944, the Joint Chiefs of Staff issued the charter for the 20th Air Force and designated General Arnold its executive agent. Officially activated six days

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68. Letter, Kenney to Arnold, 1 April 1944, Kenney Notebook.

69. Kenney, diary entry for 3 April 1944, Kenney Notebook.

70. Quoted in Berger, 57.

71. Marshall to Stilwell, 7 June 1944, quoted in *ibid*.

prior, the Joint Chiefs hoped this new unit would transcend the duplicity of command in the Pacific created by the coexistence of Naval and Army organizations. General Marshall later exposited this rationale:

> The power of these new bombers is so great that the Joint Chiefs of Staff felt that it would be uneconomical to confine [them] to a single theatre. These bombers, therefore, will remain under the centralized control of the Joint Chiefs of Staff with a single commander, General Arnold, acting as their agent in directing their bombing operations throughout the world. . . .
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> This type of flexible, centralized control recognizes that very long-range bombardment is not a weapon for the air forces alone.[72]

General Arnold offered the same reasons for maintaining control of the B-29s in his post-war memoirs, albeit in a more remonstrative tone. Arnold did not want the new bomber misused by the various narcissistic theatre commanders. The lack of unity of command in the Pacific, where MacArthur and Nimitz constantly vied for operational supremacy, distressed Arnold. He claimed that this predicament compelled him to retain command of the B-29s: "there was nothing else I could do, with no unity of command in the Pacific."[73] The official AAF history of the war, however, makes the non-committal observation that the papers of the 20th Air Force "bear no trace of demur on Arnold's part."[74]

Whatever his rationale, Arnold quickly took charge. On 6 June 1944, he advised Wolfe that the Joint Chiefs required an attack on the Japanese home islands to coincide with D-Day in the Marianas, 15 June. Arnold selected the Imperial Iron and Steel Works at Yawata, on the island of Kyushu, as the target for the raid. This plant

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72. George C. Marshall, *New York Times*, 16 June 1944, 4.

73. Arnold, 348.

74. Craven and Cate, 5:35. Baker later revealed that while other air leaders had "no argument with General Kenney's use of airpower in tactical operations," the strategic offensive against Japan was "a different kind of war." Consequently, they considered the decision to deny Kenney responsibility for its execution "a stroke of genius." Ira C. Baker, Interview by Charles Hildreth and Arthur Goldberg, location unknown, 22 May 1962, USAF Oral History Interview 627, 1.

allegedly produced 24 percent of Japan's steel.[75] The raid on Yawata shared American headlines with Allied advances in Normandy and the landings in the Marianas, and reporters immediately noted the positive effect it had on Home Front morale.[76] Arnold had finally delivered; bombs had fallen on targets within the Japanese homeland. Whatever his motivations for retaining operational control of the 20th Air Force, the AAF commander deserves ultimate credit for the accomplishment of the Yawata raid.

General Arnold may have finally received his just reward for diligence, but his imbroglio with General Kenney continued. On 10 August 1944, Arnold ordered the bombing of Palembang by aircraft based in India. B-29s flew a one-way distance of 1,900 miles before they reached their target, and the small bomb loads that such distance necessitated doomed the mission to impotency.[77]

Colonel Giles, Chief of Staff for the 20th Air Force, visited the Southwest Pacific Area in mid-August, with the meager results of the Palembang raid fresh in his mind. MacArthur and Kenney succeeded in convincing Giles that results would improve if Arnold sent four groups of Superforts to their theatre for strikes against Balikpapan.[78] When Giles proved unable to convince Arnold of the same, Kenney sent a letter to the AAF commander requesting only two groups for the same mission. Arnold sent a cursory reply in the negative.[79]

A final point of contention between Arnold and Kenney occurred just prior to 15 November 1944. Brigadier General Haywood S. Hansell, commander of the XXI

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75. Berger, 70.

76. *New York Times*, 16 June 1944, 1.

77. United States Strategic Bombing Survey (USSBS), *Air Campaigns of the Pacific War* (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1947), 46. One must exercise caution when citing from this publication. The USSBS published it only after continued agitation from an Air Force member on the Survey. For a more detailed explanation, see David MacIsaac, *Strategic Bombing in World War Two: The Story of the USSBS* (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1976), 119-135.

78. Kenney, *Reports*, 417.

79. Kenney, diary entry for 29 September 1944, Kenney Notebook.

Bomber Command of the 20th Air Force, recalled receiving a "very disturbing" letter from General Arnold while preparing for the first attack on Japan from the Marianas:

> [Arnold] stated that one of his most trusted and respected air experts, General George Kenney, had put himself in writing and his reputation on the line to the effect that the mission as planned could not be carried out. He contended that the airplanes lacked the range, and that the Japs would shoot them out of the air.[80]

The significance of this statement lay not in the accuracy of General Kenney's prediction (subsequent events proved him partially correct),[81] but rather in the fact that at this late date MacArthur's air commander continued to officiously intrude on decisions that lay wholly beyond his area of concern.

In due course General Arnold's insistence on operations from the Marianas proved advantageous. Nonetheless, before these bases became available, the AAF would have done better to give the bombers to General Kenney. Logistical problems in the China-Burma-India theatre proved a major obstacle to effective employment of the B-29. As General Curtis E. LeMay, Hansell's successor as commander of XXI Bomber Command, later recalled:

> [W]hen ordered to fly a mission out of China, we had to make seven trips with a B-29 [from Calcutta to Chengtu] and offload all the gas we could, leaving only enough to get back to India. On the eighth trip we could transport a load of bombs, top off with gas in China, and go drop them on Japan if the weather was right. . . . So the logistical situation was hopeless in China.[82]

The United States Strategic Bombing Survey (USSBS) also criticized the decision to station B-29s in China. In apparent reference to the JWPC Home Team, the Survey noted that "[t]arget appraisal prior to the movement [of B-29s] had indicated

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80. Letter, Hansell to Major James M. Boyle, December 1964, AFHRC #168.7004-64.

81. Operations against Japan from the Mariana's did not yield satisfactory results until Arnold relieved Hansell and placed General LeMay in command. LeMay's success stems from his decision to use low-altitude incendiary attacks against Japanese cities.

