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U.S. Reported

Withholding A-A

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S. McNamara, reportedly over pons like Davy Crockett should the objections of the Army, not be stored with front-line dential control is the sheer line combat units in Europe. units in the event of a crisis.

This came out when the some points in a version of the story printed yesterday in the Chicago Tribune, but left the core of the story unchallenged.

The principal weapon involved seems to be the Davy Crockett, the Army's lowest yield and shortest range nuclear weapon.

The weapon is reported to have a yield equivalent to 20 to 40 tons of TNT and a range of perhaps a few thousand yards.

A 20-ton yield would be one thousandth of the bomb used at Hiroshima and one-millionth of the size of the largest hydrogen bomb the U.S. has reported detonating.

But even this smallest of the nuclear weapons would still be a hundred times more powerful than the largest conventional artillery shell in the U.S. arsenal.

clear weapon."

The Pentagon yesterday reneed for the U.S. and NATO fused to provide any informa- to do so.

tion on what McNamara had done. But it seemed likely that view it as both risky and un-Defense Secretary Robert he had decided either that wea-necessary.

appears to have decided that units or that he refused to ap-physical difficulty of preventtactical nuclear weapons prove a contingency plan to ing the use of a weapon by an should not be given to front give the weapons to front line embattled junior commander

In either case the issue, al-Pentagon issued a denial of though ostensibly only a matter of technical detail, turns on basic judgments of the role of tactical nuclear warfare in the defense of Europe.

The arguments for the many small weapons distributed along the front have been, first, that it is the best arrangement for fighting a tactical nuclear war; and, second,

that putting tactical nuclear Reportedly 20-to-40 Ton Yield weapons in the hands of relatively junior officers at the front is the best way to convince the enemy that you really intend them to be used.

Thus proponents of the scheme, who aparently include most Army officers concerned with the issue, feel that the many-small-weapons approach is both the best way to deter an attack and the best way to defeat it if it comes.

Countering View

scheme have been, first, that choice but to use nuclear distributing lots of small weap- weapons. ons at low echelons would During the presidential cam- have the effect, if not the inpaign last fall, Sen. Barry Gold-tent, of weakening the Presiwater argued such weapons dent's control over the use of should be considered "conven- nuclear weapons; and second, tional." President Johnson an- that until and unless the Russwered that there was no such sians start distributing small thing as a "conventional nu-nuclear weapons to their front line units there is no military

Opponents of the scheme

Part of the problem of presiwhen hundreds, and perhaps thousands of them have been distributed.

Even if it can be worked out, putting the weapons in front line units telescopes the time the President might have to decide whether to start using them. Unless he decides very quickly, units with the weapons might be overrun and the weapons captured.

If the weapons are farther back, this time pressure is eased. The President has time to see whether the attack can be handled without using nuclear weapons and whether the war can be stopped short of large scale use of nuclear weapons.

Those who believe that NATO should plan on fighting some sort of nuclear war in the event of any substantial engagement in Europe do not worry very much about the danger of tying the President's The arguments against the hands so that he has little

On the other hand, for those who favor the Administration's policy of building substantial non-nuclear defenses in Europe, tying the President's hands is something to worry about very much.

There is, in this view, not much point in spending a lot of money to free yourself of the need to go nuclear right away and then turn around and distribute tactical nuclear weapons in a way that may leave the President with relatively little control over the use of these weapons anyway.