

FAX

Martens

DEPARTMENT OF BIOCHEMISTRY AND MOLECULAR BIOLOGY  
HARVARD UNIVERSITY



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Dear Dr. Martens,

I am writing to ask you for information regarding current German approaches to the destruction of old chemical warfare agents, in particular mustard and organophosphorus compounds. Our National Academy of Sciences has been asked by the U.S. Army to prepare a report on "Alternative Chemical Demilitarization Technologies". As a member of the Academy panel preparing this report, I have been assigned the task of summarizing the current practices of other countries. If it is convenient for you, I would greatly appreciate it if you could provide me with answers to the following four questions for mustard(s) and, separately, for organophosphorus agents. I must write a first draft for the next meeting of our panel, the first week of September.

What is your current preferred method for destruction of mustard(s)? Please indicate added reactants and solvents, if any, in this description.

What are the principal chemical end-products and how are they disposed of?

What problems, if any, do you encounter in using this method?

What environmental emission limitations are you required to observe?

If in addition there are any documents dealing with the above questions that you wish to provide to us, I would be most grateful to have them. With best wishes,

Sincerely,

Matthew Meselson  
Professor of Biochemistry