



CONSULATE
OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
Da Nang, Viet Nam
APO San Francisco 96349

November 16, 1970

OFFICIAL-INFORMAL

Professor Matthew Meselson
Professor of Biology
Harvard University
Biological Laboratories
16 Divinity Avenue
Cambridge 38, Massachusetts

Dear Professor Meselson:

Please forgive this tardy reply to your letter of September 16. I would like to thank you very much for the copies of the studies on chemical crop destruction. I read them both with interest and was impressed with the carefully reasoned arguments against the use of herbicides in populated areas.

As you are perhaps aware, the question of future use of any herbicides is again being considered by the American Mission. My position on crop destruction is that it should not be employed within range of populated areas. I believe it can only be justified, if then, when targeted against crops being grown deep in the mountains and where there is good evidence that the cultivation is being done directly by or for the VC. Since in only rare cases can these conditions be met, the acceptance of them would virtually end the program.

It was indeed a pleasure meeting you and your colleague in Quang Ngai. I hope that you will send me a copy of your report when it is completed. If you do again visit Viet Nam, please come and see us in Da Nang.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Francis T. McNamara".

Francis T. McNamara
American Consul

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF SCIENCE

AAAS HERBICIDE ASSESSMENT COMMISSION
BOTANICAL MUSEUM, HARVARD UNIVERSITY
CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS 02138, U.S.A.

MATTHEW S. MESELSON, CHAIRMAN
ARTHUR H. WESTING, DIRECTOR

25 November 1970

Mr. Francis T. McNamara
American Consul
Consulate of the United States
Da Nang, Republic of Vietnam
APO San Francisco 96349

Dear Mr. McNamara:

I greatly appreciate having your letter of November 16. I showed it to my colleague, John Constable, which led us both to reminisce on the pleasant evening we shared with you at Henry Cushing's house in Quang Ngai. How far away that seems as I sit here in Cambridge on a cold day-before-Thanksgiving!

After we returned to the States we tried to put together the various pieces of information we had accumulated regarding the chemical crop destruction program. The overall picture we came up with seemed important enough to justify bringing the matter to the attention of officials at a high level. We prepared a report for Ambassador Bunker with copies for General Abrams and for Secretary Rogers.

Perhaps by now you have received a copy of the written part of our report, but you probably have not had the opportunity to see the accompanying photographs. I am therefore enclosing a copy of the report and also of the three photographs and map which go with it. Also enclosed are copies of our letters to Secretary Rogers and to General Abrams. The latter I send because I think the added note on Montagnards which it contains may interest you. However, since it is a somewhat informal letter, I ask that you not circulate it.

There has been some stirring of interest in Washington in a broad review of the herbicide program, but I am not sure how far it may have gone.

We are still in the midst of writing our final report which will be presented at the annual meeting of the AAAS at the end of

December. We will send a copy of it to you as soon as it is completed.

Again, thank you for your good letter. It was a pleasure to meet with you and talk with you last August.

Sincerely yours,

Matthew Meselson

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Enclosures



JAN 11 1971

CONSULATE
OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
Da Nang, Viet Nam

January 6, 1971

Professor Matthew S. Meselson
Chairman
AAAS Herbicide Assessment Commission
American Association for the Advancement
of Science
Botanical Museum
Harvard University
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02138

Dear Professor Meselson:

I should like to thank you for your help in increasing my knowledge of the Army's herbicide program and its potential sociological/ecological effects. As you are aware, I share your concern with affects of the use of herbicides, and am anxious to see a reassessment of the program.

Your report to Ambassador Bunker seemed to indicate a need to know in greater detail the long term effects of large scale herbicide usage on animal and plant ecology in MR I. I suspect that the unique tropical climate we have in this region, influenced as it is by both summer and winter monsoons as well as the mountainous, rolling and flat topography, creates many ecological variables. These variables would certainly make a biological study of this region particularly challenging. I regret that the present state of security in the mountains prohibits the kind of thorough study we need.

You may be interested to know that in MR I an initiative has been taken by the XXIV Corps staff to write new restrictive regulations governing herbicide usage. If they are followed faithfully, damage to civilians, their crops, and livestock should be minimal. The new regulations will require that a careful assessment be made at province and region levels of the potential ecological/sociological effects of spraying each target. Information about population density, composition and mores, as well as facts, pertaining to watershed drainage characteristics, vegetation types, livestock, meteorological data in the immediate and surrounding area of the target, is to be provided and

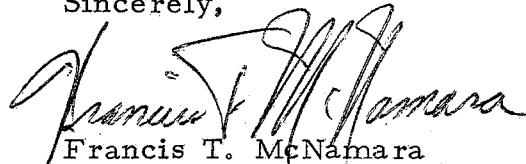
considered before a mission is approved. The disposal of empty barrels used for defoliant and the storage of full barrels of defoliant are to be more carefully safe-guarded to preclude accidental dispersion into the environment.

In the future, crop destruction missions will be confined to the use of a non-persistent herbicide in the mountainous areas now "exclusively" controlled and inhabited by VC or NVA and from which no herbicide would be likely to drift or be carried into a water system inhabited by friendly people. This should reduce adverse affects considerably.

In thinking about the whole question, it seems to me that scientists might help considerably by providing the Army with more information as to the toxicology, degradation products, and persistence of chemicals still in its arsenal. Until the military use of herbicides is banned completely, we should continue to evaluate their biological effects.

Again, many thanks for sending me copies of your very interesting letters to Ambassador Bunker and General Abrams. They contributed significantly to my understanding of the problems associated with the use of herbicides.

Sincerely,



Francis T. McNamara
American Consul