

HARVARD UNIVERSITY
THE BIOLOGICAL LABORATORIES
16 DIVINITY AVENUE
CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS 02138

August 30, 1966

Dr. Paul Doty
Department of Chemistry
Harvard University
12 Oxford Street
Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Dear Paul:

To be sure that no confusion arises as to our plans for the CB letter, I'll put on paper what I think we have agreed to do.

1) On Thursday September 1, you will send to Donald Hornig a copy of the letter, a list of initial signers, and a copy of the three newspaper quotations we have circulated.

2) We will continue to accumulate names for the list of initial signers.

3) On or about September 15, we will distribute the letter widely in order to gather a large number of signatures of professional scientists. At the same time, we will inform the press of our effort.

4) After several weeks have passed, we will formally transmit the letter to the President, along with the names of all its signers. We may also ask for a White House interview to discuss means of reinforcing restraints on the use of CB weapons.

The main effort to gather a large number of signatures will be made through the F.A.S. Their Council has agreed to endorse and distribute the letter to its members.

I'll be back in Cambridge September 9.

As ever,



Matthew Meselson

Wash Post Sept 20 '66

Chemical Warfare

The scientists who have petitioned the President to undertake a study of over-all Government policy regarding chemical and bacteriological warfare have made a sound suggestion. It would be a good idea to have a commission or committee go over the complicated issues involved and make national policy recommendations.

It is too bad that the scientists' petition not only asked for a study but, at the same time and in the same document, set forth some of the findings at which the study ought to arrive. That seems to be prejudicing the inquiry in advance. But the tactical error does not diminish from the wisdom of the study.

The United States has had a policy against the employment of such weapons on our initiative. But in the meantime, expenditures for research in the field have multiplied many times. And the tactical use of defoliants, crop poisons and tear gas in South Vietnam has clouded the issue and confused the policy.

Issues involved in the use of these weapons transcend the considerations that confront local commanders. Judgments as to national policy cannot be left to the exigencies of field situations. It is frequently necessary to forego the employment of means that would be locally effective if their use, subsequently, by an enemy, might involve the loss of American lives. It seems certain that it would not be to our advantage, in the long run, to break the restraints that now limit the use of these fearful devices. All of the dreadful possibilities need to be examined coolly and carefully by competent officials. Probably the historic position of the United States would be supported by the study. In that case, a restatement of American policy would help prevent the world-wide proliferation of the use of these implements.

Dear Colleague:

The enclosed letter to President Johnson expresses our concern with policies and practices which we consider to jeopardize existing restraints on the employment of chemical and biological weapons. We urge you to join with us as co-signers and to help gather signatures of professional scientists among your colleagues.

Signatures should be forwarded by October 31, 1966 to:

Presidential Letter
58 Washington Avenue
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02140

Sincerely yours,

John Edsall
Matthew Meselson

The following persons are initial signers of the letter to the President:

Felix Bloch, Department of Physics, Stanford University
Konrad E. Bloch, Department of Chemistry, Harvard University
James F. Crow, Department of Medical Genetics, University of Wisconsin
William Doering, Sterling Chemistry Laboratory, Yale University
Paul Doty, Department of Chemistry, Harvard University
Freeman J. Dyson, The Institute for Advanced Study
John T. Edsall, The Biological Laboratories, Harvard University
Bernard Feld, Department of Physics, Massachusetts Inst. of Technology
Irwin C. Gunsalus, Department of Chemistry, University of Illinois
Robert Hofstadter, Department of Physics, Stanford University
Arthur Kornberg, Department of Biochemistry, Stanford U. Medical School
Fritz Lipmann, Rockefeller Institute
Robert B. Livingston, Department of Neurosciences, U. Cal., San Diego
Matthew Meselson, Biological Laboratories, Harvard University
Severo Ochoa, New York University School of Medicine
Ray D. Owen, Division of Biology, California Institute of Technology
Keith R. Porter, Biological Laboratories, Harvard University
Charles Price, Department of Chemistry, University of Pennsylvania
Eugene Rabinowitch, Department of Botany, University of Illinois
E. L. Tatum, Rockefeller Institute
George Wald, Biological Laboratories, Harvard University
Paul Dudley White, Boston

President Lyndon B. Johnson
The White House
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. President:

We, the American scientists whose names appear below, wish to warn against any weakening of the world-wide prohibitions and restraints on the use of chemical and biological (CB) weapons.

