

DEC 9 1985

JOHN M. SPRATT, JR.
5th DISTRICT, SOUTH CAROLINA

1118 LONGWORTH BUILDING
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20515
(202) 225-5501

COMMITTEES:

ARMED SERVICES
GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

December 4, 1985

DISTRICT OFFICES:
FEDERAL BUILDING
BOX 350
ROCK HILL, SOUTH CAROLINA 29731
(803) 327-1114

17 E. CALHOUN STREET
SUMTER, SOUTH CAROLINA 29150
(803) 773-3362

214 W. LAURENS STREET
BOX 964
LAURENS, SOUTH CAROLINA 29360
(803) 984-5323

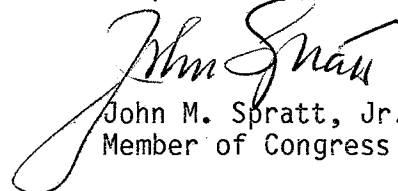
Prof. Matthew Meselson
Department of Biochemistry
and Molecular Biology
Harvard University
Cambridge, MA 02138

Dear Prof. Meselson:

Owing to your continuing interest in the chemical weapons debate, I thought you might appreciate a copy of the enclosed letter. My colleagues and I feel strongly that the Congress should not rush into a binary chemical weapons program without carefully considering how best to assure an adequate chemical deterrent long into the future.

I have appreciated your contributions to this debate and welcome any further input you might have on this subject.

Respectfully,


John M. Spratt, Jr.
Member of Congress

JMSj:bd

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

December 2, 1985

Dear Senator:

Until now, debate over binary chemical weapons has focused on the question of whether or not production should be resumed. Although there is still diversity of opinion, the Conference Report on the Department of Defense Authorization for 1986 expresses a widespread consensus that, in the absence of a verifiable treaty to ban chemical weapons, there will be a need to upgrade our chemical deterrent to counter the Soviet Union's growing capability. Congress has not, however, squarely faced the issue of how modernization should proceed.

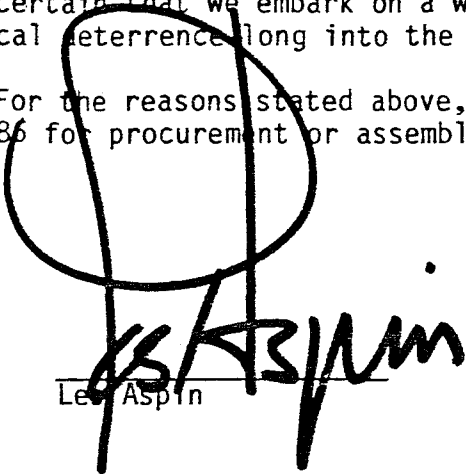
It is our view that the Congress should not appropriate any monies for the binary chemical weapons production program until the President has reported to Congress on consultations with our NATO allies regarding transport and deployment of these weapons, and Congress has had further opportunity to review the program. Our position is based on the observations summarized below:

- o Production of the 155mm binary artillery shell would duplicate what is now the most capable element of our existing chemical weapons arsenal. The President's Chemical Warfare Review (Stoessel) Commission found that all weapons currently deployed in Europe are "serviceable" and that scientists generally believe that the chemical agents will not lose effectiveness until sometime in the 1990's. The Commission also found that "rumors of the stored munitions being dangerous or leaking appear to be exaggerated and inaccurate." Results of Army tests to determine the stability and lifetime of our existing arsenal will soon be available and will provide better information on which to base procurement decisions.
- o The modernization program, as presently structured, does not adequately address the most serious imbalance between U.S. and Soviet chemical weapons capabilities. The Stoessel Commission, while endorsing production, suggests that our most critical need is a deep strike capability. Development of the Bigeye bomb will fill part of this need, but the Commission concluded that "more effort is required, particularly to develop unmanned delivery systems."
- o If we remove unitary chemical weapons now forward-based in Europe and replace these stocks with binary munitions stored in the United States, will we enhance or degrade our chemical deterrent in the European theatre? Do we have reliable plans and advance commitments from NATO countries for transportation of chemical weapons through their countries in time of crisis? Should we not await the President's report on consultations with our allies before appropriating funds?

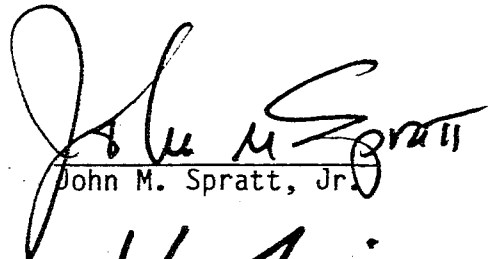
We agree that, in the absence of a treaty banning chemical weapons, our chemical arsenal requires modernization. Yet we also believe that we now have an adequate deterrent and the time to proceed deliberately and prudently. The Stoessel Commission concluded that the "existing U.S. stockpile does provide a deterrent" even though the stockpile's utility and reliability are declining. While there is substantial support in Congress for modernization, we should make certain that we embark on a well-conceived program that will assure chemical deterrence long into the future.

For the reasons stated above, we urge you to oppose appropriating funds in FY 1986 for procurement or assembly of chemical weapons.

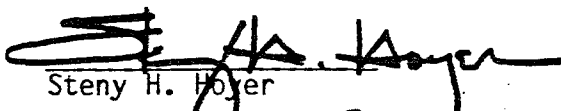
Sincerely,



Lee Aspin



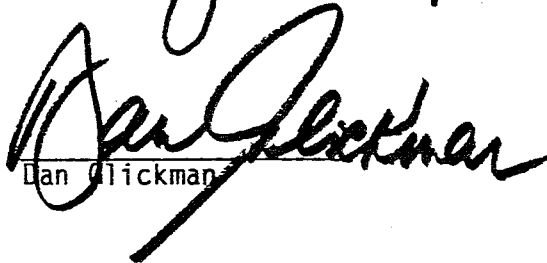
John M. Spratt, Jr.



Steny H. Hoyer



Vic Fazio



Dan Glickman