

Missing pgs?

Boxing Day, 26.12.70

Bob Kinney

Dear Mat,

A couple of days ago your card came, with your new address; and this morning I half-heard at the tail end of a news bulletin a reference to Nixon banning use of defoliants - temporarily, for ever? I don't know. But in any case, a good moment for me to answer your greetings (though too late for Xmas - sorry!), generally reconnect, and congratulate you.

As you may know, I have rather pooh-poohed ~~British initiative~~ the idea of a British initiative about defoliants because it seemed to me doomed to become a mere anti-American ~~weapon~~ argument; I could already hear the seem people applauding use of defoliants to expose South African irregulars or Portuguese commandos... However, it's a very different matter when Nixon himself takes the lead, under whatever pressure. If it turns out, when the records are published, that foreign as well as domestic attacks influenced him, then I shall have been proved wrong in thinking that a British voice in the chorus would be counter-productive. I was wrong anyway in thinking a renunciation of non-lethal chemicals by the US out of the question while the Vietnam war was still on. Which only goes to show, I suppose, what a stumbling sort of activity conflict research is - we weren't even right in assuming a plain two-way choice between the war continuing, and the war being over.

Anyway, now it's happened and as a conservationist I'm happy, and as an arms controller too in that a complication has been removed. My only arms control activity right now is being on the Disarmament Committee of the United Nations Association here, which is trying hard to produce a new overall policy pamphlet. It's not a very influential nor cohesive body, I'm afraid, and I find myself at such odds with Philip Noel-Baker and that very able lawyer Andrew Martin, that I have continually to face the choice of obstructing or shutting up. Chalfont is chairman of the sub-committee drafting the new pamphlet, Barnaby is rapporteur. Chalfont is clearly anxious to make up for the embarrassment over the CS affair by pushing ^{hard} in other fields, notably BW. And here again there seems to be a danger of quarrels between friends, ~~choking~~ and of enthusiasm for major advances frustrating minor advances. Should Britain make a unilateral renunciation on BW like Nixon, but mutatis mutandis (as we can't promise to destroy what we deny having)? HMG opposes - since it would blur our initiative for an international unqualified BW ban. Ironically, some on our Committee oppose because it would be copying Nixon, and anything Nixon does is suspect. I suspect HMG will take the idea up only if prospects of support at Geneva for the international thing continue to be nil. Is that a good thing? I hope you don't think so. But I hope even more to