of weapons which our current and most realistic opposition has openly indicated he will use, and in fact is now using?

I might point out that even Aesop, who was admittedly more of a social than physical scientist, in his fable about the boar sharpening his tusks, recognized that being prepared for a conflict was the best way of avoiding one. . . Langer fails to realize that in this bipolar world the only benefactors of a unilateral renunciation of CB weapons by the United States would be the Soviet Union and its fraternal associates.

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Tactful Editors and Bad Authors

May one more editor describe how he deals with bad authors? Most of my authors write badly, but I do not find it necessary to tell them so, as Trigg quite rightly fears to do (Letters, 7 July). If, after considerable correspondence, an author appears to have a sense of humor, I may perhaps tell him he is "a noun piler-upper" but nothing sharper than that.

I correct all the English on one copy of the paper. If I am uncertain about the meaning, or if the meaning is completely obscure, I fix up a passage that means *something*. Then personally with my own hand, I transfer all the marks to another copy of the paper, which I send to the author. In a covering letter I explain the reasons for some of my changes, but by no means all. The author usually accepts nearly all my changes, and often thanks me for making them. And he has the pleasure of correcting me very firmly on any technical inaccuracies I may have made.

I unsplit infinitives, when this is desirable—the easy way—the adverb goes at the end. "Our object was to completely prevent . . ." does not become "Our object was completely to prevent . . ." which is almost as awkward; it turns into "our object was to prevent . . . completely." If an author writes "basic" where it could be mistaken for "alkaline," I change it to "fundamental." If he says "anticipate" when he means no more than "expect," I change it to "expect." But if he writes "due to" where orthodox British usage (and American pedantry) require "owing to," I leave it. After all, what does it matter? American usage is one syllable shorter, and nothing is

lost. But the point is, the author sees *all* my changes in the manuscript before it goes to the printer. I hope this will be of help to some editors.

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Air Force: Reconstructed History

As Theodore von Karman's collaborator in writing his autobiography (which will be published this fall by Little, Brown under the title *The Wind and Beyond*), I was in a position to cover some of the same ground surveyed by Greenberg in his review of *Science and the Air Force* ("News and Comment," 16 June, p. 1463). One finds that history reconstructed entirely from documents may be quite different from history as told by one of the leading participants.

For instance, while I am sure that after World War II university scientists overran the Air Force in search for support, as Greenberg states, the actual marriage between university research and the Air Force was initially inspired by the Air Force itself, through the vision of General "Hap" Arnold. Several years before U.S. entry into World War II, Arnold sought out von Karman and his small group of amateur rocketeers at Caltech and helped them launch what was to become the nation's first important military research program in rocketry. In 1944 Arnold also asked von Karman to peer into the technological future and set down the steps he considered necessary to maintain U.S. air supremacy. Out of this came a report *Toward New Horizons* which guided Air Force thinking in scientific areas for a good many years. This doesn't mean that the report recommendations were adopted without struggle. Von Karman describes some difficulties within the Air Force in obtaining support for research (all research, not just basic research). But his emphasis lies in explaining how the Air Force gained greater respect for science and scientists—fostered by certain events, such as the Korean War which demonstrated the effectiveness of the F-86—a fighter plane that was developed from information based on captured Luftwaffe data of early German aeronautical research in jet aircraft.

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