82. LeMay, quoted in Richard H. Kohn and Joseph P. Harahan, eds., *Strategic Air Warfare* (Washington: Officer of Air Force History, 1988), 57. This book is a joint oral history interview with Generals LeMay, Leon Johnson, David Burchinal, and Jack Catton.

that top priority should be given to shipping rather than steel plants." Additionally, Japan had so depleted her steel reserves by mid-June 1944 that attacks on that industry had no appreciable impact. The USSBS' authors conclude that the "few attacks directed against steel plants had little effect on [the] Japanese steel supply."[83]

The Survey included more than a mere debunking of the strategy that Arnold proposed and instituted, however. It went on to endorse Kenney's plan for B-29 employment: "[O]f even more immediate concern [than steel] to Japanese fighting capabilities was the oil supply which largely depended on imports." A concentrated attack on this precious commodity, coupled with a stepped up offensive against shipping the SWPA, would have had a greater military effect than the missions flown from Chengtu.[84]

General Arnold, however, had to balance the requests coming from his theatre commander with the President's directives and desires. The air chief could hardly justify sending Superfortresses to Kenney when Roosevelt had already expressed his hope that the AAF would bomb the Japanese homeland. In addition, Arnold's belief in strategic bombing predisposed him to support the President's ideas on B-29 employment Given Arnold's concerns and predilections, Kenney did not help himself by continuously badgering the air chief regarding use of the B-29. Other generals, such as Eaker and Spaatz, had their share of wartime disagreements with Arnold,[85] but they knew when and how to bow out and concede defeat. Kenney not only failed to concede, but also offered his petulant requests to Arnold at the most unpropitious times. This combination of hardheadedness and bad luck served to try Kenney's

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83. USSBS, *The Effects of Strategic Bombing on Japan's War Economy* (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946), 37, 45-46.

84. *Ibid.*, 46, 63.

85. Letter, Spaatz to Arnold, 7 December 1944 and Letter, Arnold to Spaatz, 30 December 1944, AFHRC #519.1612. The dispute outlined in these two letters regarded the reassignment of certain bombardment units to the Pacific theatre.

tenuous friendship with Arnold. Suffice it to say that at the end of World War II, in Kenney's own words, "Hap was kind of sore. . . ."[86]

86. Kenney, Hasdorff interview, 93.

CHAPTER 4

PASSED OVER

On 2 September 1945, General Kenney joined the top commanders of the Pacific theatre on the battleship *Missouri* to watch General MacArthur receive the Japanese surrender.[1] With the war finally over, Kenney could look forward to the peacetime battle for Air Force independence, in which he felt he would play a leading role. General Arnold had made no secret of his desire to retire, opening up the position of commanding general of the Army Air Forces. Although Kenney later denied that Arnold had ever seriously considered him for the position, many thought him a top contender.[2] As early as 16 July 1945, Washington gossip suggested that Kenney, who outranked General Carl A. Spaatz by a few days, would replace Arnold around Christmas.[3] To contemporaries, this seemed especially plausible given Spaatz's well-known intention to retire soon after the war ended.[4]

General Arnold, however, convinced General Spaatz to take the position of commanding general and remain on active duty long enough to oversee AAF's fight for independence.[5] Although the two men's friendship played the dominant role in this decision, Arnold also preferred that Spaatz succeed him due to the latter's close

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1. Kenney, *Reports*, 576-77.

2. Kenney, Hasdorff interview, 62.

3. News clipping, labeled "Broadway," *News*, dated 16 July 1945, AFHRC #168.7103-27, Kenney Papers; and Phillip S. Meilinger, *Hoyt S. Vandenberg: The Life of a General* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1989), 102.

4. Eaker, Tobin interview, 75.

5. *Ibid.*

relationship with General Dwight D. Eisenhower, commander of the European Theatre of Operations during World War II and now the Army Chief of Staff. In January 1945, Eisenhower had lauded Spaatz as "the best operational airman in the world."[6] General Eaker later described the relationship between the two men as a "primary" factor in Eisenhower's support for an independent air arm.[7] By tapping Spaatz as his successor, Arnold hoped to capitalize on Eisenhower's belief in the need for a separate air force.[8]

While General Kenney had the backing of General MacArthur, another advocate of air autonomy, Arnold never considered the Pacific airman a prime choice to command the AAF. First, MacArthur had only limited ability to support the AAF's drive for independence. Eisenhower had returned to the United States soon after the conclusion of operations in Europe. MacArthur, however, would remain in Japan to command occupation forces for some time, thereby limiting the amount of attention he could devote to the debate on air autonomy. Second, and of greater importance, Kenney had alienated himself from the leadership of the AAF during World War II (see chapters 2 and 3). Moreover, he had not laid a solid foundation of friendship with General Arnold prior to the war (see chapter 1). As a result, Arnold felt little obligation to further Kenney's career.[9]

Although he did not have a favorable impression of Kenney, Arnold realized that he had to treat the Pacific airman with some degree of consideration. Kenney had emerged from the war extremely popular. Coupled with Kenney's exceptional speaking ability, this made him a valuable asset in the fight for autonomy. In addition,

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6. Letter, Kuter to Arnold, 28 January 1945, quoted in Wolk, *Planning and Organizing*, 212.

7. Eaker, quoted in *ibid.*, 36.

8. Arnold later acknowledged the importance of Eisenhower in this decision. He wrote that the two men had discussed whom to appoint as his successor as early as July, 1945. "It was decided then and there that General Spaatz would take my place." Arnold, 587.

9. Kenney, Hasdorff interview, 93.

any summary treatment of General Kenney would infuriate General MacArthur. If this occurred, the army general's prestige and influence could make the AAF's drive for independence significantly more difficult. Consequently, although not selected for the position of commanding general, Kenney received a consolation prize. In December 1945, Arnold appointed him the senior American officer on the Military Staff Committee of the United Nations (U.N.).[10]

Kenney reveled in his new assignment. He later recalled that being sent to the U.N. "sounded pretty good, because if they did have a United Nations force big enough to impose peace on the world, why boy that Air Force commander would be the most powerful military commander in the world."[11] The creation of such a force did not seem such a distant prospect in the years immediately following World War II. Article 45 of the U.N. charter directed that member nations provide military forces to the Security Council for use in the preservation of international peace and security.[12] In light of Kenney's selection for this post, however, it seems unlikely that Arnold and Spaatz viewed the creation of a United Nations air force as a viable possibility. Rather, the disparity between the international organization's high ambition and its actual ability made it an ideal place to send Kenney. While Arnold and Spaatz appeared to be giving him enormous responsibility, in reality they trusted him with next to none.[13] This situation, however, bore little resemblance to the singular responsibilities inherent in Kenney's next assignment.

On 21 March 1946, the AAF activated Strategic Air Command (SAC). General Spaatz directed that this new command assume responsibility for "long range offensive

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10. Military Service Summary.

11. Kenney, Hasdorff interview, 128.

12. *New York Herald-Tribune*, 17 March 1946, 17.

