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October 12, 1962

TO : G - Mr. Johnson ✓

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

THROUGH: S/SCJ

FROM : S/P - Henry Owen<sup>W</sup>

OCT 12 1962

SUBJECT: Paul Nitze's Report on Europe

DEPUTY UNDER  
SECRETARY OF STATE

You may be interested in some of the highlights of the report which Paul Nitze and Harry Rowen gave of Secretary McNamara's and their recent trip to inspect tactical nuclear delivery systems in Europe.

I. General

1. The state of training and morale of the US and allied teams manning these nuclear delivery systems is first-rate. Secretary McNamara was most impressed on this point.

2. The equipment in question is often not the latest and most efficient that could be made available. Nuclear land-mines in Europe are out of date and hence too heavy and cumbersome to be of optimum use, to cite but one example.

II. Army

3. A road mobile German "Honest John" unit was visited - a "battlefield" nuclear delivery system. The warhead was with the unit, - accompanied by two US custodians who, Harry Rowen said, looked "rather lonely". They kept the secrets of their trade in what seemed to be a wooden safe.

4. A US "Corporal" unit was visited - road mobile, with somewhat longer range than the "Honest John", but still for battlefield use. The system is so complex that it seemed unlikely it would ever be fired in time to be of use. It is intended that it should be replaced by the more modern "Sergeant", a weapon of comparable range, in due course.

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5. A "Davy Crockett" unit was visited; it was deployed with US screening forces near the demarcation line. Secretary McNamara was told that it would take so long to get the order to fire that the screening force would be over-run before the Davy Crockett could be used. The view is, therefore, that Davy Crockett's should not be deployed with the screening forces, but further back. The warhead was with the Davy Crockett; normally, it would be in a depot about half an hour away. (This and other statements in the course of the briefing made clear that there were substantial depots in forward areas.)

### III. Air Force

6. A Mace unit was visited. These fixed, "soft", air breathing, US-manned 600-1200 mile ground-to-ground missiles are regularly maintained in a condition which permits them to be fired by the crews at 6 minutes' notice. They are aimed at Eastern European airfields. The warheads are kept on the missiles. Harry Rowen felt that these were the most dangerous delivery systems now in Europe, both because they could be fired so readily and because their vulnerability would create great pressure to fire them in a period of tension or limited hostilities. (DOD is urging us to turn some of these Mace's over to the Germans; State has so far resisted.)

7. A German strike air squadron was visited. Warheads were, of course, stored aboard those aircraft on alert status. The assumption that the German pilots do not know how to arm these warheads turns out to be fictional; on request, one of the pilots showed the US visitors how this was done.

### IV. Non-Nuclear

8. There was little sympathy among the US military for building peacetime fortifications. Paul Nitze wondered whether such fortifications might not strengthen our non-nuclear defenses.

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9. A discussion with several US divisional commanders revealed an interesting difference of view on use of tactical nukes. The majority held that these weapons should be used early in any combat, since otherwise the Soviets might break through our lines, and this would create a confused situation in which these weapons could not be used without endangering our own people. General Polk, an armored commander, took a differing view: His estimate of Soviet capabilities was more modest than that of his colleagues, and thus more in line with Pentagon intelligence estimates; he felt that the 7th Army could hold its own for a very considerable period without nuclear weapons.

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**The U.S. Nuclear Presence in Western Europe,  
1954-1962, Part II**

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