

916

January 2, 1969

To: William Kabisch

From: Dael Wolfle

Please call Rodney Nichols at OX. 7-7071 and tell him the Board of Directors is ready to send the letter to Ambassador Bunker, unless his advisers think we should not.

The letter, as revised by the Board, is attached. A copy of the revision should go to Nichols whenever it is sent, but I do not think it necessary to send him a draft of the revision. He already has a draft of the slightly different earlier version.

We had also planned to send a copy to Paris. At the Board meeting, there was a discussion of whether it might best be addressed to Harriman, Vance, or the senior Civil Service member of the Paris delegation. There was a little uncertainty about his name, but a call to Herman Pollack, director of the Office of International Scientific and Technological Affairs in the Department of State, would get the information. His number is DU. 3-4202. You might discuss this point with Nichols, but it was the Board's feeling that probably the letter would get more attention if it went to the senior career man than if it went to Harriman or Vance, both of whom will be replaced shortly.

DW:chb

Nichols
Rm 3 E 144
Pentagon
OX 7-7071

DZ

D R A F T

The Honorable Ellsworth Bunker
American Ambassador
Saigon, South Vietnam

My dear Mr. Ambassador:

My fellow members of the Board of Directors of the American Association for the Advancement of Science have asked me to request your assistance in making certain that as soon as conditions permit there will be undertaken a comprehensive study of the ecological effects of the use of chemical herbicides in Vietnam.

at the direction of our Council, given serious
For the past year and a half we have ~~been consulting with representatives of the Department of Defense concerning~~ *attention to problems articulated with* the use of chemical defoliant in Vietnam. ~~We are not recommending the cessation of the use of herbicides, for their use appears to provide significant military advantages.~~ *are convinced* We have, ~~however,~~ taken the position that the ecological *risks* ~~consequences~~ of their use should be studied more thoroughly and over a longer period than thus far has been possible.

Since the beginning of our discussions in July of 1967, the Department of Defense contracted with the Midwest Research Institute for the study entitled "Assessment of Ecological Effects of Extensive or Repeated Use of Herbicides." That study brings together a large amount of information, but leaves many questions unanswered because the data necessary for answers are not available.

During the past year, Dr. Fred Tschirley conducted for the Department of State his brief field study and prepared his report. In September, your office released the statement "On Allied Herbicide Operations." *without having been aware of Dr. Tschirley's report,*
In July we published in Science a statement of some of our views

^

concerning the use of herbicides in Vietnam. These publications indicate that we have a shared concern over the possibility of damage to the ecology of Vietnam.

The best evidence we can secure is that there is much uncertainty about how severe and how long lasting the ecological changes will be. The September statement from your office and statements from the Department of Defense express assurance that there will be no significant or long-lasting damage. Yet, if our information is correct, some applications are greatly in excess of the amounts used elsewhere and earlier, and earlier studies may therefore be unreliable guides for predicting the effects of present usage levels. Dr. Tschirley's report estimates a regeneration time of 20 years for treated mangrove areas, and warns of probable bamboo invasion of semi-deciduous forests given repeated treatments. His report repeatedly emphasizes the difficulty and uncertainty of trying to predict the long-range changes. Dr. Tschirley, Dr. C. E. Minarik of Fort Detrick, and Rodney Nichols and A. E. Hayward of ODDR&E met with the Board of Directors a few weeks ago for a discussion which ^{led on Board to} concluded that we do not know with any satisfactory degree of assurance what the long-range consequences will be.

It seems to us desirable to make plans for a more comprehensive ^{of the possible risks and benefits} and longer study than has been possible so far. Thus we endorse strongly the recommendations of Dr. Tschirley's report of 12 April. He proposed that ecological research be carried out under the auspices of the International Biological Program and that assessment of the current program be made by the Forestry Branch of USAID. In our statement published in Science, of which I enclose a copy, we proposed U.N.

auspices. Whether I.B.P. or U.N. or some other organization assumes responsibility is, however, less important than that the necessary studies be done and done well. And that is not likely unless there is a strong request from Vietnam.

We hope, therefore, that your office will endorse the proposed study, will recommend that it be started as soon as active warfare in Vietnam is brought to an end, and will consult with representatives of the government and the scientific councils of Vietnam to encourage them to request such a study.

There will come a time--we hope quickly--when reparative work in Vietnam can begin. What we propose should be a part of that effort. We hope our proposals will have your active support.

