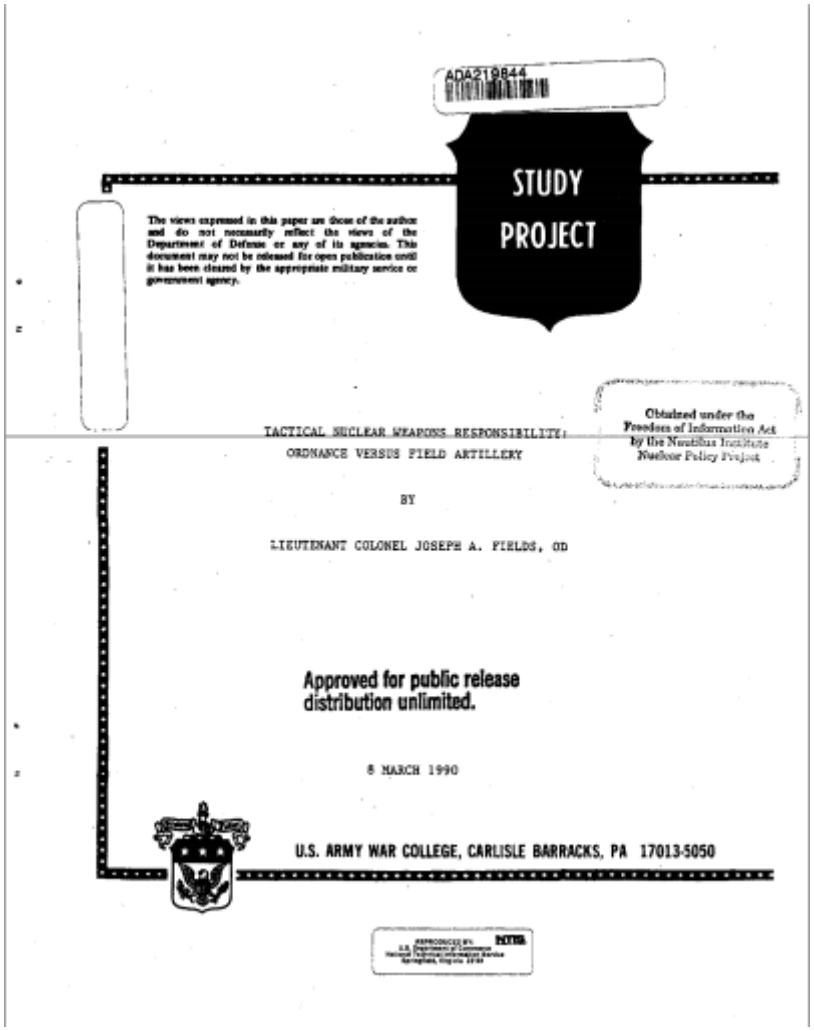
Tactical Nuclear Weapons Responsibility: Ordnance Versus Field Artillery



Recommended Citation

"Tactical Nuclear Weapons Responsibility: Ordnance Versus Field Artillery", September 17, 2012, https://nautilus.org/foia-document/tactical-nuclear-weapons-responsibility-ordnance-versu--field-artillery/

There has existed and still exists an operational dichotomy in the area of the provision of tactical nuclear weapons to United States Army forces versus those allied forces in a combined theater of operations. Specifically, within the NATO environment and to a very small degree within Combined

Forces Korea, there exists a condition where tactical nuclear weapons are supplied to the US firing unit by an organization under the proponency of the Ordinance Corps. On the other hand, within the same theater, the non-US force receives their tactical nuclear weapons by an organization under the proponency of the Field Artillery. In the advent of a conventional or nuclear confrontation with North Korea, especially given its well documented history of both bellicose statements and acts of aggression in, the necessity of having in place an operationally effective supply of tactical nuclear weapons on the field is imperative to the joint security interests of both the U.S. and South Korea.

Lieutenant Fields' paper examines the functions performed by this duplication of supply organizations and briefly lists the supporting structure. Fields then explores any possible purpose for the duplication which would justify this apparent mission replication, and then lists the pros and cons of staying with the status quo or the possible assignment of the supply function to a single branch proponency.

Readers seeking an historical understanding of North Korean nuclear threat perceptions may wish to consult the book Pacific Powderkeg:
[https://nautilus.org/DPRKBriefingBook/nuclearweapons/PacificPowderkegbyPeterHayes.pdf]

Lieutenant Fields writes:
"Force structure initiatives within the Army must be undertaken that will insure a structure for supply of tactical nuclear weapons worldwide. Elements of these initiatives could include the co-opting of ordnance Warhead Support Companies with CONUS Corps. Such a move would allow the participation of the tactical nuclear weapon support element with major divisional and corps field training exercises. Relationships would be developed in peacetime which would aid in the transition to war process." [page 26]

This report was released to the Nautilus Institute under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA).

View this online at: https://nautilus.org/foia-document/tactical-nuclear-weapons-responsibi-ity-ordnance-versus-field-artillery/

Nautilus Institute
608 San Miguel Ave., Berkeley, CA 94707-1535 | Phone: (510) 423-0372 | Email: nautilus@nautilus.org