

Heckler
CBW

HARVARD UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF BIOCHEMISTRY AND MOLECULAR BIOLOGY

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CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS 02138

September 8, 1975

Representative Margaret Heckler
343 Cannon
House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representative Heckler,

I take the liberty of writing you in connection with an item likely to come up in the FY76 Defense Appropriations Bill. The bill contains an \$8.8 million item for the construction of a production line for binary nerve gas artillery projectiles. I believe that it would be detrimental to our national security, as well as wasteful, to undertake this commitment to a binary gas weapon program.

I agree with Dr. Fred Ikle, Director of the U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, that taking this step now could reduce the chances of negotiating the Chemical Arms Control Treaty envisaged in the Joint Statements of United States and Soviet leaders at Moscow in July of 1974, and at Vladivostock the following November. I believe that such a treaty offers more security benefits to the United States than any program for the acquisition of new gas weapons. I strongly support increased efforts to provide our forces with protective equipment and to provide more realistic training for chemical defense. However, I do not believe that more effort on the offensive side would enhance our security.

For your possible interest I enclose an article entitled "What Policy for Nerve Gas?", explaining some of the bases for my views.

Sincerely yours,

Matthew Meselson
Professor and Chairman

MM:jg
Enclosure