

CBW

October 17, 1969

Dear Matt:

Enclosed are my opinions about various CB issues. I prepared them anticipating questions. They did not materialize. However, you might find this useful.

I cannot locate the paper for Henry, of which you gave me a copy. Could you have another made and sent to me in Newport Beach?

Thanks for the National Academy invitation. We enjoyed ourselves. What's next in our program for ratification?

Sincerely,



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CONCLUSIONS

About The Need for Chemical and Biological Weapons

1. Lethal Biologicals. If we want to kill population, our strategic nuclear capability gives us that option. We keep the nuclear capability anyway. We do not need the lethal biological capability in addition.

2. Lethal Chemicals. The Soviets have a lethal chemical option in Europe short of nuclear war, if we are unable to respond in kind. We need some lethal chemical capability to deter their first use in Europe.

3. Incapacitating Chemicals. These weapons enable us to attack unprotected enemy troops mingled with civilians. This is a first-use capability. No other weapon gives us this option. The alternatives are not to attack the enemy or to kill civilians. Such situations occur infrequently because most enemy troops are protected. Using the weapons would break down the barriers to chemical and biological warfare and encourage proliferation of chemical and of biological capabilities.

The importance of discouraging proliferation is greater than the lives of ten to hundreds of civilians occasionally killed on the battlefield. Hence, we can proscribe the use of incapacitating chemical weapons and do not need the capability.

4. Incapacitating Biologicals. First-use situations in which we might consider using these weapons would be very much more serious. The lives of tens of thousands of United States troops, for example, might be involved. Proliferation would again be the main cost.

The importance of discouraging proliferation is greater than the lives of even tens of thousands of U. S. soldiers. Hence, we can proscribe the use of incapacitating biological weapons and do not need the capability.

About Using CS and Defoliants in Vietnam

Using CS and defoliants in combat amounts to chemical warfare. Engaging in chemical warfare, if only with harmless irritants also used to ~~suppress~~^{suppress} domestic riots, breaks down the barriers to chemical and biological warfare. Maintaining these barriers discourages proliferation and use of all kinds of chemical and biological weapons.

The importance of maintaining these barriers is greater than the lives of tens to hundreds of civilians killed in intermingled situations. Correspondingly, even if CS could be shown to reduce U. S. troop casualties--CS does not necessarily reduce casualties--maintaining the barrier is more important than reducing U. S. troop casualties by several thousand per year in Vietnam. Therefore, the United States should stop employing CS and defoliants in Vietnam.

Employment could be halted by the Secretary of Defense, the Secretary of State, the President, or even the U. S. Ambassador to Vietnam or the U. S. Commander there.

About Ratifying the Geneva Protocol

International convention is a major factor influencing nations not to acquire or use chemical and biological weapons. Ratification by the U. S. Senate would strengthen this convention, and thereby the barriers to chemical and biological warfare.

Ratification would draw attention to the use of CS and defoliants in Vietnam. To make the gesture of ratification genuinely meaningful, we would be obliged to stop using CS and defoliants.

Opponents to halting our use would allege embarrassment to the United States, loss of face, even our becoming after the fact war criminals. They would allege shackling of the military, increased U. S. troop casualties, and other dire consequences. I question the validity and certainly the relevance of these arguments.

We should stop using CS and defoliants in Vietnam because continued use leads to proliferation. We should strengthen the barriers to proliferation and CB warfare by ratifying the Protocol.

About CB Disarmament

We do not need any biological capability. We do not need incapacitating chemical capability. Our lack of need is independent of other nations' capabilities. Hence, we can publicly and unilaterally disarm. We should make that decision and announce it in a manner which will strengthen the barriers to chemical and biological warfare.

Our only need for a lethal chemical capability stems from the Soviets having one. If the Soviets agreed to disarm, we should also.