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Authority <sup>IND</sup> 959228  
By TS NARA Date 4/17/01

THE FOREIGN SERVICE  
OF THE  
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

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OFFICIAL - INFORMAL

SECRET

Office of the Political Adviser  
Headquarters, U.S. European Command  
c/o American Embassy, Paris

March 12, 1958

Dear Lane:

Thank you for your letter of February 28, in reply to mine of February 19, concerning the security aspects of the handling of nuclear weapons. It was awaiting me upon my return last week from a swing with General Palmer around Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, Ethiopia and Libya. Also upon my return I was filled in on the subsequent developments and flaps in connection with the Sidi Slimane incident. It appears that in this particular case the explosion danger was less than the danger of contamination. Fire can, of course, greatly aggravate the latter danger - particularly, if the rising hot air is carried off by winds. I'm afraid we haven't heard the last of the Sidi Slimane fire.

At the request of General Norstad, this headquarters is about to undertake a comprehensive study of the problem abroad of accidents involving nuclear material. It will start off with a meeting here at an as yet unspecified date later this month of representatives of the component commands. As a point of departure we will use the procedures now applying in the CONUS and attempt to adapt them to conditions abroad. We will, of course, have to give particular attention to the public and foreign relations aspects. As the EUCOM area becomes saturated with nuclear stockpiles, the chances of accidents will naturally increase, and the problems will not be the same in any two countries. Sooner or later, we are going to have to share our information fairly widely because most accidents are not going to occur on U.S. bases. For example, one of these days, a U.S. plane delivering nuclear weapons is going to overshoot Rhein-Main or a

U.S. army

B. E. L. Timmons, Esquire,  
Director, Office of European  
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Washington 25, D. C.

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U.S. army truck is going to roll off the Autobahn, etc. I need not at this time offer further illustrations of the fact that non-American military and police forces are going to have to be given guidance.

Needless to say, I shall see to it that the recommendations formulated here are sent back to Washington for approval by State and Defense, and will also attempt to furnish informal progress reports.

Sincerely,

*George*  
George L. West, Jr.

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