

Mr. Bell:

~~Letter to~~

Commanding General Third Army.

From: Third Army ^{Advisory} Committee, Huntsville, Alabama

Dear Sir:

- ① Hope you can read it. May you possibly con.
 - ② These decisions due Thurs so Friday. Therefore suggest this get out today Tuesday.
- ~~Mark~~

Our committee has been familiar with the problem created at the Army Ballistic Missile Agency by the assignment of operational control of the land based IRBM to the U.S. Air Force. One of us has consented to be the attorney for Lt. J. C. Williams if his case should be referred to a court martial for decision.

It is obvious that Lt. Williams was acting for ^{what he thought was} the best interest of the national defense as a whole and for the Army, in particular. His attorney can see no reasonable grounds for prosecution for ~~any~~ violation of any law. Although certain security regulations may have been broken, ~~no information~~ it is known that ^{at all} most of the information ^{involved} could be declassified, and that further that even this information was not compromised.

We agree generally with Col. Wickham's analysis of the situation.

We know that failure to ~~fully~~ ^{fully} utilize the ABMA team on the I RBM will result in the loss of ~~some~~ ^{some} years in availability of this weapon to the United States. We also know that failure to utilize this group will result in the waste of scarce scientific ability and engineering talent in ~~a~~ ^a ~~area~~ ^{field} critical to the national defense. We also feel strongly that the Army needs longer range missiles as an integral part of its weapon systems. We feel that these vital objectives tend to justify to a considerable extent the extraordinary actions taken by Col. Wickham not in consonance with regulations.

This officer has already been restricted for two months, to ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~Colonel's~~ ^{Colonel's} ~~Redstone Arsenal,~~ ^{Redstone Arsenal,} he has apparently given certain transfer and consequent movement costs, ~~that~~ ^{that} he has lost his assignment to a program of ~~the~~ ^{the} in which he is deeply interested, his home has been searched, and he and his wife have been followed by intelligence personnel.

and undoubtedly enhanced itself.

It is ~~commonly~~ known ~~that~~ in Huntsville that this officer was primarily responsible for obtaining the Jupiter program for the Army. His contributions to the ~~development~~ development of new weapons for the Army have been important ~~and~~ ~~needed~~ ~~the~~ ~~Army~~. ~~It is known, at an official~~ ~~and~~ ~~considerable~~ ~~presight~~ ~~and~~ ~~initiative~~ on quite a few other occasions.

Some citizens, including scientists who have worked with Col. Tucker, have complained to me about the apparent unwillingness of the Army to ~~take~~ ~~any~~ ~~action~~ ~~possible~~ ~~detrimental~~ ~~to~~ ~~Col~~ ~~Tucker's~~ ~~interest~~. ~~The~~ ~~fact~~ ~~is~~ ~~in~~ ~~view~~ ~~of~~ ~~the~~ ~~his~~ ~~accomplishments~~, ~~and~~ ~~concluding~~ ~~that~~ ~~he~~ ~~has~~ ~~accomplished~~ ~~many~~ ~~things~~ ~~for~~ the Army ~~weapon~~ program and that his actions were taken with ~~no~~ ~~little~~ ~~no~~ ~~consideration~~ of his own future interests, we do ~~not~~ ~~consider~~ that trial by court martial ~~is~~ ~~a~~ ~~proper~~ will reflect credit on the administration of the Dept. of the Army, and in our humble opinion it will impair the progress of the splendid work being accomplished at Redstone Arsenal and ABMA.

Faithfully yours,

DRAFT - 2/26/57

To: Commanding General Third Army

From: Third Army Advisory Committee, Huntsville, Alabama

Dear Sir:

Our Committee ~~has been~~ familiar with the problems created at the Army Ballistic Missile Agency by the assignment of operational control of the land based IRBM to the U. S. Air Force. One of us has consented to be the attorney for Col. J. C. Nickerson if his case should be referred to a court-martial for decision.

in its efforts to work closely with RS & + ABMA has become
 We are familiar with certain facts involved & feel very strongly
 It is obvious that Col. ^{J.C.} Nickerson was acting for what he thought was the best interest of the national defense as a whole and for the Army in particular.

upon the advice of [unclear] we
 His attorney can see no reasonable grounds for prosecution for violation of any law. *we strongly and seriously doubt that the best welfare of the missile & rocket program will be served by prosecution proceedings against this case* Although certain security regulations may have been broken, it is *undisputedly treated in the Col's* obvious that most ~~of all~~ of the information involved could be declassified;

and, further, that even this information was *reduced to a very few highly responsible & vital interests of further* not compromised.

we strongly feel and are convinced
 We know that failure to utilize fully the ABMA team on the IRBM will result in the loss of some years in availability of this weapon to the United States.
we further feel
 We also know that failure to utilize this group will result in the waste of scarce scientific and engineering talent in a field critical to the national defense. We also feel strongly that the Army needs longer range missiles as an integral part of its weapons systems. We feel that these vital objectives tend to justify to a considerable extent actions taken by Col. Nickerson not in consonance with regulations.

intense desire to help service in pursuing the program at Redstone