CB weapons have the potential of inflicting, especially on civilians, enormous devastation and death which may be unpredictable in scope and intensity; they could become far cheaper and easier to produce than nuclear weapons, thereby placing great mass destructive power within reach of nations not now possessing it; they lend themselves to use by leadership that may be desperate, irresponsible, or unscrupulous. The barriers to the use of these weapons must not be allowed to break down.

During the Second World War, the United States maintained a firm and clearly stated policy of not initiating the use of CB weapons. However, in the last few years the U.S. position has become less clear. Since the late 1950's, Defense Department expenditures on CB weapons have risen several fold — and there has been no categorical reaffirmation of the World War II policy.

Most recently, U.S. forces have begun the large-scale use of anti-crop and "non-lethal" anti-personnel chemical weapons in Vietnam. We believe that this sets a dangerous precedent, with long term hazards far outweighing any probable short term military advantage. The employment of any one CB weapon weakens the barriers to the use of others. No lasting distinction seems feasible between incapacitating and lethal weapons or between chemical and biological warfare. The great variety of possible agents forms a continuous spectrum from the temporarily incapacitating to the highly lethal. If the restraints on the use of one kind of CB weapon are broken down, the use of others will be encouraged.

Therefore, Mr. President, we urge that you

- Institute a White House study of overall government policy regarding CB weapons and the possibility of arms control measures, with a view to maintaining and reinforcing the world-wide restraints against CB warfare.
- Order an end to the employment of anti-personnel and anti-crop chemical weapons in Vietnam.
- Reestablish and categorically declare the intention of the United States to refrain from initiating the use of chemical and biological weapons.

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 22, 1966.

May 15, 1966

TEAR GAS DROPPED BEFORE B-52 RAID

U.S. Explains New Tactic

WASHINGTON, Feb. 21 — Defense Department officials explained today that the new tactic of a helicopter-borne tear gas attack was designed to flush Vietcong troops out of bunkers and tunnels before the attack by B-52 bombers.

One of the past limitations of B-52 "saturation bombing" attacks was that little or no damage was done to the Vietcong troops unless a direct hit was made on a tunnel or bunker in which they were hiding. The purpose of the gas attack was to force the Vietcong troops to the surface, where they would be vulnerable to the fragmentation effects of the bomb bursts.

U.S. Spray Destroys Cong Food

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The area of crops destroyed in South Viet Nam to deny them to the Viet Cong has been significantly expanded in recent months, according to figures made available by official sources Saturday.

As of about two months ago — the latest figures available — the area covered by crop-killing herbicides was listed at slightly above 98,000 acres.

The previous total on this, as issued by the State Department on Mar. 9, was around 20,000 acres. That was said to have been the total as of last Fall. Data arriving here run behind the program, which officials said has been underway since 1962.

The 98,000 acres was estimated to be roughly 1½ percent of the total area under cultivation in South Viet Nam. Authorities said the affected lands are only in certain areas, for instance, parts of the central highlands, long under Communist control.

Food is rated here as a highly important item in the Viet Nam conflict. The United States sends food to South Viet Nam and helps farmers there boost production.

At the same time various efforts are under way to keep food from the Communist forces because, as an official put it, "in war food is as essential to the effectiveness of a military unit as its weapons and ammunition."

U.S. and South Vietnamese have seized large amounts of rice and other edibles from the Viet Cong during anti-guerrilla sweeps. Booby traps are used to guard harvests from foraging Communist forces.

U.S. officials said that crop destruction activities are carried out largely by American planes and equipment but are initiated by South Vietnamese authorities.

Often a South Vietnamese district or province chief wants the herbicide spread over an area of known Viet Cong occupation.