13. Additionally, Arnold and Spaatz never made statements in any way comparable to those which Kenney made regarding the potential of the United Nations. For Kenney's impression of the lack of trust he encountered, see Kenney, Hasdorff interview, 125-26.

operations in any part of the world either independently or in cooperation with land and naval forces." For Spaatz and other air leaders, SAC represented the intellectual progeny of the wartime 20th Air Force, which had conducted the strategic bombing offensive against Japan. SAC now had control of all strategic air forces throughout the world, independent of any theatre commanders. Ironically, the man who had fought with the most tenacity to tie strategic operations to a specific theatre during World War II now became SAC's first commanding general: George C. Kenney.[14]

Several factors influenced Spaatz's decision to appoint Kenney to this new position. Given the importance assigned to independent strategic operations, the AAF preferred that the commander of SAC hold the rank of four-star general.[15] At the conclusion of World War II the AAF had only four full generals: Arnold, Spaatz, Kenney, and Joseph T. McNarney. Arnold had retired, and since Spaatz had taken his place as the AAF commander, he had to chose between Kenney and McNarney. During the war McNarney had served primarily in staff assignments; only afterwards did he receive an operational command.[16] In contrast, Kenney had distinguished himself as an able and innovative combat commander during World War II. This made him the only reasonable choice to head the new command.

As with the decision to send Kenney to the United Nations, however, the image of Douglas MacArthur loomed in the background. When later asked for the rationale behind his assignment to SAC, Kenney replied cryptically: "I don't know. Maybe

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14. Hopkins and Goldberg, 1-2. While SAC theoretically controlled all strategic air forces, note that the Pacific Air Command United States Army (PACUSA), which Kenney had helped establish after the war and now under the command of Lt. Gen. Ennis C. Whitehead (the 5th Air Force Commander during World War II under Kenney and a close friend), had merged the tactical and strategic air forces assigned to the Pacific theatre. Furthermore, this command reported to General MacArthur, not to AAF Headquarters. Borowski, 36.

15. Public Law 381, Officer Personnel Act of 1947, later codified this requirement.

16. "There were rumors that Arnold did not like McNarney, thinking him insufficiently air-minded. After the war, Arnold did not want McNarney on his staff. . . ." McNarney served as acting Supreme Allied Commander of the European theatre immediately after the war. Meilinger, 91.

they didn't know what else to do with me."[17] Although Kenney meant this statement as a joke, he perhaps came surprisingly close to delineating the problem facing General Spaatz. Again, neither Spaatz nor Arnold felt a great deal of attachment to Kenney, but they recognized his political connections. Spaatz would probably have preferred to give the position of SAC commander to someone else, anyone else, but doing so would have raised the eyebrows of Kenney's supporters and elicited a number of inquiries. Indeed, Spaatz may *not* have known what else to do with MacArthur's airman.

Although appointed to command SAC, Kenney also retained his post at the United Nations. Consequently, executive control of SAC fell to the Deputy Commander, Major General St. Clair Streett.[18] General Kenney, meanwhile, spent his time either at the United Nations or giving speeches around the country. The Assistant Secretary of War for Air, W. Stuart Symington, urged Kenney "to accept all invitations to make a speech." Symington welcomed the publicity that Kenney afforded the AAF on the issue of air force independence. The garrulous Kenney needed little prodding; he "didn't mind making speeches [he] believed in." As a result, when Kenney did get away from the United Nations, he did so only to go "all over the damned country yelling for a separate air department." Active command of SAC remained a low priority.[19]

Not all of Kenney's speeches during 1946 centered on the issue of air autonomy, however. The general had a propensity to speak on issues outside his area of concern, repeatedly placing him at variance with the War Department. In January 1946, for example, Kenney expressed his view that the United States should place its

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17. Kenney, Hasdorff interview, 129.

18. Hopkins and Goldberg, 1.

19. Kenney, Hasdorff interview, 135.

armed forces at the disposal of the United Nations. General Spaatz promptly ordered Kenney to refrain from issuing statements on other than military matters.[20]

General Kenney's comments, however, continued to venture beyond military issues. In April 1946, Kenney gave an Army Day speech to the Military Order of World Wars in Washington, D.C., expressing his disgust with "the small minded cynics of the world" who "sneer[ed] at idealism." Comparing the situation facing the nations of the world in 1946 with that facing the states of the Union in 1860, Kenney admonished his listeners to "realign our national thinking even as eighty-six years ago we had to realign our thinking on the scope of sovereignty of our internal states."[21]

Kenney did not limit his pro-United Nations activities to speech-making. A few weeks earlier, in a meeting with Secretary Symington, Kenney pushed for increased American involvement at the United Nations. In particular, he argued for a sizable contribution of airpower.[22] The general apparently left that meeting feeling optimistic. In a 27 March 1946 interview with the *New York Herald-Tribune*, Kenney stated that the Military Staff Committee had begun to tackle the question of "raising international forces." Furthermore, he predicted that the United Nations would agree to organize an international air force first.[23]

These comments prompted a rejoinder from General Spaatz. Kenney defended himself by criticizing others on the U.N. delegation whom he felt had breached security by revealing classified information. Kenney believe that Spaatz had misdirected his criticism: "Instead of hopping on me for saying nothing, I'd like to see some action on

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20. Message, Generals Eisenhower and Spaatz to Generals Kenney and Ridgeway, subj: Pacific Islands, 16 January 1946, Series III, Box 5, Folder 4, Borowski Papers.

21. Kenney, Speech to the Military Order of World Wars, 6 April 1946, Washington, D.C. AFHRC # 168.7103-27, Kenney Papers.

22. "Memorandum - Discussion with General Kenney - Points He Raised," 14 March 1946, Symington Papers.

23. Kenney, quoted in *New York Herald-Tribune*, 17 March 1946, 17.

the ones who are really messing things up by giving secret information." Kenney failed to recognize that Spaatz's reservations regarding his remarks stemmed not from any privileged information which he had revealed, but from the fact that Kenney had again impinged upon political prerogatives. The spectacle of a senior military officer dabbling in the policy-setting arena embarrassed not only General Spaatz and the AAF, but the entire War Department.[24]

Although Kenney's statements throughout this period suggest that the general held an idealistic vision for the future of the United Nations, one cannot dismiss the possibility of other motivations. Kenney had an innate desire for public recognition, as evidenced by his enjoyment of the attention he received when giving speeches, interviews, or attending other public events.[25] His endorsement of a powerful United Nations Organization offered a convenient vehicle to obtain such recognition and satisfy his ego. The establishment of an international air force, with Kenney as its commander, could only enhance his prestige.[26] Thus, although Kenney expressed his internationalist sentiments in earnest, his need for public recognition and sense of self-importance reinforced his proclivity for an active United Nations.

