

17 August 1971

Senator Albert Gore
100 Maryland Avenue NE
Washington, D.C. 20002

Dear Albert,

I enclose a statement recently placed in the Record by Edmund Muskie. I am somewhat concerned that the statement could be misinterpreted as regards his position on the status of riot gas and herbicides under the Geneva Protocol. As you will see, he praises the recently proposed U.S.-Soviet biological weapons treaty and urges progress toward the wider goal of eliminating chemical weapons as well. However, he has said nothing, so far as I know, regarding the principal CBW arms control problem now before the Senate, namely the status of riot gas and herbicides under the Protocol. This is all the more conspicuous now that Senators Brooke and Humphrey have filed resolutions on this subject. (Copies are enclosed.)

The reason for my present concern is that Muskie's statement is considered by at least some members of the executive branch, with whom I have spoken recently, to imply an unwillingness to support the general positions of either Brooke or Humphrey. I would be surprised if this were indeed the case but it seems to me that Senator Muskie has only to gain and nothing to lose by making a clear statement on this.

I am writing to ask, therefore, that you consider the advisability of your mentioning the problem to him when the opportunity next arises. I know that the White House is giving serious thought to ways in which the United States might broaden its interpretation of the Protocol so as to allow the inclusion of riot gas and herbicides and thereby break the log jam in the Senate, which is holding up ratification. I don't have any clear feeling as to which way the decision will go, but it is certainly possible that a clear (although friendly) statement by Senator Muskie would have a beneficial effect on the President's decision.

In addition to copies of the Humphrey and Brooke resolutions I am enclosing a memo I have recently written. I ask you to treat the latter for your own information only and not to hand it on.

With warm regards to you and Pauline,

Sincerely,

Matthew Meselson

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