The U.S. officials also stated that the chemicals used are not dangerous to men or animals and do not prevent crops from being grown there in future years.

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

FRIDAY, AUGUST 16, 1963

Until a few years ago, U.S. efforts on chemical-biological weapons were minuscule. At the end of World War II spending on such research ran only \$8 million a year. This expenditure sank to \$6.5 million in 1950, at the very time the Communists were accusing this country of using germ warfare in Korea. Beginning about 1960, as U.S. policy-makers became aware of Russian strides in this field, spending began to rise significantly, to nearly \$50 million. In the fiscal year ended last June, the figure topped \$100 million and this year \$114.5 million is allocated. Alongside past efforts, this amounts to a crash program.

CW 1967

HOLD UNTIL AFTER NEWS CONFERENCE 2:00 PM Tuesday February 14, 1967
Cabinet Room, Hotel Willard, Pennsylvania Ave. and Fourteenth St., Washington, D.C.

PRESS RELEASE

U.S. SCIENTISTS ASK REVIEW OF CHEMICAL AND BIOLOGICAL WEAPONS
POLICY

More than five thousand American scientists, including seventeen Nobel Prize winners and one hundred twenty-nine members of the U.S. National Academy of Sciences have sent a petition to President Johnson recommending a review of U.S. policy toward chemical and biological weapons. The petition, initiated in September and delivered to the White House today, urges a clear-cut U.S. policy of not starting the use of gas or biological weapons and requests a high-level study aimed at finding ways to maintain and reinforce world-wide restraints against chemical and biological warfare. Cautioning that the combat use of any chemical or biological weapon seriously weakens the barriers to the use of others, the scientists believe that a dangerous precedent is being set by the current large-scale use of riot gas and anti-crop chemicals by U.S. forces in Viet Nam.

In a covering letter to the President, the scientists who originated the petition cite a recent resolution of the United Nations General Assembly calling upon all nations to observe the 1925 Geneva Protocol prohibiting gas and bacteriological warfare. The scientists commend the United States for supporting the United Nations resolution and recommend that the U.S. now move to ratify the Geneva Protocol. In their letter to the President, the scientists note that the United States, almost alone among the nations of the world, has not yet acceded to the Geneva Protocol.

HOLD UNTIL AFTER NEWS CONFERENCE 2:00 PM Tuesday February 14, 1967.
Cabinet Room, Hotel Willard, Pennsylvania Ave. and Fourteenth St., Washington, D.C.

President Lyndon B. Johnson
The White House
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. President:

We have the honor to transmit to you with this letter a petition from more than 5,000 of our professional colleagues seeking to bring to your personal attention the need to safeguard and strengthen the world-wide restraints and prohibitions against the use of chemical and biological weapons.

The reasons for our concern and some recommendations for practical measures are outlined in the petition, which bears the signatures of many of the foremost leaders in American science and medicine.

We wish at this time to note what appears to us to be an additional opportunity for constructive action. This stems from unexpected progress at the United Nations several weeks after our petition was circulated. On December 5, 1966, the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted a resolution inviting all States to accede to the Protocol for the Prohibition of the Use in War of Asphyxiating, Poisonous, or Other Gases, and of Bacteriological Methods of Warfare, signed at Geneva in June 1925, and calling upon all States to observe the principles and objectives of the Geneva Protocol. We are particularly pleased that the United States supported this resolution in the United Nations.

The United States was the prime initiator of the Geneva Protocol in 1925. Since then, although we have not yet acceded to the Protocol, almost every other nation of the world has done so. We recommend to your favorable consideration that the United States now accede to the Geneva Protocol and thereby firmly establish its stand on these matters.

It is our hope, Mr. President, that the various United States policies and programs referred to in our petition and in this letter will be subjected to a far-sighted examination, aimed at insuring that progress in biological and medical science retains its traditional dedication to the peaceful development of mankind.