Over the next several months, however, General Kenney grew disillusioned with his U.N. post. Blaming American intransigence in failing to take the initiative on the issue of an international force, Kenney recalled that "the [Military] Staff Committee became a dead issue." His later comments on the committee reveal the depth of his

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24. Letter, Kenney to Spaatz, 4 April 1946, quoted in Borowski, 140. Spaatz probably also took exception to Kenney's disclosure of American diplomatic intentions with regard to the atomic bomb: "General Kenney said the American representatives on the Military Staff Committee had no intention of introducing the subject of the atomic bomb in committee discussions, but the subject would not be barred from discussion if any of the four other members of the committee . . . should elect to bring it up. American policy in the matter would be determined at the [*sic*] time." *New York Herald-Tribune*, 17 March 1946, 17.

25. Kenney, Hasdorff interview, 135. See also Borowski, 141.

26. *Ibid.*, 128

cynicism: "They still meet; I think they meet once a month, adjourn, and decide to meet the next month."[27]

In early June, Kenney received a confidential letter from Lieutenant General Ennis C. Whitehead, commander of Pacific Air Command, United States Army (PACUSA). This communication contributed to Kenney's growing discontent with his position on the Military Staff Committee. Whitehead, a long-time friend and one of Kenney's subordinate commanders during World War II, wrote that "[t]he rumors which I hear indicate that UNO [United Nations Organization] is taking an ever increasing amount of your time and energy." Whitehead termed the world organization a "dead pigeon," and suggested to Kenney that he ask Spaatz to release him from his duties at the United Nations. This would allow Kenney to concentrate on his primary responsibilities at Strategic Air Command.[28]

General Whitehead stressed the importance of SAC to the AAF throughout his letter. Noting that "Strategic Air Command will be the only military organization which is truly organized and disposed for long range warfare," Whitehead urged Kenney to seek AAF control of the guided missile program. The PACUSA commander also provided his old boss a list of those officers which would soon return to the United States from the Far East. He felt that Kenney could tap many of these personnel for staff duty at SAC Headquarters.[29] After attesting to his faith in both Kenney's personality and ability, Whitehead closed his letter by reiterating his belief that Kenney's duties at SAC must take precedence over concerns at the United Nations.[30]

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27. *Ibid.*, 125.

28. Letter, Whitehead to Kenney, 5 June 1946, AFHRC # 168.6008-3. Whitehead Papers.

29. While Kenney remained at the United Nations, General Streett ran SAC Headquarters with officers who had served on the staff of Continental Air Forces, which the AAF had disbanded when it created SAC. Hopkins and Goldberg, 2.

30. Letter, Whitehead to Kenney, 5 June 1946, AFHRC #168.6008-3. Whitehead Papers.

General Kenney took his friend's exhortations to heart. A few days after receiving Whitehead's letter, he called General Spaatz to inquire as to when another general could take his place at the United Nations. Spaatz replied that the War Department had no four-star generals with which to replace Kenney.[31] Given this situation, Whitehead turned his attention to recruiting a competent staff to run SAC in Kenney's absence.

The PACUSA commander had Major General Clements C. McMullen hand carry a letter to General Kenney in early July 1946. Whitehead began on an ominous note:

> While you have had all your energies absorbed by your duties at UNO, you are nevertheless completely responsible for the success of Strategic Air Command. If anything should happen and units of the Strategic Air Command be called upon for combat operations, the only thing which people would remember would be that George Kenney was the Commander.[32]

Whitehead wrote that he, McMullen, and Brigadier General K. B. Wolfe had discussed the problem at SAC and determined that two of the three of them should return to serve at Kenney's headquarters. He noted that working out the transfer would present some difficulties, but prompt action on Kenney's part could alleviate many of the problems. Reminding Kenney that "all we want to do is help you," Whitehead left the decision in his friend's hands.[33]

Whitehead's concern and assistance proved of no avail. Kenney chose General McMullen as his deputy, but the transfer did not occur until January 1947. By this time, Kenney had finally wrenched himself free from the United Nations, "actively assuming the duties of his new job" on 15 October 1946.[34] In the period prior to his

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31. Memorandum for Record, 11 June 1946, subj: Telephone conversation between Generals Spaatz and Kenney, Series III, Box 5, Folder 4, Borowski Papers.

32. Letter, Whitehead to Kenney, 4 July 1946, AFHRC #168.6008-3. Whitehead Papers.

33. *Ibid.*

34. Hopkins and Goldberg, 1, 7.

arrival at SAC, Kenney's rhetoric cooled considerably. His speeches rarely mentioned the United Nations, focusing instead on the debate over unification of the armed forces.[35]

In one of his last speeches as a member of the Military Staff Committee, however, Kenney regressed. An editorial in the *Chicago Tribune*, "Gen. Kenney Confuses his Loyalty," lambasted the general for suggesting that "the United States must be willing to yield its sovereignty to the world league." Citing the "disaffecting influences of internationalism," the editors expressed their doubts as to Kenney's suitability for taking command of SAC. In their minds, Kenney had "disqualified" himself for any post where he had responsibility for the defense of America: "There may be no alternative for him except to resign his commission."[36]

The fallout from this last flirtation with internationalism completed Kenney's disillusionment with the United Nations and the Military Staff Committee. Whereas in April 1946, he had played down the barriers of language and lauded the ability of the Allies to compromise, he now pointed to such issues as cause of the committee's impotence. At lunch in the Pentagon on 30 January 1947, Kenney presented Secretary of War Patterson with his after-action report from his United Nations duties. He ended on a decidedly pessimistic note: "As to the future--I see little hope that the Military Staff Committee will accomplish anything worth while during 1947."[37]

I

Soon after General Kenney left the United Nations to devote himself full-time to the command of SAC, he involved himself in one of the most damaging controversies

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35. For example, see "Address by General George C. Kenney to the Spokane Chamber of Commerce," 25 September 1946, AFHRC #7103-27, Kenney Papers.

36. *Chicago Tribune*, 12 October 1946, clipping found in AFHRC #7103-27, Kenney Papers.

37. "Address by General George C. Kenney to the Military Order of World Wars," 6 April 1946; After-action report, labeled "Mr. Patterson's Lunch," 30 January [1947], AFHRC # 7103-27, Kenney Papers.

of his career.[38] Kenney immediately made it clear to the AAF leadership that he did not support development of the Consolidated-Vultee (Convair) B-36 bomber. The AAF had first conceived the B-36 in 1941. It had planned development of the intercontinental bomber so that, if England fell to the Nazis, the United States would possess the capability to launch an air attack against Germany from North America.[39]

The original specifications for the B-36 reflected this rationale. In the spring of 1941, the War Department notified Convair that it required an aircraft with a range of 12,000 miles and a ceiling of 45,000 feet.[40] Later that same year, Convair proposed to deliver the first experimental models within three years at a cost of $15 million.[41] By 1943, however, rising production costs and declining estimated capabilities prompted General Arnold to express his reservations regarding the bomber. He advised his production chief to cancel the B-36 contract when and if progress slowed to an unsatisfactory level.[42] In response to Arnold's reservations, AAF planners came to view the B-36 as an interim bomber for the immediate postwar period rather than a long-term acquisition.[43]

After the war, problems with capability and cost-overruns continued to plague the B-36 program. In January 1946, the AAF chastened Convair for shoddy workmanship and production delays. The prototypes of the bomber, originally scheduled for delivery in 1944, did not actually fly until August 1946. Despite press reports indicating the widespread approval of air leaders with the B-36's maiden flight,

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38. For an overall discussion of the B-36 controversy, see Murray Green, "Stuart Symington and the B-36," (Ph.D. diss., American University, 1960).