Sincerely,

Walter Orr Roberts
President

*letter for W.O.R.
send lib to new
recy of state
agreed w/ Technical sec.
offering AAS covers*

*American Association
for the Advancement of Science*

WALTER ORR ROBERTS, *President* Chairman
Board of Directors

National Center for Atmospheric Research
Boulder, Colorado 80302

19 January 1969

Memorandum to: AAAS Board of Directors
From: Walter Orr Roberts *WOR*
Subject: More about the Vietnam herbicides.

A couple of days ago I had a call from Rodney Nichols of DDRE, with whom, you remember, we've been talking about our proposed letter to Ambassador Bunker, in Saigon. We had planned, after a little further discussion, to mail the letter, modified along the lines of our discussions at the Christmas meeting.

Nichols reported that things have moved quite rapidly, and that a different step might now be more useful. After some thought, I concur. I have therefore sent the attached letter to the new Secretary of State, Mr. Rogers. I concluded that this letter did not cut off the avenue to write the other kind of a letter later, if we should decide that actions are moving too slowly.

The report Nichols gave me can be summarized as follows:

- (1) Some significant steps have already occurred in Saigon. The Ambassador and the Mission have given considerable thought to Fred Tschirley's recommendations (which he reported to us when we met with him).
- (2) They (Ambassador and Mission) have agreed: (a) to a good study of the ecological consequences, in the field, when hostilities cease; (b) before end of negotiations or hostilities a continued assessment of the impact of the herbicides program on the forests, watersheds, etc., and; (c) adoption of a policy, in general, of defoliation in strips, instead of by big area blocs.

In the light of this, I think the kind of letter I enclose will be of optimum value now. If things lag, we can still send a letter more or less like the one we discussed at Christmas.

Glad to have advice or comment!

END OF MEMO

Office of the
Secretary of State
Department of State
Washington, D.C. 20520

OFFICE OF THE
USAID/SAIGON

UNCLASSIFIED
Classification

USAID

Office: SAIGON 12551

Date: 5 AUGUST 1970
050030Z

ACTION: SECSTATE WASH DC
INFO: CINCPAC
SAIGON: 12551

AIDAC

SUBJECT: Herbicide Assessment Commission

FROM: MESELYN PASS TO WILLIAM LOGAN, Vietnam Desk, FEEM, USDA

USAID
DISE
DIR
DD
EASAC
DPA

Embassy insists bottleneck on access to spray location data
is in Washington, not Saigon. Have just seen Ambassador Bunker.

He fully supports our request for access to all data and

MACV-3
MACV-13-2

for MACV logistic support. Ambassador sees no reason for

GMB

MACV-13-2 denial of our requests and will so inform CG Rossen. Therefore,

please have Bentley Glass make strongest effort to persuade

DOD/Washington. Cable Glass address and phone number.

BUNKER

Date: 8/4/70
BY: MeseLyn:al:8/4/70

Approved: AEFarwell (by phone)

AMB:EBunker

UNCLASSIFIED
Classification

SECRET

MEMORANDUM

September 22, 1970

TO : The Ambassador
FROM : POL - William K. Hitchcock
SUBJECT : Crop Destruction

Should the crop destruction program be continued?

The herbicide program, including crop destruction, was last reviewed critically in 1968.

Funds for herbicide activities have been cut from \$27 million in FY70 to \$3 million in the current fiscal year, the use of defoliant 2, 4, 5, T (Orange) has been banned and the availability of C-123 spray aircraft has been reduced sharply by Vietnamization. Nevertheless, the crop destruction program, which was budgeted at \$3 million last year, is continuing at nearly the same level.

The rationale for crop destruction spraying is to deny food to the enemy by killing standing crops prior to harvest, forcing him to forage far afield to meet his needs, or, in combination with other measures, to so reduce his food stocks as to force loss of morale and abandonment of aggressive action. This rationale has been questioned in a recent USAID Staff Memorandum (TAB A).

Crop destruction was also severely criticized by Dr. Meselson and his AAAS colleagues who spent August in Viet-Nam studying the long-term effects of the herbicide program. (Two memos at TAB B) Their criticisms reflect the feelings of many Americans.

