

H-Bomb Use Forecast For Strafing Jobs

By ELTON C. FAY
 WASHINGTON (AP)—H-bombs may be used to strafe airbases if war comes. They would be dropped from swift jet bombers screaming along at low level to avoid detection.

This new and startling tactic should be entirely different from the popularly understood method of dropping the mass destruction weapon from a plane flying at 40,000 or 50,000 feet, with the detonation occurring at a height of two miles. That was the technique used in the recent first drop by an American plane in a test at Bikini atoll.

The hint of the ground strafing application of thermonuclear weapons comes from one of the best authorities—the Strategic Air Command. A Senate subcommittee issued today a censored transcript of testimony by Gen. Curtis E. LeMay, chief of SAC, and other officers of his command, testifying in the inquiry on air power.

Reds Might Use
 As is often the way of air officials discussing tactics and strategy, the method was presented as one which might be used by the Soviet Air Force. Col. Edward M. Nichols, of SAC's operations directorate, included among the tactics to be used for destroying a large number of strategic aircraft on the ground the following:

A "10 megaton bomb," with the bombing done at 1,000 feet. (Ten megatons is the equivalent of 10 million tons of TNT.)
 Two bombs would be dropped (apparently to provide complete coverage for a large airbase or complex of installations.)

At Low Level
 Elsewhere, Nichols had explained that "we can come in at low level today with our jet aircraft, come in fast enough and low enough that the aircraft will survive." Low altitude—at a thousand feet or less—means that a plane often can fly under the searching fingers of a radar warning system. It also multiplies the difficulty of either anti-aircraft or fighter plane interception.

Until today, there had been no hint the experts were thinking of low level H-bomb attack. At Bikini, the B-52 bomber's problem was to get away from the area before the detonation occurred. The high altitude at which the bomb was released permitted the B-52 to streak away at least 15 miles from the point of burst.

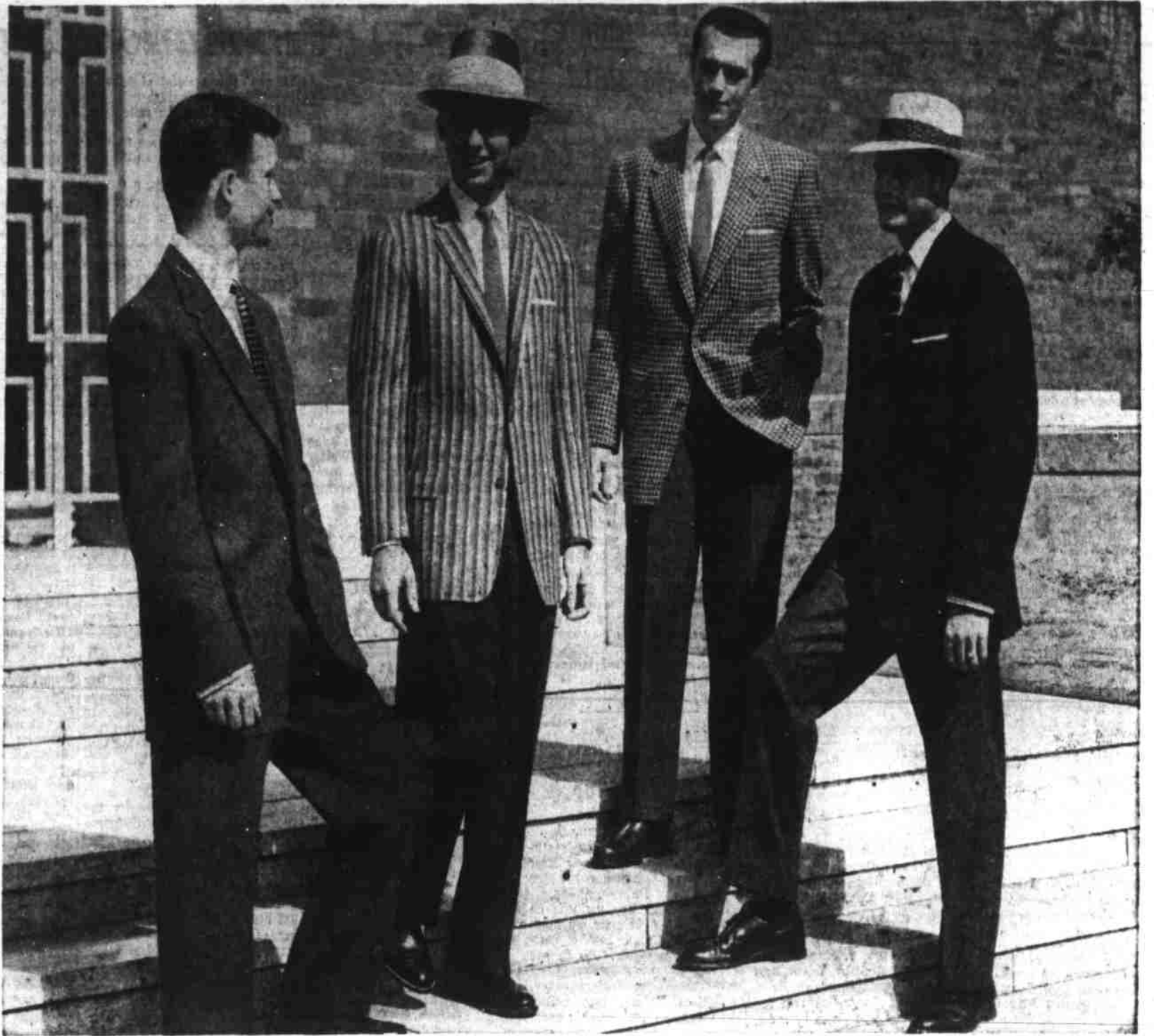
No Details
 Nichols gave no details of how the low level attack would be executed (or if he said it was one of the many portions deleted from the transcript before publication.) However, it was obvious some method for allowing the drop plane to escape would be needed. This could include using a chute to slow the fall of the bomb or a delayed action fuse to detonate the weapon after it reached the ground, or a combination of the two.

The destructive effect of a 10-megaton bomb exploding at the surface is enormous. The fireball alone expands to a diameter of three miles. Heat, measured in tens of thousands of degrees, instantly vaporizes any material it touches.

All Would Vanish
 Aircraft caught in the fireball would vanish in a fraction of a second. Even planes in stout hangars two miles from one of the twin H-bomb blasts would be destroyed, along with the hangars. Stoutly built headquarters buildings, with concrete-steel walls almost a foot thick would vanish. Residual radioactivity, aggravated by the presence of dust from the ground burst, would make the area untenable for days.

ACTOR, WIFE EXPECTING
 HOLLYWOOD (AP)—Rosemarie Bowe disclosed Saturday that she and her husband actor Robert Stack are expecting a baby. The couple were wed last Jan. 23.

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