Respectfully,

Felix Bloch, Department of Physics, Stanford University
Konrad E. Bloch, Department of Chemistry, Harvard University
James F. Crow, Department of Medical Genetics, University of Wisconsin
William Doering, Sterling Chemistry Laboratory, Yale University
Paul Doty, Department of Chemistry, Harvard University
Freeman J. Dyson, the Institute for Advanced Study
John T. Edsall, The Biological Laboratories, Harvard University
Bernard Feld, Department of Physics, Mass. Inst. of Technology
Irwin C. Gunsalus, Department of Chemistry, University of Illinois
Robert Hofstadter, Department of Physics, Stanford University
Arthur Kornberg, Department of Biochemistry, Stanford University Medical School
Fritz Lipmann, Rockefeller University
Robert B. Livingston, Department of Neurosciences, U. Cal, San Diego
Matthew Meselson, Biological Laboratories, Harvard University
Severo Ochoa, New York University School of Medicine
Ray D. Owen, Division of Biology, California Institute of Technology
Keith R. Porter, Biological Laboratories, Harvard University
Charles Price, Department of Chemistry, University of Pennsylvania
Eugene Rabinowitch, Department of Botany, University of Illinois
E. L. Tatum, Rockefeller University
George Wald, Biological Laboratories, Harvard University
Paul Dudley White, Boston

President Lyndon B. Johnson
The White House
Washington, D.C.

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During the Second World War, the United States maintained a firm and clearly stated policy of not initiating the use of CB weapons. However, in the last few years the U.S. position has become less clear. Since the late 1950's, Defense Department expenditures on CB weapons have risen several fold — and there has been no categorical reaffirmation of the World War II policy.

Most recently, U.S. forces have begun the large-scale use of anti-crop and "non-lethal" anti-personnel chemical weapons in Vietnam. We believe that this sets a dangerous precedent, with long term hazards far outweighing any probable short term military advantage. The employment of any one CB weapon weakens the barriers to the use of others. No lasting distinction seems feasible between incapacitating and lethal weapons or between chemical and biological warfare. The great variety of possible agents forms a continuous spectrum from the temporarily incapacitating to the highly lethal. If the restraints on the use of one kind of CB weapon are broken down, the use of others will be encouraged.

Therefore, Mr. President, we urge that you

- Institute a White House study of overall government policy regarding CB weapons and the possibility of arms control measures, with a view to maintaining and reinforcing the world-wide restraints against CB warfare.
- Order an end to the employment of anti-personnel and anti-crop chemical weapons in Vietnam.
- Reestablish and categorically declare the intention of the United States to refrain from initiating the use of chemical and biological weapons.

Nobel Prize Laureates Who Have Signed the Petition

John Bardeen	Urbana, Illinois	Physics
Felix Bloch	Stanford, California	Physics
Konrad E. Bloch	Cambridge, Massachusetts	Biochemistry
Owen Chamberlain	Berkeley, California	Physics
Carl F. Cori	Boston, Massachusetts	Biochemistry
Donald A. Glaser	Berkeley, California	Physics
R. Hofstadter	Stanford, California	Physics
Arthur Kornberg	Palo Alto, California	Biochemistry
Fritz Lipmann	New York, New York	Biochemistry
Maria Goeppert Mayer	San Diego, California	Physics
Severo Ochoa	New York, New York	Biochemistry
Linus Pauling	Santa Barbara, California	Chemistry
E. M. Purcell	Cambridge, Massachusetts	Physics
Dickinson W. Richards	New York, New York	Medicine
Albert Szent-Gyorgyi	Woods Hole, Massachusetts	Biochemistry
E. L. Tatum	New York, New York	Genetics
Harold C. Urey	San Diego, California	Chemistry

HOLD UNTIL AFTER NEWS CONFERENCE 2:00 PM Tuesday, February 14,
1967. Cabinet Room, Hotel Willard, Pennsylvania Ave. and Fourteenth St.,
Washington, D.C.

