

The Evening Star  
Washington, D.C., Friday, October 7, 1949

## **Bogan's Letter and Indorsements**

*Following is the text of a letter from Vice Admiral Gerald F. Bogan, Commander of the 1<sup>st</sup> Task Fleet in the Pacific, to Secretary of the Navy Matthers concening Capt. John G. Crommelin, and the indorsements by Vice Admiral A.W. Radford, Pacific Fleet commander, and Admiral [Louis] Denfird, chief of Naval Operations:*

### **Admiral Bogan's Letter.**

My Dear Mr. Secretary:

At the beginning it is proper for me to state that in no manner have I, to date, indorsed or condemned Capt. Crommelin's statement because no one has asked me to do so. Had such been the case honest necessity and conscience would have required hearty and complete agreement with the affirmations made in his release to or interview with the press.

Your dispatch, which prompts this letter, is surprising in its interpretation of the motive in the basic statement. It avers that the Crommelin statement and subsequent public utterances have embarrassed the progress of unification and harmony and the Navy Department. It further states that these remarks have been inspired by apprehensions concerning the future of naval aviation. Mr. Secretary, while realizing that this is your honest belief, that interpretation of the genesis of Crommelin's release is the most superficial gloss and does not remotely touch the heart of the question. The basic reason behind all of it is a genuine fear in the Navy for the security of our country if the policies followed in the Department of Defense since the National Security Act became law are not drastically changed, and soon.

### **Testimony Recalled.**

It is necessary for me to assert now to you that I opposed the act as written and passed and so testified before the committee. My reasons for opposition and suggestions for other methods of achieving ultimate unity in the military establishment were given at that time, 1 July 1947. I forecast much of what subsequently occurred. Records of that testimony are available. The creation of three departments or sub departments where formerly there were but two is not unification. Under the present law it can be made to and does operate effectively in the field. But it would be sheer balderdash to assume that there has been anything approaching it among the secretariat, the joint staff or the high command of all three services. Knowing that honest differences of opinion must constantly be present, bickering is still the rule; unanimity is still the rule.

The morale of the Navy is lower today than at any time since I entered the commissioned ranks in 1916. Lowered morale, to some degree, may be expected to follow any war during the readjustment to the organization for peace. In my opinion this descent, almost to despondency, stems from complete confusion as to the future role of the Navy and its advantages or disadvantages as a permanent career. Optimistic letters and plans issue from Washington. And concurrently the situation deteriorates with each press release. The younger men are necessarily concerned with their future security. We of greater age, and, we hope, more mature judgment are fearful that the country is being, if it has not already been, sold a false bill of goods. Junior officers, in large numbers, whose confidence I enjoy, have come to me asking advice on their future

course of action. I have invariably encouraged them to enhance their professional ability against the day when the troublesome questions now paramount would be equably resolved. It is becoming increasingly difficult for me to do this honestly.

### **No Cheap, Quick Victory.**

If the adequate military or defense establishment could be achieved without a Navy and naval aviation I would gladly advocate using funds now expended to maintain that service, on the procurement of the best other necessary weapons and equipment. Not even the United States can support indefinitely, during peace, the tragically large military budgets we are now devouring.

There is no cheap, quick victory possible between any two nations or groups of nations each having strong, even if relatively unequal, power. Yet at a time as potentially critical as ever existed during our history, the public has been lured into complacency by irresponsible speeches by the advocates of this theory. The result could be a great national and world-wide catastrophe.

I have been informed that when the committee hearings resume in October the Navy will be afforded the opportunity to state its case completely on the items comprising the agenda. Since Capt. Crommelin's press statement, I am more optimistic than before that such will be the case. But the agenda does not cover the fundamentals of our national security. It embraces a totality, all pertinent but by no means the complete whole. It is my earnest hope that at some time in the near future this vital subject may be thoroughly explored with no consideration being given to the reputations nor politics of the witnesses who appear. It is bigger than personalities, broader and deeper than politics. It is our country.

Respectfully,  
C. F. BOGAN

### **Radford Statement.**

1. Forwarded.
2. Vice Admiral Bogan is an officer of great ability and wide experience in naval aviation and naval warfare. There is no question of his sincerity and high principles. I know that the writing of his letter was motivated by sincere patriotism.
3. Rightly or wrongly, the majority of officers in the Pacific Fleet concur with Captain Crommelin and with the ideas expressed by Vice Admiral Bogan above. Most will avoid any statements to that effect, and they would probably question the propriety and timing of such public statements. Nevertheless, it would be a grave mistake to underestimate the depth and sincerity of their feelings.
4. Because of my conviction that this letter is representative of a general feeling, I commend it to your attention.

A. W. RADFORD

### **Denfield Statement.**

1. Forwarded.
2. I concur in the indorsement of commander in chief, Pacific Fleet. Naval officers have faith in the Navy and a knowledge of the aggressive role it plays in the defense of the country. They are convinced that a Navy stripped of its offensive power means a Nation stripped of its offensive power.
3. I believe that Fleet Admiral King in October, 1945, summed up the present Navy-wide concern when in a report he stated, ". . . Sea power will not be accorded adequate recognition, because the organization contemplated would permit reduction of the sea

power by individuals who are not thoroughly familiar with its potentialities, as has happened in several other countries. France never used her navy to good advantage. The German general staff failed, in two wars, to appreciate the potency of sea power. The absorption of Britain's crack Royal Navy Air Service into an independent Royal Air Force and the consequent withering of her naval aviation left her in 1941 a second-rate navy. Another significant fact is that Japan's collapse was coincident with the reduction of her sea power—at the end of the war she was stronger on the ground and in the air than at the start, but her navy was practically eliminated. It follows that if the Navy's welfare—and I sincerely believe that to be the case—any step that is not good for the Navy is not good for the Nation.

LOUIS DENFIELD