39. General Carl A. Spaatz, ret., "Why We Need the B-36," *Newsweek*, 11 July 1949, 21.

40. Memo, Lt. Col. A. E. Jones , Materiel Division, to Convair, 11 April 1941, quoted in Green, 61.

41. Memo, Lt. Col. Fredrick Bacher to General Vandenberg, 13 July 1948, quoted in *ibid.*, 62.

42. Memo, Echols to Major General Chidlaw, 19 June 1943, quoted in *ibid.*, 64.

43. Craven and Cate, 6:210.

Convair now estimated the aircraft's range at less than 4,000 miles, an 8,000-mile reduction from 1941 predictions. Additionally, by the end of 1946 the AAF had spent nearly $390 million on the bomber program; Convair had originally estimated the cost would not exceed $175 million.[44]

Despite problems with the bomber, many key members of the AAF repeatedly expressed their support for the B-36. This advocacy sprang from air leaders' recognition of the bomber's important role in air doctrine. To them, the B-36 represented the "only completely new design toward the further development and advancement of the conventional heavy bomber to which so much of the success of AAF operations may be attributed."[45] Additionally, the Assistant Secretary of War for Air, W. Stuart Symington, spoke highly of the B-36 as early as June 1945, and remained upbeat regarding the bomber's potential through 1946.[46] Thus when General Kenney complained about the B-36's capabilities, he found himself in contention with some of the AAF's most substantial opinions.

Kenney first expressed his opposition to the B-36 program in a letter to General Spaatz in December 1946. The SAC commander not only deplored the lack of self-sealing tanks (which provided better protection from enemy bullets), but also asserted that once Convair corrected this deficiency, the aircraft's estimated range dropped to 3,000 miles. He noted this "[was] not sufficient to permit the B-36 to reach and return from profitable targets in Europe and Asia from bases in the United States or Alaska." Furthermore, Kenney felt the B-36 lacked sufficient armaments. To him, the B-50 (a modified version of the B-29) appeared superior to the B-36 in almost every area.

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44. Green, 63-80.

45. Memo, BG E. M. Powers, Asst. Chief of the Air Staff, Materiel and Services, to Lt. Gen Eaker, Chief of the Air Staff, 2 June 1945, quoted in *ibid.*, 67.

46. *Ibid.*, 73-74.

Kenney closed his letter by urging a reevaluation of the AAF's plans to purchase the new bomber.[47]

General Spaatz did not share Kenney's estimate of the situation. In a mid-January 1947 speech, the AAF commander praised the B-36 and its range: "this plane can carry 10,000 pounds of bombs 10,000 miles."[48] Predictably, Spaatz's reply to General Kenney reflected this bias. The commanding general initially told the SAC commander that Congressional opposition precluded cancellation of the B-36.[49] A week later, Spaatz modified his position, informing Kenney that he supported the bomber despite its problems. Spaatz did, however, acknowledge the validity of the SAC commander's concerns regarding the range of the aircraft, noting that the AAF planned to install a new engine in the bomber to improve its operational radius.[50]

Although Convair proceeded to build the experimental models of the B-36 over the summer without this improvement, the United States Air Force (USAF) did pursue the new engines.[51] In October, Spaatz proposed to the USAF Aircraft and Weapons Board that Convair install variable discharge turbine (VDT) engines in the last thirty-four B-36s off the production line.[52] Every member of the board concurred with Spaatz's suggestion except one.[53] General Kenney responded unequivocally: "There is

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47. Letter, Kenney to Spaatz, 12 December 1946, quoted in *ibid.*, 77-78.

48. Spaatz to Essex Club Dinner, Newark, New Jersey, 15 January 1947, quoted in *ibid.*, 75

49. Letter, Spaatz to Kenney, 16 January 1947, quoted in *ibid.*, 80.

50. Memo, Spaatz to Kenney, 21 January 1947, quoted in *ibid.*, 78.

51. The AAF finally achieved its goal of independence in September, 1947, and became the United States Air Force.

52. Memo, Spaatz to Aircraft and Weapons Board, 15 October 1947, quoted in *ibid.*, 82-83.

53. Congress, House, Committee on Armed Services, *Investigation of the B-36 Bomber: Hearing before the Committee on Armed Services*, 81st Cong., 1st Sess., 9 August to 5 October 1949, 55. Referred to hereinafter as *B-36 Hearing*.

no future for this airplane." He recommended postponing production until the improved model became available.[54]

The air leadership did not object to Kenney's lack of enthusiasm for the B-36. By this time, many other members of the Aircraft and Weapons Board shared Kenney's reservations.[55] They supported continuing production out of their desire to obtain for the USAF some tangible return in light of the amount of taxpayer money it had invested. Kenney, however, ignored this line of reasoning and concentrated his argument on the practical issues surrounding the bomber. To him it seemed clear that if the B-36 did not meet requirements, the Air Force should cancel it. As Kenney put it, "[i]f the bomber had the performance and would do the job that I was charged with carrying out, I would buy it."[56]

The Air Force leadership understood Kenney's concerns; they did not, however, approve of his manner of expressing his position. The SAC commander refused to check the wording of his opinions, intent on convincing the Air Force to adopt his position. Even once the USAF had decided to produce the B-36, Kenney refused to acquiesce to the decision. Characteristically, Kenney demonstrated his political naïveté and lack of tact through his persistent remonstrations against the B-36.

By late 1947, Kenney's reservations had filtered upward and reached the ears of now Secretary of the Air Force Symington. In a one sentence memorandum, the secretary cautiously asked one of his subordinates to "look quietly in the B-36 contract."[57] In the meantime, however, Kenney persisted in his annoying dissension. At a meeting of the Aircraft and Weapons Board in late January 1948, Kenney stated

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54. Memo, Spaatz to Aircraft and Weapons Board, 15 October 1947, and 1st Indorsement, Kenney to Spaatz, 3 November 1947, quoted in *ibid.*, 82-83.

55. *Ibid.*, 73.

56. *B-36 Hearing*, 124.