Protocol for the Prohibition of the Use in War of Asphyxiating,
Poisonous or Other Gases, and of Bacteriological Methods of
Warfare, signed at Geneva on 17 June 1925

The text of the substantive part of the protocol reads as follows:

"Whereas the use in war of asphyxiating, poisonous or other gases, and of all analogous liquids, materials or devices, has been justly condemned by the general opinion of the civilized world; and,

"Whereas the prohibition of such use has been declared in Treaties to which the majority of Powers of the world are Parties; and,

"To the end that this prohibition shall be universally accepted as a part of International Law, binding alike the conscience and the practice of nations;

"Declare:

"That the High Contracting Parties, so far as they are not already Parties to Treaties prohibiting such use, accept this prohibition, agree to extend this prohibition to the use of bacteriological methods of warfare and agree to be bound as between themselves according to the terms of this declaration."

The United States delegation at Geneva proposed the ban on gas, and the Polish delegation suggested that this be extended to include bacteriological weapons. The protocol is in force with respect to most countries, including the United Kingdom, France, the Federal Republic of Germany, Italy, the Peoples Republic of China, and the U.S.S.R. The United States and Japan signed but did not ratify the protocol. Although the protocol was favorably reported by the Committee on Foreign Relations, the United States Senate in 1926 referred the report back to committee without giving its advice and consent to ratification.

RESOLUTION ADOPTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE UNITED NATIONS

The General Assembly,

Guided by the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and of international law,

Considering that weapons of mass destruction constitute a danger to all mankind and are incompatible with the accepted norms of civilization,

Affirming that the strict observance of the rules of international law on the conduct of warfare is in the interest of maintaining these standards of civilization,

Recalling that the Geneva Protocol for the Prohibition of the Use in War of Asphyxiating, Poisonous or Other Gases and of Bacteriological Methods of Warfare of 17 June 1925 has been signed and adopted and is recognized by many States,

Noting that the Conference of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament has the task of seeking an agreement on the cessation of the development and production of chemical and bacteriological weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, and on the elimination of all such weapons from national arsenals, as called for in the draft proposals on general and complete disarmament now before the Conference,

1. Calls for strict observance by all States of the principles and objectives of the Protocol for the Prohibition of the Use in War of Asphyxiating, Poisonous or Other Gases, and of Bacteriological Methods of Warfare, signed at Geneva on 17 June 1925, and condemns all actions contrary to those objectives;

2. Invites all states to accede to the Geneva Protocol of 17 June 1925.

148th plenary meeting,
5 December 1966.

170. Memorandum From the President's Special Assistant for Science and Technology (Hornig) to President Johnson/1/

Washington, February 14, 1967, 3:30 p.m.

/1/Source: Johnson Library, National Security File, Subject File, Warfare, Chemical and Biological, Box 51. Secret. A copy was sent to Rostow.

SUBJECT

Scientists' Petition on Chemical and Biological Weapons

This morning (11:00 a.m.) Mr. Adrian Fisher, Deputy Director of ACDA, and I received on your behalf the attached petition and transmittal letter,^{2/} opposing any actions weakening the present prohibitions and restraints on the use of chemical and biological weapons and specifically criticizing the U.S. for the use in Vietnam of "non-lethal" anti-personnel chemical weapons and anti-crop herbicides.

^{2/}Neither the petition nor the transmittal letter has been found, but the petition is extensively summarized in *The New York Times*, February 15, 1967, pp. 1, 16.

The petition has been signed by over 5,000 scientists and physicians, including 127 members of the National Academy of Sciences. I was informed that the group would discuss the petition with the press at 2:00 p.m. today.^{3/}

^{3/}The scientists' press conference was reported *ibid*.

Specifically, the petition urges you to:

--Institute a White House study of government policy regarding CB weapons.

--Order an end to the employment of anti-personnel and anti-crop chemical weapons in Vietnam.

--Declare the intention of the United States to refrain from initiating the use of chemical and biological weapons.

The covering letter commends the United States for its recent support of the UN General Assembly Resolution calling on all States to observe the principles and objectives of the Geneva Protocol^{4/} and recommends that the United States should now accede to the Geneva Protocol of 1925.

^{4/}See footnote 2, Document 154.