The administration in presenting the Geneva Protocol to the Senate for ratification stated our understanding that "it does not prohibit the use in war of riot-control agents and chemical herbicides." (TAB C) However, there was considerable support in the Senate for the motion by Senator Gaylord Nelson of Wisconsin proposing that herbicides be banned.

SECRET

DECLASSIFIED
Authority NND 5692

*Key attached
Other memos
at end of report
by Hitchcock*

*Re: Senator
Nelson*

SECRET

2

In carrying out the President's policy of Vietnamization, it is essential that during a period of waning military activity we take every feasible precaution to avoid unnecessary damage to the civilian economy. Therefore, it seems to me desirable that we reassure ourselves of the overriding military necessity for continued spraying of herbicides for the purpose of destroying crops.

The Mission has an established interagency committee under MACV chairmanship comprising experts on herbicides and representatives from interested agencies in country, the "203" Herbicide Review Committee. Although its charter is only to review specific crop destruction and other herbicide projects submitted for your approval, it appears well qualified to assume this larger responsibility for study and recommendations.

RECOMMENDATION

That you sign the memorandum to General Abrams at FA 3 D asking him to convey your request for a study to the Chairman of the "203" Committee.

-/-

DECLASSIFIED
Authority: NND 56038

POL/MIL SW:esb

SECRET

Brown, D OS
CSW corresp

OCT 28 1970

22 October 1970

Dear Matt,

I have the maps you requested for pickup at your convenience
-- or would you rather I mailed them?

Enclosed is some information on the Hre I found; it may be of
use to you.

Please send me a copy of your memo to ~~AK~~ Ambassador Bunker
as soon as possible. It seems like a very opportune time
to try to stimulate some action here, before the Secretary
goes up to the hill.

Best wishes,

Dave Brown

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF SCIENCE

AAAS HERBICIDE ASSESSMENT COMMISSION

BOTANICAL MUSEUM, HARVARD UNIVERSITY
CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS 02138, U.S.A.

MATTHEW S. MESELSON, CHAIRMAN

ARTHUR H. WESTING, DIRECTOR

12 November 1970

The Honorable Ellsworth Bunker
American Ambassador
Saigon, Republic of Vietnam
APO San Francisco, California 96243

Dear Ambassador Bunker,

On behalf of the Herbicide Assessment Commission of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, we wish to express our appreciation for the generous assistance provided by the Embassy during our recent tour of the Republic of Vietnam.

We are now preparing our report for presentation to the AAAS at the end of December and will send a copy to you as soon as it is available. Before that time, however, we wish to relay some observations that we believe merit your more immediate attention because they challenge the basis of the current chemical crop destruction program.

On August 21 and 28 we overflew an area in Quang Ngai province where chemical crop destruction operations had been conducted a few days before. The responsible chemical operations staff officer accompanied us on one of the overflights, and we spoke at length with other officers and civilian officials on the scene. It was explained to us that the targets were VC/NVA crop production areas and that most of the food destroyed would otherwise have been consumed by enemy forces. The reasons given for this assessment were that

1. The target area had only a very low population density.
2. The area under cultivation had expanded strikingly in recent years.
3. The cultivated area was much larger than that needed to support the small indigenous population.
4. The existence of numerous terraced rice fields indicated the influx of VC/NVA food production units, since the Montagnards who comprise the native population do not practice terracing.

Our observations are sharply at variance with all four of these points.

Background information. One of the target areas is shown in photograph 1. Three C123 aircraft sprayed herbicide along the Song Re river valley from map coordinates BS 3455 to BS 3543. The photograph was taken near the latter coordinate, looking northward up the valley. The spray swaths are generally visible as brown streaks. Spraying was conducted continuously for a distance of about ten miles, resulting in coverage of approximately 1000 acres. Photographs 2 and 3 show the ground more closely. Numerous craters have been caused by the preparatory laying down of maximum suppressive fire, including the application of 300 per cent saturation with cluster bomb units, a measure required by the Seventh Airforce to protect the slow-flying C123's against hostile ground fire. Many dwellings may be seen in both close-ups, especially in photograph 3. The site of each of the photographs is indicated on the accompanying 1:50,000 scale U.S. Army map.

Population density. The map shows a high population density throughout the target area. In the twenty-seven 1 km² grid boxes through which the spraying passed, there are more than 900 dwellings, indicated as small black squares. Detailed comparison of the map with photographs 2 and 3 suggests that the number of dwellings in the target area is at least as great as it was in 1965, the year in which the map was last revised. Assuming, for example, an occupancy of six persons per dwelling, the population in the sprayed area would be approximately 5,000. This corresponds to 180 persons per square kilometer, hardly a low population density.

