

RL. 853-1959
COPY

From: Air Chief Marshal Sir Thomas G. Pike, K.C.B., C.B.E., D.F.C., R.A.F.



BY AIRMAIL

HEADQUARTERS, FIGHTER COMMAND
ROYAL AIR FORCE
BENTLEY PRIORY
STANMORE, MIDDLESEX

FC/CinC/758

7th April, 1959

Dear Sir,

Needless to say, I was very upset to read about the events in connection with the Arrow. It created an air of depression and much sympathy this side of the water amongst your many friends. The situation seems to have been far from well handled and, as an outside observer, I cannot refrain from the comment that there are always two sides to every story and it seems to me that the top management of Avro's must share in the responsibility.

It would seem a great pity and a great loss in the building up of knowledge about supersonic flight if these aircraft are scrapped. You ask my personal views on the suggestion that they might be useful in the research work which is going on in the U.K. I think there is no doubt that they would be very useful, but my impression is that it would be costly for us to buy them and difficult for us to operate them. I believe that they have flown very trouble-free so far, but even so I think we should find in this country that any flying programme would be constantly held up for the shortage of some silly little spare part which we could not provide.

This was my immediate ^{SIR} reaction on reading your letter and I then spoke to George Gardner. He agrees with my view about the difficulty of keeping them flying, but points out that we have nothing in this country of similar performance with such a large and useful armament bay. He is, therefore, making a serious study of this question, which of course I am unable to do, and will be writing to you in a few days time.

Before closing I must tell you how sorry I am that this wonderful enterprise of yours should end the way it has. All of us in this country who have been privileged to see the Arrow have been profoundly impressed with the concept, the design and the methods of manufacture. It must be a great blow to you to see your efforts brought to a halt after all you have put into it for so many years.

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My wife joins me in sending kindest personal regards and we hope very much to have the pleasure of seeing you this summer. Please give my kindest regards to John Plant and tell him that we have often thought of him during the difficult time which you have been experiencing in the last few weeks.

Yours ever

Tom

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