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The Congressional Aviation Policy Board, whose report (Senate Report 949, "National Air Policy") was presented to Congress on March 1st, has made a unique and significant contribution to the military security and economic health of the nation. In my capacity as Chairman, I make this statement from a full recognition of the truly bi-partisan and bi-cameral cooperation which its members gave, without stint, in a time of grave national peril.

In an earlier issue, your Editor has described the work of the President's Air Policy Commission, whose "Survival in the Air Age" will continue for a long time to come as a great exposition of the meaning of air power. There has been some confusion about the existence and the work of two such contemporary policy bodies, which, in spite of frequent explanations, still needs clarification.

The Foreward to the Congressional Report states: "Within two years after cessation of hostilities in World War II, general concern over national security and the threatened bankruptcy of the aircraft industry and civil air carriers of the United States, indicated necessity for review of national aviation policy by the Congress.

"As early as January 1947, legislation was introduced in the Senate for establishment of a National Aviation Policy Board. After months of debate, a bill, H.R. 3587, was passed by both Houses on July 22, 1947. This act to provide for the establishment of a temporary Congressional Aviation Policy Board, was signed by the President on July 30, 1947, thus becoming Public Law 287."

It was during the course of the debate on H.R. 3587 that the President, on July 18th, announced the appointment of his Commission. Sceptics immediately saw in the parallel action of the White House and the Congress the probability of duplication of effort and of rivalry for the limelight. Instead, the Board and the Commission met as soon as they were organized and came to a completely satisfactory arrangement for their working procedures. The action of each was independent, but the Commission held public hearings, making its transcripts of testimony available to the Board every twenty-four hours. The Board set up a distinguished Advisory Council of civil and military experts and a staff to digest the Commission's testimony and to do voluminous additional research. Its own sessions were executive and top level policy officers of the Government departments and the military services were called for full and frank discussion of the problems facing the United States.

When the President's Commission's report became available on January 1st, its recommendations were given the most earnest consideration. In certain respects, there was close agreement on general policy; in some the Board's decisions differed from those of the Commission. Those differences resulted partly from the fact that the Board was able to gain more concrete information on certain vital points, but arose largely from the very nature of the two bodies.

It must be remembered that the Board was an instrument of the Congress, established to report to the Congress. Its members were able to introduce bills in the House and Senate which would implement the recommendations they had made. Because time was of the essence, short cuts to action by the necessary committees of the House and Senate were taken by inviting members of the Armed

Services and Appropriations Committees of both chambers to sit as Ex-Officio Members during the Board's sessions. As soon as the Report had been made to the Congress, the work of preparing bills began and twenty-one pieces of major legislation have now been introduced in both House and Senate.

There is another point about the Board which must be emphasized. Congress is responsible to the people not only for legislation, but also for authorization of the expenditure of funds from the public Treasury. With the tremendous demands being made upon the United States at the present time, the addition of billions of dollars in appropriations' requests to reestablish the greatest air power in the world as a prime security essential was a matter of grave concern. The Board found that priorities must be decided -- that first things must come first or the country would be pushed into bankruptcy. The initial step was to move for an over-all estimate on the national budget, and constant pressure was exerted on the Joint Chiefs of Staff to produce a unified plan of action and a unified, instead of a triple budget for the common defense.

The acute financial situation of the aircraft industry was early seen to present no problem once plans were developed for rebuilding a major air force. Long range procurement, to be authorized by law, plus the orders which would flow from the military services would automatically solve the industry's difficulties. This process is now under way.

In the case of the air transportation industry, first priority was assigned to an All-Weather Air Traffic Control System, which would ultimately eliminate the present crippling schedule delays and cancellations due to unflyable weather. The industry is losing approximately $40,000,000 a year from such delays and cancellations, and there have been too many accidents caused by weather. The

present system of Federal Airways is outmoded by the newer aircraft and is so overburdened by existing traffic that stacking over airports for hours at a time results. Relief for civilian flying is urgently needed and in case of war, it would be impossible to inject immense numbers of military aircraft into the system.

When the new aids are installed and working, however, it will be able to handle fleets of 5,000 planes without overloading.