Expansion of cultivated area. The boundaries of cultivated fields on the enclosed map (and also on a matching 1:20,000 scale pictomap) agree well with the boundaries seen in our photographs, offering no evidence for any major expansion of crop production since 1965. Also, the fields seen in the photographs look well established and not of recent origin.

The question of surplus. The amount of land under cultivation in the target area may be estimated from the map to be approximately 800 hectares, about one hectare for each dwelling. Contrary to the view that a large surplus of food was being grown in the valley, one hectare of mountain land is just about enough to sustain a family unit.

Significance of terraced fields. Authoritative DoD publications on the Montagnard peoples as well as knowledgeable officials in Saigon state that the Montagnards of Quang Ngai, the Hre, have long grown rice on terraced fields.

We realize that this particular crop destruction mission may have been atypical. However, it was cited by the chemical staff officer and other officials as being particularly effective and well planned.

Moreover, our observations lend additional weight to several official studies done in Vietnam which have concluded that nearly all of the food destroyed by the chemical crop destruction program would normally be consumed by civilians, not by enemy soldiers.

As to the scale of the present crop destruction program, we were distressed by the implications of an analysis prepared by the GVN at the province level estimating the quantity of rice and other crops marked for chemical destruction under the 1970-71 herbicide program. Including missions requested by U.S. elements as well as those requested by the Vietnamese themselves, the total quantity of food scheduled for destruction is placed at 14,575 metric tons in Quang Ngai and Quang Tin provinces alone. This should be enough to sustain some 50-70,000 persons for a year. The targets are located mainly in upland regions where Montagnards are the traditional population. The Special Commission for Highland Affairs estimates the total Montagnard population of the two provinces as just under 70,000. Therefore if the areas we inspected are any indicator, the destruction of so much food or even of any substantial fraction of it would have devastating consequences for the Montagnard peoples of Quang Ngai and Quang Tin and for indigenous peoples in other provinces where similar conditions may prevail.

While we were in Quang Ngai province we had several occasions to interview Montagnard refugees whose lands had recently been sprayed with herbicide. We were impressed with the way in which they perceive the use of the chemicals. Apparently when the land is effected by herbicides, the Hre people consider it to be the manifestation of an evil spirit, and according to their tradition will abandon such land in the belief that it has fallen under a curse. Thus the folk beliefs of the Hre may intensify the effects of the crop destruction program on their lives.

Before leaving Vietnam we made a preliminary report of our observations to General Abrams and to Mr. Stephen Winship and Mr. Terence Grant of the Embassy Political Military section. Upon our return, one of us was requested to present a briefing at the State Department in Washington. The briefing took place on October 19 before a working level group consisting mainly of personnel from the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs and the Bureau of Intelligence and Research. We are also sending copies of this report to Secretary Rogers and to General Abrams.

We strongly hope that our observations can make a positive contribution toward bringing under review a program which seems to us very much in need of it.

Sincerely yours,

Matthew Meselson

John Constable

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF SCIENCE

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12 November 1970

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We strongly hope that our observations can make a positive contribution toward bringing under review a program which seems to us very much in need of it.

Sincerely yours,

Matthew Meselson

John Constable

DEC 8 1970

Saigon, Republic of Viet Nam
December 1, 1970

Dear Professor Meselson:

Your letter of November 12 was awaiting me on my return from consultations and leave in the United States. I was pleased to have been able to assist you and your colleagues and will look forward to receiving your final report.

I appreciate your bringing to my immediate attention your August 21 and 28 observations in Quang Ngai and have carefully considered your explanation of how they varied with the assessment of the American military. I have asked MACV for an explanation of this variance and will be in touch with you when this has been received.

With kind regards,

Sincerely,


Ellsworth Bunker
Ambassador

Professor Matthew S. Meselson
AAAS Herbicide Assessment Commission
Botanical Museum, Harvard University
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02138

(Handwritten letterhead)

KOMER

15 December 1970

Ambassador Robert Komer
Rand Corporation
2100 "M" Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20037

Dear Bob:

Following our telephone conversation yesterday I enclose a copy of a letter sent to Ambassador Bunker in the middle of last month. I think the letter speaks for itself, ~~and~~ I believe you will find our observations to be somewhat at variance with how you thought the crop destruction program was being operated at present. Certainly it was at variance with our previous understanding of the program.

