

# AIR TRANSPORT ASSOCIATION

of America

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June 6, 1967

Hon. L. Mendel Rivers  
Chairman  
Armed Services Committee  
House of Representatives  
Washington, D. C. 20515

Dear Chairman Rivers:

I apologize for bringing the LOH matter to your personal attention, but as the LOH investigation seemingly nears its conclusion I find myself more concerned about certain undertones which have become apparent. Since you have always been a staunch friend of the military man - particularly those who fought with courage for what they believed to be the right - I would like to summarize the situation as I see it, also to make sure the record is correct.

This letter is not meant to complain about Chairman Hardy or his subcommittee. However, they are deeply involved in the investigative process. This process by its very nature seeks to find things wrong and to view all that it discovers with suspicion. It is not primarily interested in vindicating the innocent, in the protection of their rights, or in removing the stigma which invariably attaches itself to those who are known to be involved in these investigations. Nor does it give primary emphasis to placing facts in context. In view of this I find the following particularly disturbing:

a. My contributions to national security seem to have been ignored or distorted. I was responsible for the organizational blueprint of the 1st Air Cavalry Division; and it is still organized on this blueprint today in Vietnam. In addition to its combat effectiveness I designed into this division a degree of strategic air mobility far beyond that of any comparable fighting force. (I was the J-3 of the U. S. Strike Command at the time.) As Director of Army Aviation from 1959-1961 I played a part in the development of every modern Army aircraft now in use in Vietnam today. In short I say without fear of contradiction that the Army is in better condition today than it would be without my efforts. I need not tell you that this involved many bitter struggles with the bureaucrats of

the Defense Department who were already doing so much to slow down or wipe out these important modern aircraft programs under the rationale of "cost-effectiveness." In my dealings with industry I supported those contractors who were effective members of the military/industry team and opposed those who sought to profit at the taxpayers' expense. Presumably the subcommittee should be interested in the latter with their many ECP's, unnecessary spare part sales, and other devices to inflate costs. Yet I have seen no sign that the subcommittee has any interest in this part of the story except to listen to the charges of hostile contractors.

b. With respect to the LOH program, there appears to be a similar mistreatment of the facts. In the 1961 design evaluation, the Board was given a technical evaluation which has been proved by subsequent experience to have been wrong. I opposed the position which was based upon this fallacious evaluation. My opposition resulted in the development of the OH6 helicopter, which proved to be a breakthrough in helicopter design and which, despite production problems, gives the U. S. Army the outstanding small helicopter in the world and the holder of 23 world records. There seems to be no concern about the courage which my actions required, but instead a preoccupation with what might have been wrong with it. The subcommittee has not developed a single fact to support any suspicion of impropriety or wrong doing on my part. At the same time I see no concern for what might have caused the technical evaluation team to present such a fallacious report as they did.

c. With respect to the 1964 leak of information on the LOH, certain facts are known:

1. The Hiller organization has long been recognized for one of the most effective industrial espionage operations in Washington.
2. Mr. Hiller was in possession of certain classified information in October, 1964.
3. There is a direct conflict between his testimony and Mr. Bayer's on how he obtained this information.
4. Certain elements of this information had been discussed rather freely among government evaluation technicians and members of industry.

Now these facts would seem to explain the leak. But as recently as May 24, 1967, Chairman Hardy was still concerned about the fact that I "might have

had access to information about the LOH." Many people "might have had access," it is true. However, I have testified under oath that I received no classified information and therefore could not have passed any on. Further, I had no motivation to do so. No evidence has been presented to contradict this statement in any way. Why, then, is Chairman Hardy so intent upon inventing a second source of the leak when he has already developed one source with solid evidence? (Actually, it is common knowledge in industry circles that all three competitors for the LOH contract were in possession of the same information that Mr. Hiller reported receiving from Mr. Bayer.)

d. Finally, there are strong indications that the subcommittee is attempting to exaggerate the extent of my friendship with Mr. Bayer. This, too, I base on statements by Mr. Hardy. The facts are that I was equally friendly with many other members of industry. As I have testified under oath, I rejected and opposed three of the four proposals which Mr. Bayer made to the Army while he was with Hughes Tool Company. The only time I supported his position was in the case of the LOH; and this action stands on its own merits. It needs no apology. To further prove my point I call attention to the fact that on only one occasion during our entire acquaintance did Mr. Bayer stay overnight at my quarters, and that was in October 1963 at Ft. Rucker because he was accompanied by Mrs. Bayer. This is hardly descriptive of a truly close friendship between two men.

In brief, then, the subcommittee has found no wrongdoing or impropriety on my part. Yet it has continued to hound me and query me about unfounded and farfetched suspicions. Even this I could accept if it were not for the damage which such a process can do to one's reputation. This is aggravated by official subcommittee releases to the press about closed hearings. (See Aviation Daily, 29 May 1967 a copy of which is attached.) Since the assumption is always to the effect that where there is smoke there is fire, this could have extreme adverse effects upon my present and future earning capacity.

However, there is a more fundamental issue at stake. Your Committee is the white hope of the many hundreds of military officers who are trying to protect our military posture from the ravages of computers and cost effectiveness. If they feel the responsible committees of Congress are with them, they will go on fighting. But if my case conveys the kind of treatment they can expect from you, many more of them will give up the ghost and let the systems analysts have their way. And we will be a few steps closer to the abdication of the military. This may sound like a self-serving statement, but I know from talking to my many friends in the service what a violent reaction the LOH investigation is causing in their attitude toward the Congress.

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Therefore, Mr. Chairman, in view of my prior service to my country and its security and in view of the fact that in nearly a year of investigation (at great expense to the taxpayers) the subcommittee has not produced a single fact to validate any suspicion of impropriety or wrongdoing on my part - I hereby request that my innocence be made known without delay. I further request that as a citizen and taxpayer I be favored with a reply to this letter.

I regret that it has been necessary for me to write this letter, but when one's reputation and earning power are under attack and when the attitude of the military toward the Congress is at stake, one wants to be sure the record is crystal clear in every respect. I trust that this letter will serve that purpose.

Yours respectfully,

Clifton F. von Kann  
Major General, USA (Ret.)

cc: Mr. Hardy, Chairman of the Subcommittee