57. Memorandum, Symington to Undersecretary Barrows, 29 December 1947, quoted in Green, 83-84.

his belief that the value of the nuclear bomb precluded taking chances on its delivery to a target, and "chances are that [in a B-36] it probably wouldn't get there."[58]

Over the next several months Convair surprised the USAF by issuing a new set of figures for the projected performance of the B-36. In response to these revised estimates, *not* in response to pressure from his superiors, Kenney finally modified his position: "We should go ahead with the 100 [B-36s] now on order and utilize them as best we can." Although still less than enthusiastic regarding the new bomber, Kenney felt the Air Force could use it as a combat plane in 1948 while waiting for production of the B-50.[59]

After a trip to the Convair plant in Fort Worth on 26 May 1948, Secretary Symington wrote to the Secretary of Defense, James V. Forrestal, that the criticism of the B-36 "is just a lot of nonsense."[60] Symington also forwarded a cryptic message to the Air Force Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations, General Hoyt S. Vandenberg: "All of us knew where much, if not most, of the criticism of this ship is [*sic*] coming from." Most likely, the secretary's comments referred to General George C. Kenney.[61]

In a 25 June 1948 conference, however, General Kenney agreed with Symington that the Air Force should continue the B-36 program.[62] The SAC commander had based his opposition on the technical failings of the bomber; once its

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58. Kenney, USAF Aircraft and Weapons Board Minutes, 27-30 January 1948, 187, quoted in *ibid.*, 84.

59. Memo, Kenney to Symington, 29 April 1948, quoted in *ibid.*, 88.

60. Letter, Symington to Forrestal, 26 May 1948, quoted in *ibid.*, 91.

61. Letter, Symington to Vandenberg, 7 June 1948, quoted in *ibid.*, 93. Symington's comments could also have referred to the Navy, which had opposed the B-36 in favor of a new supercarrier.

62. General Muir S. Fairchild, Vice Chief of Staff, Memo for Record, 25 June 1948, quoted in Michael E. Brown, *Flying Blind: The Politics of the U.S. Strategic Bomber Program* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992), 138. Note that the Air Force decided to purchase only 95 of the bombers.

performance had improved, Kenney felt that he could support a limited acquisition program.[63] Nonetheless, Kenney's frank and open opposition to the B-36 further damaged his relationships with other senior Air Force officials. That the SAC commander's criticisms had a basis in fact does not alter the outcome of his actions. Kenney's comportment during debates over the B-36 prejudiced his relationships with both General Spaatz and Secretary Symington. The increasing degree of alienation to which Kenney subjected himself did not bode well for the future.

II

Other issues besides the B-36 controversy contributed to Kenney's increasing professional isolation. Even after returning to SAC in late 1946, the general continued to give speeches around the nation arguing for a separate Air Force. As a result, Kenney severely limited the amount of time he spent at SAC Headquarters.[64] General Kenney felt comfortable with his absence, however, for in January 1947, he finally received the services of Major General Clements McMullen. Kenney quickly made McMullen his deputy commander and gave him sweeping authority to run the command in his absence.[65]

"[Kenney] trusted McMullen," recalled Colonel C. S. Irvine, Kenney's chief of staff at SAC Headquarters.[66] With public fears growing regarding the possibility of war with the Soviet Union, Kenney's attitude regarding SAC capabilities remained upbeat. When asked by reporters in April 1947, whether "we could fight a war tomorrow," the SAC commander responded with typical bravado, "Sure! We're not

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63. Letter, Kenney to Symington, 18 June 1949, quoted in *B-36 Hearing*, 122-23.

64. Irvine, Kipp interview, 17.

65. Hopkins and Goldberg, 7.

66. Irvine, Kipp interview, 17.

in too bad shape. We could do a job!"[67] Kenney failed to recognize the pernicious effects his absence had on the operational readiness of his command. McMullen's personnel policies amplified the problems inherent in the period of budgetary austerity which followed World War II (see introduction).

One of McMullen's policies sought to virtually eliminate non-flying personnel from SAC. Reviving an institutional bias from the interwar years, Kenney's deputy felt that only flight-rated officers had the requisite knowledge to run flight-support operations. This belief led directly to a brusque confrontation between Generals Kenney and Spaatz. SAC refused the services of three quartermaster colonels that AAF Headquarters had assigned to that command. General Spaatz wrote to General Kenney on 6 May 1947, noting that he had agreed to take twenty quartermaster colonels from the War Department. "[Y]ou and McMullen," he continued, "either are unfamiliar with . . . my earlier directive to you or are failing to carry out that directive." After arguing that SAC's position seemed "absurd" in light of the high qualifications of the three colonels, Spaatz closed his letter with a firm reminder to Kenney of his obligations: "I expect that you and your staff will become familiar with the Air Force policies and plans and will carry them out promptly and loyally."[68]

General Kenney's activity while SAC commander also estranged him from Secretary Symington. In May 1947, Kenney arranged for a "maximum effort mission" on New York City. 101 B-29 bombers flew over the metropolis in a "simulated attack."[69] While it initially received a positive reaction from the press, some criticized the Air Force for using alarmist tactics. Soon afterward, Symington wrote Kenney to

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67. *Los Angeles Times*, 9 April 1947, 1.

68. Letter, Spaatz to Kenney, 6 May 1947, Series III, Box 5, Folder 4, Borowski Papers.

69. Hopkins and Goldberg, 8. Note that the altitudes at which the B-29s flew over the city, around 8,000 feet, would not have been flown in an actual high-altitude bombardment mission. Citizens could not have seen the bombers had they flown at normal attack altitudes. In reality, then, the "attack" was not a training mission, but a publicity stunt.

express his chagrin over the negative effects the mission had on the public perception of the Air Force. Even more importantly, the secretary added, "with people in very high places the AF [Air Force] has a reputation for popping off."[70]

Kenney's opinion on the role of the service secretary also unsettled Symington. Kenney felt that the Air Force Chief of Staff should not take orders from "anyone with regard to aviation matters." The secretary should limit his role to defending the Air Force before Congress and seeking appropriations. Kenney noted that the World War II relationship between General Arnold and Assistant Secretary of War for Air, Robert Lovett, paralleled his ideas. He later disclosed his belief that his position on this issue adversely affected his chances to become Chief of Staff when Spaatz retired.[71]

Indeed, Kenney had fully expected that he would serve as the next Chief of Staff.[72] To his surprise, Spaatz chose General Hoyt S. Vandenberg, Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations, as his successor. Vandenberg had served with Spaatz in the European theatre during World War II where the two men had become close friends. Arnold, too, had confidence in the young general, and likely had a hand in his selection. Additionally, Vandenberg's uncle, Arthur H. Vandenberg, Sr., had served as a Republican United States Senator for many years, chairing the powerful Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Rumors grew that Truman agreed to appoint the younger Vandenberg as chief in return for political favors and foreign policy support from the senator.[73]

It seems more likely, however, that Spaatz recognized Vandenberg's competence, preferring him to the other available generals. McNarney, although the

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70. Symington to Kenney, 30 May 1947, quoted in Borowski, 142.

