

STATEMENT OF GEN. THOMAS D. WHITE, CHIEF OF STAFF OF THE AIR FORCE

General WHITE. I should say my reaction, of course, is favorable because I think the whole Air Force is mindful of the confidence that the Secretary of Defense has placed in the Air Force in defining this mission more clearly than in the past.

I think that our major reaction is that a very great responsibility, insofar as the military space program is concerned, has been placed upon the Air Force, and we intend to carry it out to the very limit of our ability.

The CHAIRMAN. Now, that gives military space largely to the Air Force. That is correct, is it not?

General WHITE. It gives the research, development, and testing of space matters to the Air Force, but there are many provisos that require us to consult with and utilize facilities and personnel of the Army and Navy on projects in which they may have an interest. It also provides that the other services may continue studying ways and means whereby space may be utilized for their particular missions in the military sphere.

The CHAIRMAN. Now, when a weapons system becomes operative it is then assigned to the proper military department, is it not?

General WHITE. It is assigned to the appropriate military command; the Unified Commands, or Specified Commands, which would have the need for the utilization of that particular system.

It is a fact that with minor exceptions all combat forces of all the services today, since the Reorganization Act of 1958, are assigned to unified and specified commanders and are no longer under service operational control. Prior to the 1958 Act, for example, the Chief of Staff of the Air Force commanded certain of the major units of the Air Force, such as the Strategic Air Command, the Air Defense Command, and one or two others.

The Chief of Naval Operations prior to the Reorganization Act commanded all naval forces. With the Reorganization Act, that authority was rescinded and the command reposes in the Unified, or Specified Commands.

The CHAIRMAN. Here is a point we want to get to: Some time back my attention was directed to a certain directive, order, or statement purporting to come from you in which you referred to the future of NASA—you referred in that statement to the fact that the military would ultimately take over NASA. That is a point that I wanted you to clear up.

General WHITE. I am delighted to have a chance to clear that up, Mr. Chairman.

The memorandum has been declassified, and I would like my staff to pass a copy to each member of the Committee, and then I would like to talk about it.

The CHAIRMAN. Is there any objection to putting that in the record?

General WHITE. Not at all, sir.

The CHAIRMAN. If there is no objection, it is so ordered.