

[Letter from CAPT Arleigh Burke VADM Felix Stump. 19 September 1949.]
[Letter of Transmittal from VADM Stump to CAPT Burke. 16 September 1949.]
[Copy of letter from VADM Stump to CAPT John Crommelin. 16 September 1949.]

To Cdr. Wilson
and return to

Burke

19 September 1949

Vice Admiral Felix B. Stump, USN,
Commander Air Force Atlantic Fleet
c/o FPO Branch
Norfolk, Virginia.

Dear Admiral:

I agree with the sentiment which you express in your letter to John Crommelin. We will assist John as much as we possibly can on "not to interfere with B-36" basis.

John has done a marvelous, unselfish job and he has obtained surprisingly good support. That support, as you have pointed out, will depend on keeping the whole matter on a very high plane, and not getting into personalities. John has no intention of getting into personalities unless he is pushed, I think. We will help him rewrite his statement along the lines which you have suggested.

I think the Navy will come out of this thing in pretty good shape. We are getting wonderful support from a lot of people outside the Navy, who are not interested in the Navy, but who are interested in the security of their country.

Sincerely yours,

ARLEIGH BURKE

l:djj

(copy to Capt. John Crommelin)

Folder: "File No. 27"
Unnumbered Box
Arleigh A. Burke Papers
Operational Archives
Naval Historical Center

Sent to The Brown Shoe Project
By David F. Anderson, March 30, 2008

COMMANDER AIR FORCE ATLANTIC FLEET
NAVAL AIR STATION, NORFOLK, VIRGINIA
MAIL ADDRESS: C/O FPO BRANCH, NORFOLK, VIRGINIA

16 September 1949

Captain Arleigh A. Burke,
Navy Department,
Washington 25, D.C.

Dear Arleigh:

Enclosed herewith is a copy of a letter I am sending to John Crommelin.

Sincerely,

/s/ Felix Stump

FELIX B. STUMP
Vice Admiral, U.S. Navy

FBS:mfb

16 September 1949

Captain John G. Crommelin, USN,
c/o Deputy Chief of Naval Operations (Air),
Navy Department,
Washington 25, D. C.

Dear John:

Since you have left I have been reading over your statement. I believe that this statement is not suitable, in its present form, for testimony before any investigating committee or court of inquiry unless it is carefully documented, which can be done.

Where pertinent, you can make such statements as the following:

"I agree with statement made by Congressman Hoffman of Michigan, and quote such statement from the Congressional Record of 2 August, as follows", or

"I quote from the statement of Mr. Hoover, contained in before the Tydings Committee", or

"I quote from Mr. Eberstadt's statement as follows contained in"

What I am trying to say is that your opinions are useless in any kind of legal or quasi-legal investigation, unless completely documented and supported by opinions of others who will carry weight.

I strongly recommend that you work over this statement with Arleigh Burke's assistance.

I also recommend that Admiral Durgin or Admiral Price team you up with Arleigh Burke and such others as are desirable to work up a "case for the Navy", which can be definitely and positively supported by documentary or other irrefutable evidence.

I again stress that the best line of argument is to build up a "case for the Navy" showing that it is an irreplaceable and absolutely essential part of the National Defense establishment, without engaging in vituperation or conjecture (such as the cause of Forrestal's death, Eisenhower's intentions . . .) which cannot be supported by sound evidence.

An example of such conjecture is the statement that Lieutenant Ingram saw a [illegible] document. This should be supported by evidence such as a photostatic copy or otherwise, but unless sworn evidence can be obtained with certainty, supporting such a statement, it will be denied and more harm than good will be accomplished by what will appear to be an unsupported, random guess or opinion caused or stimulated by panic.

Moreover, forget the B-36 and stick to principles. Where necessary, bring out false conceptions of rules in future warfare.

Captain John G. Crommelin

16 September 1949

The Navy's fundamental error and tragic mistake since 1945 is in not having a good sound policy. This is rendered even more tragic because the Air Force has a sound policy, with every effort being directed to the accomplishment of that policy, both in public relations and in unified support of general officers and civilian secretariat, which we have lacked in the Navy.

The Navy should have a committee (secret, if necessary) topped by a flag officer authorized to have direct access to the Chief of Naval Operations, to formulate and direct such policy.

Every statement and action should be a furtherance of an accomplishment of that policy. Assistance should be given by a sub-committee or committees as necessary. You and Arleigh Burke should be part of such team.

I further believe that unilateral action on your part may jeopardize results you are patriotically endeavoring to accomplish. By unilateral action I mean action taken without careful consideration of every statement made including obtaining the best advice and help you can obtain within the Navy Department.

Best regards,

Sincerely,

FELIX B. STUMP,
Vice Admiral, U. S. Navy

FBS:mfb