Probably the outstanding achievement in this program of the Radio Technical Committee for Aeronautics is that it represents agreement, for the first time in air history, of every element of civil and military aviation on the devices and techniques which will give the greatest service to all components. Such an agreement is little short of a miracle — but it WAS achieved and can now be put into effect. The interim program will take five years to reach full development, and the target program, in which a considerable amount of fresh research is involved, another four years. The cost will be slightly in excess of a billion dollars but the Board feels that this is one major expenditure which will earn its keep. Since the airlines must be supported by mail pay until they can be self-supporting, safety and certainty of service is the one sure way to change red ink to black on the ledgers. All weather flying with safety and certainty should bring the passengers into the ticket offices in sufficient numbers to provide an increasing upward curve on the operations charts.

The Board also recommended that the Post Office Department begin domestic air parcel post service at an early date. International air parcel post has been inaugurated within the past two months but there are even greater possibilities in the domestic field. In the case of transference of first class mail to the

air, we felt that this is definitely desirable when the airlines are able to offer all weather service dependability and the Congress is assured that there will be sufficient public benefit to outweigh the additional cost.

One of our major considerations was to increase our transport and cargo aircraft fleet as rapidly as possible for security reasons. It was obviously impossible to shoulder the burden of building the thousands of planes which would be needed in an emergency and putting them in mothballs until they were needed. Air cargo is now growing involume at a rate far exceeding any other branch of air transportation and it promises to continue this phenomenal growth during the next fewyears. By establishing a definite policy for development of a sound air cargo transport system throughout the country, we could provide needed service and assure expansion of the aircraft fleet on a pay-as-you-go basis. We accordingly recommended that the Civil Aeronautics Board give early consideration to the establishment of such a policy.

Such a system must have a satisfactory, modern air cargo plane, suitable for civilian transport and at the same time readily convertible to military use. The cost of developing such prototypes is too great for the industry to carry and it was agreed that the Federal Government should sponsor their design and development through allocation of funds to the Air Force, earmarked for this specific purpose. To carry this out, we recommended that a Civil Air Transport evaluation and Development Board should be established within the Air Force, with representatives of Air Force, Navy, other Government agencies concerned with aeronautics, the aircraft manufacturers and the air carriers.

Since the full text of the recommendations dealing with commercial aviation have already been published I will not detail them further. However, I feel that

it is important to the student of Air Law to understand our thinking with regard to our plan for reorganization of the Government agencies dealing with aviation.

First, the Civil Aeronautics Board needed strengthening by having its full independence returned to it. We felt that this could be accomplished only by taking it completely out of the Department of Commerce and by eliminating the shadow zones that had existed since the Reorganization in 1940, between the CAA and CAB. We recommended transference to the Board of the administration and enforcement functions of the CAA relating to aircraft and airmen; that the CAA be abolished and an office of Civil Aviation be created in the Department of Commerce, with a Director as senior operating official who should report to an Assistant Secretary of Commerce.

Statutory status for the Air Coordinating Committee was the solution to the creation of a policy coordinating body for the executive branch of the Government. Creation of a Joint Congressional Committee on Aviation Policy, which would make a biennial report to the Congress on the defense and commercial capabilities of the nation in view of the then existing international situation and aviation strength of other countries, would provide legislative rapport at all times.

The other most important recommendations were for an independent Director of Air Safety Investigation and for establishment of the Federal Airways system under a single civilian head to facilitate integration of its function with military aviation in an emergency.

I made the statement at the beginning of this editorial that the Congressional Aviation Policy Board had made a unique and significant contribution

to the military security and economic health of the Nation. If it had done nothing but recommend a clear cut, workable and realistic air policy for the country, it would have been noteworthy. But the fact that the legislation to implement the report is already on its way to becoming law and that the executive departments and agencies of the Government have been contacted at top levels and have expressed their good faith and willingness to effectuate the recommendations concerning them, are the best indications that the Board has performed a service of first importance to the nation. In the words of the Report -- "Until men of all nations can meet in good will in the council chambers of the world, anything less than complete supremacy in air power is self-deception."