

Colonel Holtner

10 December 1946
Capt Farry/jm/3563

Brief Outline of the Background of the XB-53 Light Bomber Project.

1. The XB-53 is the outgrowth of the XA-44, which was previously changed from the XB-46. The original XB-46 contract, written in March of 1945, called for the procurement of four aircraft. Three were to be flight articles and one a static test article. The static test article was cancelled in June of 1945 leaving the three flight articles on contract at an estimated cost of \$10,418,642.19.

2. Under the original 1945 contract, work progressed concurrently with the XB-45 project until it was found that the XB-46 had nothing to offer performance-wise that was not obtainable in the XB-45. Since the XB-45 offered a greater potential for the installation of the equipment, it was desirable to discontinue the XB-46. However, in view of the considerable amount of fabrication accomplished on the first XB-46, it was not considered economical to completely cancel the project. Therefore, in order to take advantage of the aerodynamic information amassed and utilize the contractor's resources on the XB-46, it was decided to cancel two articles of the XB-46 contract and in their place procure two XA-44's (of an attack proposal submitted by Consolidated). This change was accomplished in December of 1945 by a change order on the XB-46 contract. One of the main considerations in granting approval for the change order to continue one XB-46 and build two XA-44's, in lieu of two XB-46's on the unexpended funds of the original contract, was the fact that Consolidated stated that they could deliver the same number of airplanes with increased amount of data and mock-ups contemplated originally. The increased amount of data and mock-ups included additional research and development for two separate jet bombers. It represented an expenditure of only \$650,000 more than the cost resulting from the stoppage of the XB-46 contract and the procurement of three XA-44 airplanes. It was further stated that the \$10,418,642.19 plus the \$650,000 would be the maximum cost and would probably be reduced when cancellation charges of the two XB-46's were considered.

3. In June of this year, another change in this project was proposed. This was to convert the XA-44 to a light bomber to be known as the XB-53 at an additional cost of approximately \$1,260,177. This change was favorably considered since there no longer existed military requirements for the attack airplane and it also involved a change in the sweep of the wings from 12° to 30°, which increased high speed of 64 mph and a cruising speed of 87 mph without a sacrifice in range.

4. The total authorized expenditure of the above amounts to approximately \$12,328,800. This, in addition to the present request for \$7,435,543 to complete the XB-53 contract, makes a total of approximately \$19,764,370 which is about \$8,000,000 more than the original contract of the XB-46.

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5. Originally the change order on the XB-46 contract was conceived to secure an airplane of a more advanced design and thereby effecting a more economical use of government funds previously obligated. However, the result is an airplane comparable to the XB-51 at a much higher cost. Therefore, it is recommended that the XB-53 project be discontinued.

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