Also enclosed are the three photographs and accompanying map showing the valley where this particular crop destruction mission was flown, and a copy of the letter which was sent to General Abrams along with this same material.

I am sending these items to you partly because I know you will be interested in them, and partly in the hope that you may be able to help in getting this questionable program properly reviewed. Anyway, I would like to get whatever comments and advice you may have.

I do not have extra copies of these photographs and the map. Could you please return them in the enclosed envelope?

With best regards,

Sincerely yours,

Mat

Matthew Meselson

MM:em

Enclosures

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

February 26, 1971

The Honorable Ellsworth Bunker
American Ambassador
Saigon, Republic of Vietnam
APO San Francisco, California 96243

Dear Ambassador Bunker:

Thank you for your letter of December 1.

As we are now in the last stages of preparing our final report, we are anxious to learn of the conclusions reached by MACV in evaluating our report to you of November 12. If this evaluation has now been completed we would greatly appreciate hearing from you in connection with this matter, though we realize that you are under the pressure of many other duties.

I am enclosing the summary of presentations given by the AAAS Herbicide Assessment Commission at the annual meeting of the AAAS in Chicago last December, in case the copy sent earlier to your staff did not come to your personal attention.

With best regards,

Sincerely yours,

Matthew Meselson
Professor of Biology

15 March 1971

The Honorable Ellsworth Bunker
American Ambassador
Saigon, Republic of Vietnam
APO San Francisco
California 96243

Dear Ambassador Bunker:

The enclosed volume contains the results of a recent Carnegie Endowment study that focused on policy questions raised by the military use of riot control agents and herbicides. I thought you might find it of some interest.

With kind regards,

Sincerely yours,

Matthew Meselson

Matthew Meselson
Professor of Biology

SAIGON

May 27, 1971

Dear Professor Meselson:

During the past month I have been informed of two developments of interest to scientists like yourself who are concerned about the long-term effects of herbicide operations in South Vietnam.

First, a group from the office of the Chief of Engineers will arrive in Vietnam later this month to begin preliminary field work on the study of long-term herbicide effects to be conducted by the National Academy of Science under the auspices of the Department of Defense. Other members of the NAS team are acquainting themselves with background material at the DOD and should begin arriving here within the next several weeks.

Second, I understand that the DOD is about to declassify the Mission's 1968 Herbicide Policy Review. I believe the material contained in the Review will answer many of the questions which were unresolved when you left Saigon last fall.

In that regard, I find that inadvertently we neglected to forward to you additional information concerning the points raised in your letter of November 12 on crop destruction operations in

Professor Matthew S. Meselson, Chairman
AAAS Herbicide Assessment Commission
American Association for the Advancement
of Science
Botanical Museum, Harvard University
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02138

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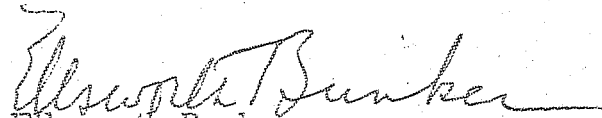
Quang Ngai Province. I enclose a memorandum bearing on some of those questions.

I hope it will be of some use in interpreting the information developed during your survey. I assure you we share your concern for the Montagnard farmers and other civilians caught in the turmoil of a long and bitter war.

I hope this information, as well as that developed by the NAS Study and that contained in the Herbicide Policy Review, will assist you and your colleagues in making a definitive determination of what effect U. S. herbicide operations may have had on the South Vietnamese ecology and society.

With kind regards,

Sincerely,


Ellsworth Bunker
American Ambassador

Enclosure:
Memorandum on Crop Destruction Operation
in Quang Ngai Province

MEMORANDUM

FOR: Professor Matthew S. Meselson

SUBJECT: Crop Destruction Operation in Quang Ngai
Province

Like all proposed target areas, the one discussed in your letter was reviewed by the Vietnamese and American military and civilian officials most familiar with local conditions, beginning at the district level. This particular area has been under effective enemy control for years, except during sweeps by large allied units.

