

Bothman, Frank

July 19, 1971

Dear Matt,

This letter is being  
sent today. I'll keep  
you posted of any response  
(he usually answers  
promptly.)

Sincerely,  
Frank

Rothman, Frank  
Rothman

July 19, 1971

Senator John O. Pastore  
3215 New Senate Office Building  
Washington, D. C. 20510

Dear Senator Pastore:

More than a year has passed since I wrote to you concerning arms limitations, particularly the Safeguard A. B. M. Program. Your vote against the second phase of the A. B. M. was, I believe, an influential one. Today I am writing about another aspect of disarmament in which I believe your assistance could be crucial, namely the total abolition of chemical and biological warfare. As you know, the President has submitted the Geneva Protocol of 1925 to the Senate with the restrictive interpretation that the Protocol does not prohibit the use of tear gas and chemical herbicides. The Committee on Foreign Relations has held hearings in which non-administration witnesses were unanimous in their opinion that it does not serve the interests of the United States to retain the option to use tear gas and chemical herbicides in future wars. Senator Fulbright has written to the President summarizing this testimony, and asking for a reconsideration of the restrictive interpretation of the Protocol. As of June 8, he had not received a substantive reply. (Congressional Record S8486, June 8, 1971)

As a biochemist with considerable training and experience in both chemistry and genetics, I am very uneasy about any exceptions to a treaty abolishing chemical and biological warfare. As long as any exceptions exist, the distinction in practice between permitted and forbidden agents is difficult to maintain, and development of new chemical warfare agents can continue. Chemicals whose primary use may be intended as herbicides may have severe health effects on humans and on human embryos, and may also cause genetic damage. Tear gas may be used to temporarily incapacitate people in order to facilitate their slaughter by other weapons.

There is something simple and satisfying about a treaty which says "No Gas" which all of mankind can understand and embrace.

The real interest of the United States is to prevent any outbreak of chemical or biological warfare. I agree with Senator Fulbright

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that this interest would be best served by the United States ratifying the Protocol on the basis of the same comprehensive interpretation already adopted by most nations of the world.

If you agree with this position, I believe it would be most helpful if you would speak out publicly, as well as privately, in favor of it, in order to influence the President to resubmit the Protocol to the Senate with the comprehensive interpretation. The President and his advisors know that your many years of service and leadership on the Joint Committee on Atomic Energy have provided you with a complete background of the overall disarmament situation. In view of this experience, and of your major participation in obtaining ratification of the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty in 1963, your voice will add a new dimension to that of the Foreign Relations Committee, and may cause the Administration to respond favorably to Senator Fulbright's request.

I believe that many of my fellow scientists share my deep feelings on this subject. Please let me know if I can be of any assistance to you in pursuing this matter.

Sincerely yours,

Frank G. Rothman  
Professor of Biology

FGR/ab