71. Kenney, Hasdorff interview, 61.

72. Letter, Kenney to Vandenberg, 2 April 1948, quoted in Meilinger, 93-94.

73. Meilinger, 91-95.

ranking general in the Air Force, lacked combat experience.[74] General Ira C. Eaker elected to retire at the same time as Spaatz.[75] Finally, General Kenney had long since divorced himself from the inner circle of the Air Force leadership. Still, Kenney and the new Chief of Staff maintained an amiable relationship. After hearing that Spaatz had chosen Vandenberg as his successor, Kenney wrote to his new boss, expressing his confidence and pledging "personal loyalty and utmost cooperation for the hard work that seems to be facing us" despite the fact that he had expected the position.[76]

Kenney owed his primary loyalty, of course, to General Douglas MacArthur. In contrast to his actions in 1944, MacArthur made no secret of his desire to run for President in 1948. Kenney had supported MacArthur's earlier bid for office (see chapter 2), and in 1948, he once again chose to meddle in presidential politics. On 11 May, Kenney wrote MacArthur, informing him that he had advised the production manager from "Meet the Press" to approach the army general regarding an appearance on the show. Kenney felt the program could serve as an ideal forum from which General MacArthur could launch his campaign:

> The country has a tremendous number of problems facing it and people this year particularly want the answers from someone they believe is qualified to give them. A lot of them are puzzled as to your attitude and wonder just how interested you are in solving those problems. . . . A short statement from you would clear up some of these doubts.[77]

Kenney's active support of General MacArthur, who ran against Senator Vandenberg in several primary elections, did not endear him to the new Chief of Staff.[78]

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74. *Ibid.*

75. Eaker, Tobin interview, 15.

76. Letter, Kenney to Vandenberg, 2 April 1948, quoted in Meilinger, 93-94.

77. Letter, Kenney to MacArthur, 21 May 1948, Record Group 5, SCAP, Office of Military Secretary, MacArthur Archives.

78. For a full account of MacArthur's quest for the Presidency in 1948, including his running against Senator Vandenberg, see D. Clayton James, *The Years of MacArthur*, v. 3, *1945-1964* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1985), 193-217.

Being twice denied the top position in the Air Force must have disillusioned General Kenney. "After all," he later wrote, "no one likes to be 'passed over' by someone junior in length of service."[79] The poor quality of Kenney's relationships with his superiors, which had only worsened during the postwar period, determined that he would not serve as Chief of Staff. The erstwhile SAC commander's statements while serving on the Military Staff Committee at the United Nations had embarrassed the War Department; Kenney's persistent recalcitrance on the B-36 issue aggravated and annoyed his superiors; his failed public relations schemes and opinion on the role of the civilian secretary vexed Mr. Symington. By the summer of 1948, Kenney had alienated his peers to the degree that he had no chance of serving as the next air chief. If anything, the Air Force leadership looked for an opportunity to lessen Kenney's prestige and influence, not increase it.

Meanwhile, General McMullen continued to exercise extraordinary control at SAC Headquarters, and Kenney remained largely absent from his post. Still concerned with his friend's and his country's welfare, General Whitehead tried to convince Kenney to pay greater heed to his primary responsibilities. In May 1948, Whitehead wrote his friend a lengthy letter discussing several courses of action he felt SAC must take in order to prepare for war. He reiterated the somber responsibilities which faced the Air Force: "George, if war comes, our country will initially suffer severe reverses. . . . It is time that you and I did something about our respective responsibilities and did it officially and in writing."[80] By the time he received Whitehead's admonition, however, Kenney's neglect of SAC's operational readiness had already sealed his fate.

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79. Kenney, *Reports*, 9.

80. Letter, Whitehead to Kenney, 10 May 1948, AFHRC #168.6008-3, Whitehead Papers.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

On 5 October 1948, the Secretary of the Air Force, W. Stuart Symington, wrote to President Harry S Truman: "It appears advisable in the national interest to reassign certain Air Force general officers." The secretary requested the transfer of General George C. Kenney from Strategic Air Command to Air University. The president's subsequent approval formalized a decision reached by General Vandenberg several months earlier.[1] General Whitehead, writing to Kenney after the official announcement of the transfer, expressed his astonishment: "I was shocked at your new assignment; shocked over your leaving SAC." Whitehead proceeded to list several possible reasons for the reassignment, including interference from both the Navy and an unidentified lieutenant general, and stated that he believed Vandenberg had "acquiesced" to Symington in the decision.[2] Whitehead ignored the two deciding factors: Kenney's had failed to prepare SAC for its critical mission of nuclear deterrence, and his personality had estranged him from other Air Force leaders.

This process of alienation had its roots in the interwar period, when Kenney worked in virtual isolation from his most significant contemporaries. Kenney never belonged to "General Arnold's gang,"[3] and indeed his relationship with the World War II Army Air Forces commander never fully developed. This contrasts starkly with the

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1. Letter, Symington to Truman, 5 October 1948, Official File, Truman Papers.

2. Letter, Whitehead to Kenney, 24 September 1948, AFHRC #168.6008-3, Whitehead Papers. The official announcement of Kenney's reassignment had occurred three days earlier, on 21 September 1948. Borowski, 159*n*.

3. Baker, Tobin interview, 26.

relationships between Arnold and two of Kenney's ablest contemporaries, Generals Spaatz and Eaker. Both of these men became protégés of General Arnold, following him throughout their careers. Furthermore, while Arnold, Spaatz, and Eaker repeatedly reaffirmed their commitment to the doctrine of strategic bombing, Kenney remained beholden to attack aviation through the Second World War.

Kenney's assignment to the Pacific theatre during World War II drastically altered the terms of his interactions with Arnold. The situation there required "a cocky, enthusiatic little man" like Kenney (who was only 5' 6" tall), but the secondary status of the Pacific to the European theatre meant that Kenney would have to fight constantly for resources and personnel.[4] This fact alone prefigured most of the disagreements he had with Arnold. The most dramatic example of this is what Major General Haywood S. Hansell later characterized as a "bitter" contest for control of the B-29 Superfortress.[5] Arnold and Kenney held two competing visions for use of the bomber. The Southwest Pacific airman fought with self-defeating tenacity and aggravating endurance for the assignment of the B-29 to his command. Arnold, however, saw the aircraft from a strictly strategic viewpoint. He feared that theatre commanders would dilute the long-term effectiveness of Superfortress operations by employing it tactically. The futility of Kenney's pleadings and the depth of the ensuing disagreement between him and Arnold becomes clear by superimposing Kenney's barrage of requests over the vast array of pressures and constraints which influenced Arnold's disposition. By the end of the war, the B-29 controversy, coupled with other wartime disagreements, had caused a serious personal and professional rift to develop between the two men.

