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Twining's Book Backs

By George C. Wilson
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Air Force Gen. Nathan F. Twining, former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, allies himself with Sen. John L. McClellan (D.-Ark.) in the TFX airplane battle in a hard-hitting new book which will escalate the current debate on United States military policy.

Gen. Twining contends "our Air Force would have possessed better all-around fighting capability across the spectrum of war" if the $6 billion to $9 billion slated to go into the TFX went for "two different aircraft: (1) a relatively simple and inexpensive direct support aircraft tailored specifically for support of our ground forces; (2) a modern bomber to follow the aging force of B-52s and B-58s."

McClellan, in an interview, read the above and other passages about the TFX from Twining's book and said they reflected his own views. Twining might be called as a witness in the coming McClellan committee TFX hearings.

Assails Military Policies

Twining, who retired from the service as chairman of the Joint Chiefs in 1960, also assails Johnson Administration military policies in other parts of his book entitled, "Neither Liberty nor Safety, a Hard Look at U.S. Military Policy and Strategy." Publisher Holt, Rinehart & Winston plans to put the book on sale soon.

Such congressional military leaders as Chairman Richard B. Russell (D-Ga.) of the Senate Armed Services Commit-
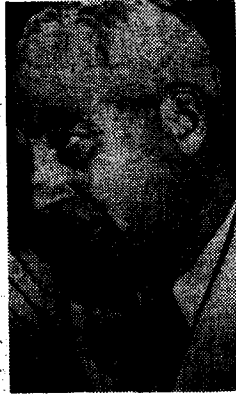
NATHAN TWINING
. . . newer planes needed

tee, Chairman John C. Stennis (D-Miss.) of the Senate Preparedness Investigations Subcommittee and Chairman L. Mendel Rivers (D-S.C.) of the House Armed Services Committee will find their fears about the bomber gap expressed forcefully by Twining.

Also, Republican Party leaders knowledgeable in military issues, like Rep. Melvin Laird of Wisconsin, will be able to make political capital out of many of the charges in Twining's book.

Twining was a military adviser in Barry Goldwater's 1964 presidential campaign.

Twining charges that centralization of the Defense Department by Secretary Robert S. McNamara has all the disadvantages of a single military general staff; that cost-effectiveness has been perverted from a tool to a decision maker; that the failure of the United States to test-fire a single nuclear-tipped missile or develop a 100-megaton bomb are grave blunders, and that the military potential of space has been all but ignored.

Although those views are certainly appealing to hawks, arguments behind them are detailed enough to carry beyond them and fire up the debate on today's military policies.

The fact that McClellan already is using Twining's book to help his TFX case against McNamara is but the first example of this.

The TFX is a combination Air Force fighter-bomber and Navy interceptor which has a wing that swings all the way back for supersonic dashes and is extended nearly straight out from the fuselage for landings and slow cruising.

McClellan launched what became a politically explosive investigation in 1963 after Secretary McNamara overruled military advisers and gave the TFX contract to General Dynamics of Ft. Worth, Tex., rather than the lower bidder, Boeing, which the Air Force and Navy recommended.

Called Too Expensive

McNamara claimed at the time, and ever since, that the Genral Dynamics design was simpler to build and would more nearly provide one basic airplane for both the Air Force and the Navy than the Boeing proposal. A bomber version of the TFX also is being built.

Twining who was on active
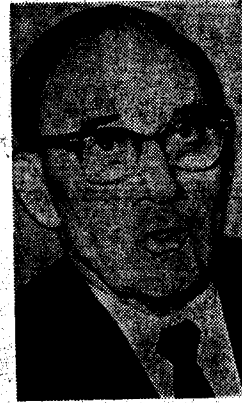
SEN. JOHN McCLELLAN
. . . criticism supported

duty when the TFX development started, claims the TFX is too expensive to use to support ground troops in a conventional war, too short in range and electronics to be an adequate strategic bomber, and not enough better than current fighters to justify itself for the air superiority role.

"Who wishes to lose, as a matter of practice, a $5 or $6 million airplane to small arms ground fire which costs the enemy next to nothing when compared to the price of the airplane and its highly trained crew?" Twining asks in his book.

McClellan also quotes Twining's rebuttal to McNamara's insistence of building the same plane for two services: "When aircraft design compromises are attempted in order to meet competing requirements," the General writes, "past experience has indicated that the resulting hybrid machine can-

McClellan on TFX

not perform any one of its missions in an optimum manner."

Former Secretary of the Air Force Eugene M. Zuckert testified during the 1963 hearings that one reason for rejecting the Boeing design was that it showed "excessive optimism" in believing that titanium could be used in "structural members". Twining in his book accuses the Defense Department of giving this "misleading information" to the Congress at the very time the Air Force had the Lockheed A-11 spy plane — built almost entirely of titanium. McClellan intends to hit hard on this point in the hearings.

Despite the misgivings of McClellan and Twining about the original TFX contract award, neither is now trying to stop the production of the Air Force TFX, designated the F-111A. McClellan figures it is too late for that, while Twining believes the experience with the swing wing will be valuable.

This resigned attitude of McClellan's, however, does not extend to the overweight Navy version of the TFX, designated the F-111B. He will zero in on it during the new hearings, posing the question whether the aircraft's performance is worth the cost.

The Defense Department's public estimates for the TFX are $7 million a copy for the Air Force F111A and $10 million each for the Navy F111B. But the Department will not say on how big a production run these unit costs are based.

The Navy has said it will decide next spring whether the F11B's performance is good enough to justify quantity production. McDonnell Aircraft Co. has been briefing the Navy on a swing-wing version of its F-4 fighter which could become an alternative to the F11B.