Mr. Fisher and I had a very good discussion with the scientists who delivered the petition. The group has clearly given this problem a great deal of responsible thought. They are seriously concerned about the broader implications of the problem, and this is not simply a disguised criticism of the Administration's policy in Vietnam.

In our initial reaction, I recommend that we simply state we are studying the petition and that I acknowledge the letter on your behalf along these same lines.

As a follow up, I would recommend that at an early press conference in response to a question on the petition, you make a statement clearly stating that we have a "no first use" policy with regard to chemical and biological warfare, with the exception of riot gases and herbicides. Although this would not directly respond to all the points in the petition or transmittal letter, it would deal directly with the most important general question. As you recall, I suggested such a statement in a memo to you (copy attached)^{5/} setting forth the concern of your Science Advisory Committee on the general problem of biological warfare. Although Secretaries McNamara and Katzenbach both agreed with the proposed statement, McNamara preferred not to push the matter at that time in the face of JCS objections unless there were a clear and urgent reason for doing so. If you are interested, I believe it would be possible to clear such a statement within the government, particularly if the statement were a low-key reiteration and clarification of the position we have already taken in supporting the UN resolution.

^{5/}Document 154.

Donald Hornig

1. Hornig to acknowledge petition, stating the matter under study.
2. Hornig to clear statement on "no first use" of chemical and biological weapons with McNamara and Katzenbach.^{6/}

^{6/}Neither of these options was approved or disapproved or marked to "Discuss."

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE
WASHINGTON

February 20, 1967

~~SECRET~~

MEMORANDUM FOR MR. WALT W. ROSTOW
THE WHITE HOUSE

Subject: Policy on Chemical and Biological
Weapons

We have reviewed Don Hornig's Memorandum For The President of February 14, 1967, in which he recommends that the President make a statement that we have a "no first use" policy with regard to chemical and biological warfare, with the exception of riot gases and herbicides.

While I agree that a statement along the lines proposed by Don would be appropriate, I would like to have the opportunity to review the exact statement proposed for use by the President before it is finally approved.

I perceive only one obstacle to clearing a statement within the government. This is the Department of Defense view that we should keep open the option for first use of incapacitating weapons until we have better information concerning incapacitating agents, their military effectiveness, and the political consequences of their use. In the absence of a convincing case that retaining this option is vital to the national security, I doubt that the potential advantages outweigh the probable political and public opinion costs, domestic and foreign.

DECLASSIFIED

Authority NLS 83-115

By isa, NARS, Date 11-1-83

Richard W. Long
Acting Secretary

~~SECRET~~

COPY
Lyndon B. Johnson Library

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MEMORANDUM

~~SECRET~~

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

Saturday, February 25, 1967

G.F. L
ND 20-1
Revision taken

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

SUBJECT: Scientists' Petition on Chemical and Biological Weapons

Last week Don Hornig made two recommendations to you for handling the scientists' petition on chemical and biological weapons:

1. Hornig asked you to authorize him to acknowledge the petition on your behalf, stating that the matter is under study.

I recommend you ask him to do this in an attempt to avoid attracting renewed public attention to the petition.

Tell Hornig he can acknowledge

Draft acknowledgment for me to sign

2. Hornig and the scientists want you to announce publicly that we will use chemical and biological weapons only in retaliation, after others use them against us.

Nick Katzenbach thinks a "no first use" policy which does not cover riot gases and weed killers should be issued. (See attached memo Tab A)

Secretary McNamara agrees with the policy but does not want to issue any statement now because the JCS opposes.

The Chiefs want to keep open the possibility of first use until we have better information about the military effectiveness of incapacitating agents.

I recommend that you ask Walt Rostow to get to you a draft statement on the use of chemical and biological weapons along with the recommendations of the agencies concerned -- State, Defense, JCS, ACDA and USIA -- as to whether it should be made public.

Bromley Smith
Bromley Smith

Rostow to get coordinated statement

Tell Hornig to go ahead

Ask Rostow to talk to me

DECLASSIFIED

Authority NLS 83 114

By is NARS, Date 10-12-83

COPY

~~SECRET~~

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