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4. *Time*, 18 January 1943, 28.

5. Haywood S. Hansell, Undated manuscript "American Air Power in World War II," 285, Series I, Box 1, Folder 1, Hansell Papers. Hansell later scratched out the word "bitter" and replaced it with the word "active."

From the end of the war to 1948, Kenney gave Arnold and his successors little reason to revise their estimates of him. Kenney performed less than satisfactorily in his post-war assignments at both Strategic Air Command and the United Nations. He often made irresponsible statements which damaged the public image of the air arm and embarrassed its leaders. Furthermore, during this period Kenney became involved in an acrimonious dispute with his superiors over procurement of the B-36 bomber. His persistent opposition to this project contributed to the further deterioration of his relationships with his peers.

Kenney often blamed the lack of comity between himself and other air officers on his friendship with General Douglas MacArthur. He later claimed that "MacArthur resented what he considered Hap's interference" during World War II and that the army general "scared" Arnold.[6] Rather than hostility towards MacArthur, however, Arnold and his protégés held the charismatic army general in high regard. This respect had its roots in the interwar years. Although unwilling to sacrifice the ground force budget in order to promote airpower, these years did see MacArthur repeatedly advance the air cause, earning praise from even the most zealous advocates of airpower.[7] During World War II, Kenney repeatedly rebuffed the air chief by giving his primary loyalty to his theatre commander. He constantly reminded Arnold that he reported to MacArthur, not AAF Headquarters. In 1944, Kenney's intense personal loyalty to his commander extended to the political realm, as evidenced by his support of MacArthur's ill-fated presidential bid.

After the war, air leaders recognized the close ties between Kenney and his wartime boss. They appreciated the sway that MacArthur held on Capitol Hill and

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6. Kenney, Haedorff interview, 57. Kenney claimed that "Arnold was scared of [MacArthur] because [he] was superintendent [of West Point] when Arnold was a cadet." However, Arnold graduated from the Academy in 1903, and MacArthur did not become superintendent until 1919.

7. This interpretation of MacArthur's somewhat inconsistent support of the Air Corps comes from D. Clayton James, *The Years of MacArthur*, vol. 1, *1880-1941* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1975).

noted that despite his failed presidential adventure in 1944, the army general still had political aspirations. Should MacArthur realize his goal, Kenney could expect a commensurate rise in rank. Even if MacArthur failed in his pursuit, he possessed sufficient political clout to shield Kenney from excessive chastisement. Either way, the air leadership could expect a sharp political reprisal should any iniquities befall Kenney. Significantly, the Air Force did not relieve Kenney from his command until the political situation had progressed to the point where it minimized the negative consequences such action might engender. By late-September 1948, MacArthur had removed himself from contention for the Republican presidential nomination.

With MacArthur no longer a factor and SAC's capabilities obviously below standards, Vandenberg decided to relieve Kenney immediately rather than restate SAC's responsibilities and afford its commander another opportunity. Vandenberg saw the situation as so critical that only such a bold action would alleviate the problem. Additionally, the previous Chief of Staff, General Spaatz, had already indicated his disapproval with Kenney and McMullen on several occasions. Nonetheless, Kenney might have retained his position at SAC if he had maintained close personal and professional ties with other Air Force leaders. Not only might Vandenberg have tolerated more from a personal friend, but the quality of communication between the two men would have improved markedly. Instead, the only personal admonitions Kenney received regarding his negligent treatment of SAC came from Whitehead, a lieutenant general stationed in Japan.

Vandenberg's failure to notify Kenney of his dissatisfaction with SAC's performance prior to deciding to relieve him provides unique insight into the political machinations that occurred at the highest levels of the postwar Air Force. After World War II, the AAF existed in an atmosphere charged by the politics of seeking independence. For ranking airmen, no other issue had the same priority as that of gaining autonomy from the Army. No matter what their personal objections to General

Kenney, the Air Force leadership recognized that his outstanding performance during the Pacific war and his superb speaking ability made him a model publicist for the Air Force cause. Although this recognition did not eliminate air leaders' reservations regarding Kenney, it did make them willing to tolerate his idiosyncrasies, especially since he still had the ear of the ever-political MacArthur.

Once the Air Force had gained its independence and MacArthur had eschewed his 1948 presidential ambitions, the two factors that had made Kenney respectively valuable to and untouchable by the Air Force had evaporated. General Vandenberg could then act on his opinion of Kenney as a difficult and egoistic subordinate. While the existence of a Machiavellian plot to remove Kenney remains untenable, General Vandenberg and his staff certainly did not attempt to help Kenney recognize and correct his command's deficiencies. Instead, the lack of capability at SAC presented a convenient, albeit unimpugnable, excuse for Vandenberg to relieve General Kenney.

Vandenberg's decision had far-reaching significance. Most importantly, it cleared the way for the rise of General Curtis E. LeMay, who eventually served as Air Force Chief of Staff. LeMay took SAC from its feeble beginnings and created a powerful atomic striking force at the forefront of America's national security policy. Of course, LeMay had the benefit of both financial and moral support never enjoyed by General Kenney.[8] Still, the new commander deserves most of the credit for turning SAC around. Within a year, LeMay had doubled the number of operational heavy bombardment groups in SAC and added aerial refueling capability to the command's armory.[9]

Meanwhile, General Kenney adjusted to his new assignment at Air University. On 9 October 1948, the day before his transfer officially took effect, Kenney visited Carswell Air Force Base, Texas, for the inauguration of the first operational B-36

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8. Borowski, 157.

9. Hopkins and Goldberg, 11-15.

wing. He spoke words of reconciliation, applying a palliative to his most recent altercation with air leaders. "I am here . . . to lay to rest that ghost of the B-36. . . . It has had its teething troubles, of course, but in some ways it has had fewer teething troubles than most new airplanes."[10] Seeing the inevitability of his relief from SAC, Kenney's egoism drove him to fall gracefully from operational command.

When asked about the causes of his reassignment years later, Kenney responded abruptly: "I never argued about a transfer."[11] Rather than attesting to his naïveté, Kenney's curt refusal to speculate implies that he understood the factors which led to his relief. Kenney realized that his transfer represented the completion of the process of estrangement that he had begun during the 1920s. With this burdensome knowledge weighing on his mind, the man whom MacArthur once lauded as "the greatest air commander of the war" descended into the realm of historical anonymity as the commander of Air University.[12]

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10. *Washington Post*, 9 October 1948, 1.

11. Kenney later added, "I don't question any motives or anything. I don't think there was any Machiavellian plot or anything." Kenney, Haadorff interview, 153-54.

12. Cable, SCAP Tokyo, Japan [MacArthur] to Kenney, AFHRC #168.7103-12, Kenney Papers.

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