

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

18 June 1970

Dear Dr. Orear:

With respect to your letter of May 26, 1970, I recall quite well that on April 30th of last year the officers of the Federation of American Scientists met with me and presented me with a copy of a petition, presumably signed by 5,000 scientists, which had been previously submitted to President Johnson. I advised you at that time that the Nixon Administration was in the process of reviewing the Government's CBW policy and that the questions raised in this petition would be given careful attention. I want now to assure you that this in fact happened.

The petition urged that the President institute a White House study of overall government policy regarding CBW weapons, etc.; this was accomplished by a very extensive CBW policy review conducted within the NSC mechanism. The petition also urged that the President re-establish and categorically declare the intention of the US to refrain from the first use of chemical and biological weapons. Not only was this done, but in doing so, President Nixon made the first public statement by a US President indicating that the US would not be the first to use incapacitating weapons. Of even greater importance, the President renounced completely the use of biological or bacteriological agents in warfare. Later, the use of toxins was also renounced.

Your petition also asked that an order be issued ending the use of antipersonnel and anticrop chemical weapons in Vietnam. As you know, the only antipersonnel chemical in use in Vietnam is the riot control agent CS which is used on US citizens within this country and equally on citizens in many countries throughout the world by their governments. Its usage in South Vietnam, even every instance of its use, has the complete approval of the Government of South Vietnam and has not been discontinued.

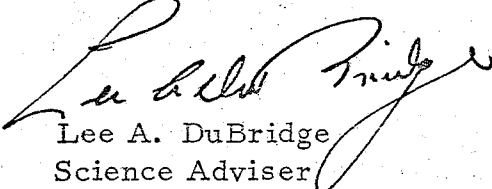
With respect to anticrop chemical weapons in Vietnam, you might be interested in knowing that we have sharply reduced the extent of this program. Not only has the use of the herbicide 2,4,5-T been

suspended in Vietnam, as a result of information received indicating that it might have teratogenic and other undesirable effects, but the use of other agents to destroy crops has also been curtailed. The crop destruction program, incidentally, is closely controlled by the Government of South Vietnam and in no case are crops destroyed without its explicit approval.

Finally, you suggested in your petition to the President that the US accede to the Protocol for the Prohibition of the Use in War of Asphyxiating Poisons or Other Gases and of Bacteriological Methods of Warfare, signed at Geneva in June 1925. As you know, the President has indicated his intention to submit the Geneva Protocol to the Senate for their advice and consent to ratification.

Although the Nixon Administration has not been able to agree in detail with all the recommendations contained in your petition, I am certain that you will agree that the President's policy goes a long way towards meeting your objectives and that he has made a significant contribution to the progress towards the control and ultimate elimination of chemical and biological warfare. I attach for your information and use copies of the White House statements indicating the decisions which the President made. I hope that you will apprise the signers of the petition which you submitted of the actions taken by the President and assure them that all of the points which they raised, in addition to many other issues of public concern, were considered most carefully in the formulation of the present CBW policy.

Sincerely,



Lee A. DuBridge  
Science Adviser

Attachment

Professor Jay Orear  
Professor of Physics  
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Ithaca, New York