We believe there are no friendly civilians in the valley. You pointed out in your letter that Montagnards abandon their land when it is sprayed with herbicides. The valley had been sprayed at least once before the August mission. Thus, if your information is correct, most, if not all, Montagnards living there would have abandoned the valley long ago.

That the present inhabitants of the valley are largely enemy forces is apparent from the damage inflicted on C-123 aircraft during spray runs. During a mission in the valley in April of last year, the aircraft were hit a total of thirty-seven times. During the August mission, the aircraft were hit three times.

Heavy suppression runs were made prior to both missions; however, the craters which appear in your photographs were not caused by this fire. The munitions used in heavy suppression are small bombs weighing less than a pound each. They do not produce craters large enough to be seen from the air. The craters shown in your photographs were caused by tactical air strikes and artillery fire during various ground operations since 1965.

Concerning population density in the valley, estimates based on repeated aerial observation are much lower than those you have made. I believe you will agree that in the time available your

observation could not be as thorough as those carried out on a regular basis by trained reconnaissance pilots. Incidentally, the 70,000 figure cited in your letter as the Montagnard population in Quang Ngai and Quang Tin refers to the entire area of both provinces. The overwhelming majority of the Montagnard population lives in government-controlled areas where no crop destruction missions are carried out.

Aerial photographs also indicate that cultivation within the valley has increased during the past year, a period when the enemy has been emphasizing self-support by his units because of logistical and supply problems. The area under cultivation cannot increase much beyond the limits on the 1965 map because of the mountains surrounding the valley. This suggests that cultivation in the valley decreased as fighting in the late '60s forced the original inhabitants from the area and began to increase in the past year as enemy units devoted more manpower resources to self-support.

MACV is unaware of the analyses you mention which estimated that 14,575 metric tons of food would be destroyed in Quang Nhai and Quang Tin Provinces during 1970-71. Without going into detail, I can assure you that the crop destruction program never operated at that level of magnitude.

9 August 1971

The Honorable Ellsworth Bunker
American Ambassador
Saigon, Republic of Vietnam
APO San Francisco, California 96243

Dear Ambassador Bunker:

Thank you very much for your letter of May 27 and for the memorandum on "Crop Destruction Operation in Quang Ngai Province" which you sent with it. I am spending most of my time this summer preparing the final report of the AAAS Herbicide Assessment Commission. It will be published as a rather technical book sometime next year. In the meantime Dr. Constable and I thought we should write something for the lay reader, and so agreed to prepare an article at the request of the Sierra Club Bulletin. I enclose a copy of that article, as well as a copy of some recent correspondence published in the London Times which may be of interest to you. We took the opportunity in the Sierra Club article to express once again our gratitude for the superb assistance we received last August from the Embassy, MACV and the Government of Vietnam, notwithstanding the rather reluctant attitude of the Department of Defense in Washington.

I read with much interest the memorandum on crop destruction, a copy of which I enclose in case you do not have one at hand. Some of the points it makes are certainly worth discussion, and I would very much like to take them up with its author. I cannot tell who this may be, although I assume that it is an individual rather than a committee, since I notice in the last paragraph that the word "I" is used. If it would not be too much trouble, would you ask your staff to let me know who is the author, so that I can contact him directly?

With kind regards,

Sincerely yours,

Matthew Meselson
Professor of Biology

MM:em

Enclosures: London Times letters; Sierra Club article; Crop Destruction memorandum

SEP 30 1971

Saigon, Viet-Nam
September 22, 1971

Dear Professor Meselson:

Recalling our meetings a year ago, I was interested to learn from your letter of August 9 that you are now preparing the final report of the Herbicide Assessment Commission of the AAAS. Professor Westing was here on a return visit to Viet-Nam last month, but unfortunately our schedule crossed for only a very brief period and I did not have a chance to talk with him before his departure.

We are expecting shortly the visit of Dr. Lang and his Committee on the Effects of Herbicides in Viet-Nam, continuing the study by the National Academy of Sciences as requested by the Congress. The Vietnamese government has promised to cooperate with this study and we are hopeful that some qualified Vietnamese scientists may join the distinguished panel of international scientists in the field work here. Although I am sure that the scientific community will retain an active interest in following the indicators of ecological damage for some years, this study should provide much additional scientific data, and coming a year after your investigations may provide useful observations on the extent of any permanent damage.

