

ER 7-5050/a

Mr. Cornelius Van H. Engert

[Redacted]

Dear Van:

Many thanks for your letter of October 6 expressing your concern over the observations of your son, Roderick, while visiting in the Boeing B-52 plant at Seattle, Washington.

The information contained in your letter is a bit out of my bailiwick but I am certainly in a position to bring the matter to the attention of the Air Force. I am forwarding today a copy of your letter to the appropriate Air Force authorities.

With best regards.

Faithfully,

Allen W. Dulles
Director

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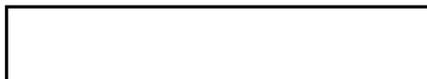
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STATOTHR

October 6, 1955

CONFIDENTIAL

Dear Allen:

I have just had a letter from my son, Roderick, who is on his way to Formosa, written en route from Seattle to San Francisco and dated October 2, 1955. As it contains some observations which I think should be brought to the attention of the appropriate authorities I am passing them on to you.

While in Seattle Roderick was taken on a tour of the Boeing B-52 Plant by a brother-in-law of his who works there. This plant apparently produces the very latest heavy (8-jet) bomber now in production and I understand that at the present moment the Seattle plant is its sole producer. (A second Boeing plant in Kansas is getting ready to produce the B-52).

My son says that he was amazed to find that any casual visitor to this Plant could observe that each bomber as it is assembled is numbered with its correct consecutive number, and that these numbers are conspicuously displayed on the body, wings, tail, etc. to make sure that sections bearing the same number are fitted into the same aircraft. In other words, not only every one of the many thousands of employees, but any visitor, need only enter one of the buildings, to glance at these numbers, and to know at once the cumulative total to date of B-52 planes produced for our Air Force.

To make matters worse, I understand that the U.S.A.F. also accepts these bombers numbered consecutively, so that even a visitor to any B-52 base would likewise be able to ascertain at least the minimum number produced to date by merely noting the highest number he saw.

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The Honorable
Allen W. Dulles
2430 E Street, N.W.
Washington 25, D. C.

As I understand that the B-52 is probably the most important element in the hitting power of the U.S.A.F. Strategic Air Command - for purposes of massive retaliation almost at once anywhere in the world - everything connected with the B-52 must be of the utmost interest to any potential enemy.

My son therefore suggests the Boeing Plant be instructed not to use consecutive numbers on the B-52s, and that the U.S.A.F. itself cease using consecutive numbers on these bombers.

I can hardly believe that the National Security Council is aware of the fact that the rate of production of this very crucial Stratofortress can be so easily ascertained, and I assume they would wish to take some corrective action as soon as possible.

Please let me know whether you are in a position to bring the matter to the attention of the Air Force.

As ever



Cornelius Van H. Engert