

May 28, 1971

Senator Edward W. Brooke
Senate Office Building - 232
Washington, D. C.

Dear Ed:

As you no doubt know the 1925 Geneva Protocol prohibiting gas and germ warfare was submitted to the Senate last August by the White House. The Foreign Relations Committee has had hearings on the Protocol but instead of reporting it to the floor, they have asked the White House to reconsider the current U.S. interpretation holding that herbicides and riot gas are exempt from the terms of the treaty.

I have long considered that the overriding interest of the U. S. in the CBW field is to prevent the proliferation of chemical and biological weapons capability to other nations and to head off the diversion of research and development in the life sciences toward military ends. Because I believe that a first-use option for chemical and biological weapons of any kind including riot gas and herbicides is of only the slightest military use to the U.S. at best, I feel that we can and should play the leading international role in the control of chemical and biological weapons. President Nixon's initiatives of the last two years have come a long way in this direction. However, I do not see how his policies can be culminated or can be made lastingly effective unless the U.S. can ratify the Geneva Protocol in the way that nearly all other countries have, namely without special exemptions for riot gas and herbicides.

Because of your strong interest in arms control and because of the comparatively large number of scientists, teachers, and students working in the life sciences in the state of Massachusetts, you may wish to speak out on the issues involved here.

For your possible interest in connection with this subject I enclose three items:

1. Statement of Mr. McGeorge Bundy, "The Consideration of the Geneva Protocol of 1925."
2. Statement of Mr. Matthew Meselson, "Gas Warfare and the Geneva Protocol of 1925."

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3. "Turning Off the Gas," a guest editorial from the Christian Science Monitor.

If there is any way I can be of assistance I hope you will not hesitate to let me know.

With warm regards.

Sincerely yours,

Matthew Meselson

MM:mcm
Enclosures