Professor Matthew Meselson
Harvard University
The Biological Laboratories
16 Divinity Avenue
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02138

SEP 30 1971

2

I recently saw a clipping of the letter written by you and Dr. John Constable in rebuttal of Professor Westing's article which appeared in the New York Times July 12. I am glad to have this for the record. Not only has crop destruction been halted, but we have gotten out of the herbicide business altogether except for the immediate circumference of fire support bases which, being mined, cannot be cleared by other methods.

The memorandum on crop destruction in Quang Ngai province, enclosed with my letter of May 27, was prepared by Embassy staff for enclosure with my letter, so the first person assurances contained in the last paragraph conveyed my views. Background material had been provided by military officers at MACV, but the memorandum was drafted by Mr. Terrence Grant of the Embassy, who is now assigned to the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs in the Department of State in Washington. I understand you talked with Mr. Grant several times during your visit to Viet-Nam, and I am sure that he would be pleased to meet you again in Washington, if you desire.

Sincerely,



Ellsworth Bunker
Ambassador

cc: Mr. Terrence Grant

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

27 September 1972

The Honorable Ellsworth Bunker
American Ambassador
Saigon, Republic of Vietnam
APO San Francisco 96243

Dear Ambassador Bunker,

I am writing to ask for your help in obtaining the August 1968 Report of the Herbicide Policy Review Committee. Some time ago, on 27 May 1971, you kindly wrote to me of your understanding that the Department of Defense was about to declassify the Report. In response to several inquiries at the Department of Defense since then, I was informed that the declassification process is still not completed. In June of this year, an official of the Department indicated that an objection to declassification had arisen at the Embassy in Saigon but that the situation might shortly change. However, I learned from DoD this week that the paper remains classified. On the possibility that the difficulty is merely a procedural one, I am writing to ask for your assistance in expediting the declassification process, if that is appropriate.

With sincere regards,

Yours truly,

Matthew Meselson
Professor of Biology

MM:mm



WINDHAM COLLEGE

PUTNEY, VERMONT 05346

Department of Biology

11 October 1971

AIR MAIL

Ambassador Ellsworth Bunker
Embassy of the United States of America
Saigon, Republic of Viet-Nam
APO San Francisco 96243

Dear Ambassador Bunker:

Thank you for your kind and carefully detailed letter of 21 September.

It was good to be reassured by you that U.S. forces no longer employ Agent Orange. I am convinced that no small part of the credit goes to you for this firm policy, as well as for our recent general suspension of the use of herbicidal weapons.

However, in view of the potential public health danger associated with Agent Orange and in view of the possible irresponsibility of the Saigon government I continue to be most apprehensive about the possibility of ARVN use in the future of our remaining stocks of Orange. I must therefore urge again that the Embassy do all in its power to have this remaining Orange shipped home and/or destroyed.

The concern you express over Dr. Pfeiffer's and my findings of environmental damage by various MACV programs other than herbicides is well taken. We have a number of reports in press that I will be sure to send you as soon as reprints become available.

I too have noted the Constable/Meselson response to my New York Times article dealing with the U.S. crop destruction program in Viet-Nam, although in my case less with interest than with surprise. Their rather niggling objections were not only factually questionable, but served to obscure the central issue. They took issue with my one specific example, claiming that my information on Quang Ngai province was exaggerated because it dealt with two provinces not one. Actually, when Meselson and I were shown the report on which I based this example (by the Operations Officer to the Quang Ngai PSA in August 1970) we were informed that it referred only to that one province. Their additional "correction" that U.S. crop spraying had ended prior to March is of course, also incorrect. This past August, MACV spokesmen informed us of crop destruction missions through early May.



WINDHAM COLLEGE

PUTNEY, VERMONT 05346

Department of Biology

Ambassador Ellsworth Bunker

11 October 1971

The very tone of their letter, it seems to me, served to undermine my main point (based on hard facts, supplied by DoD) that we as a nation had been knowingly and intentionally destroying substantial quantities of civilian food over an extended period of time. This whole tactic of massive civilian food deprivation (for marginal military gain at that) is to me one of the most odious aspects of this unfortunate war, dwarfing the importance of any other aspect of the herbicide program.

I am sorry to be ending my remarks on such a bitter note, knowing of your opposition to the military use of herbicides. As I look out the window I see Vermont at its most beautiful and I too look forward to the time when we can both enjoy the Putney area in peace and quiet.

Sincerely yours,

Arthur H. Westing
Arthur H. Westing
Chairman of Biology

AHW/e

cc: J. D. Constable

— M. S. Meselson

The RAND Corporation

2100 M STREET, N. W. • WASHINGTON, D. C. 20037

December 10, 1971

Professor Matthew Meselson
The Biological Laboratories
Harvard University
16 Divinity Avenue
Cambridge, Mass. 02138

DEC 14 1971

Dear Matt:

Just heard from Bunker. You'll be interested to know that he says:

"I think the herbicide situation is under good control. As you know, Agent Orange was returned to the United States. The limited amounts remaining of Agent White and Agent Blue will be used by the RVNAF and ourselves around the perimeter of bases where, because of mines, barb wire, etc., defoliation cannot be done by other means."

Please protect Ambassador Bunker's confidence by not quoting this in any way, but I thought you would be relieved to know precisely how responsive he was.

Incidentally, elsewhere in the letter, he says that:

"pacification was probably the wisest effort we undertook here",
i.e. in Vietnam.

All best wishes for the holiday season. I may come up to give a Seminar at the Kennedy School in February.

Sincerely,



R. W. Komer

RWK:st

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

27 September 1972

The Honorable Ellsworth Bunker
American Ambassador
Saigon, Republic of Vietnam
APO San Francisco 96243

Dear Ambassador Bunker,

I am writing to ask for your help in obtaining the August 1968 Report of the Herbicide Policy Review Committee. Some time ago, on 27 May 1971, you kindly wrote to me of your understanding that the Department of Defense was about to declassify the Report. In response to several inquiries at the Department of Defense since then, I was informed that the declassification process is still not completed. In June of this year, an official of the Department indicated that an objection to declassification had arisen at the Embassy in Saigon but that the situation might shortly change. However, I learned from DoD this week that the paper remains classified. On the possibility that the difficulty is merely a procedural one, I am writing to ask for your assistance in expediting the declassification process, if that is appropriate.

With sincere regards,

Yours truly,

Matthew Meselson
Professor of Biology

MM:mm

Saigon, Republic of Viet-Nam
November 27, 1972

Dear Professor Meselson:

I regret the delay in replying to your letter of September 27. It was occasioned by the need to clarify why you had experienced difficulty in obtaining a copy of the August 1968 Report of the Herbicide Policy Review Committee and then to locate an extra copy which we could lend you.

Enclosed is a copy of the report, which has been declassified. I would appreciate your returning it to the Embassy when it has served your purpose, since this is now our only copy available for loan.

With kind regards,

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Ellsworth Bunker". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name and title.

Ellsworth Bunker
Ambassador

Professor Matthew Meselson
Harvard University
The Biological Laboratories
16 Divinity Avenue
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02138

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

18 December 1972

The Honorable Ellsworth Bunker
American Ambassador
Saigon, Republic of Vietnam
APO San Francisco 96243

Dear Ambassador Bunker,

It was very kind of you to clarify the status of the 1968 Herbicide Policy Review and to permit me to borrow a copy from the Embassy. Please accept my thanks.

You may not have seen the recently published Senate hearings on the Geneva Protocol of 1925, pursuant to President Nixon's submission of the Protocol to the Senate for its advice and consent to ratification. I enclose a copy for your interest. The testimony of McGeorge Bundy (pages 183-194) appeared to have a particularly strong effect on the Committee.

With best wishes for the coming year,

Sincerely yours,

Matthew Meselson

encl:2

Bunker

Saigon, Republic of Viet-Nam
December 27, 1972

Dear Professor Meselson:

Thank you for your thoughtfulness in returning so promptly the Embassy's copy of the 1968 Herbicide Policy Review and for sending along a copy of the Senate Hearings on the Geneva Protocol, which we had not yet received from the Department. I look forward to an opportunity to read this record, particularly as it reflects on the actions taken in use of herbicides in Viet-Nam.

The field work undertaken by the National Academy of Sciences is nearing its end here in Viet-Nam but I understand that it will take some months to assemble their data and produce a report for submission to the Congress. I expect that your study by the Herbicide Assessment Committee for the AAAS must be nearing completion.

Please accept my best wishes for the holiday season and for the coming year.

Sincerely,



Ellsworth Bunker
Ambassador

Professor Matthew Meselson
Harvard University
The Biological Laboratories
16 Divinity Avenue
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02138