

December 3, 1969

Mr. Derek Viney
British Broadcasting Corporation
Bush House
London, W.C.2
England

Dear Derek,

Rather odd to see you in London without having the chance to talk. Still it was very pleasant to exchange smiles. My wife and I looked for you at the end of the meeting but you had vanished. The next days were so hectic we had no chance to call. And now that we really have something to celebrate together, we are back on our side of the Atlantic.

In case you did not see the exact text of President Nixon's statements, I enclose them with this letter. Notice that the position on harassing agents and anti-plant chemicals has not been specified. I believe there is still considerable flexibility here. There may be significant curtailment of chemical warfare in Vietnam although I do not expect it to cease altogether. If it were not for Vietnam, I believe there would be strong support within the government for interpreting the Protocol as Britain and other nations do, thus prohibiting harassing gases. Optimists can still hope that we will curtail the use of CS in Vietnam and will quietly remove CS munitions from the inventory after the war is over. One of the most important factors that will decide our ultimate position on harassing gas and anti-plant chemicals will be the view of other nations, especially allies, and especially Britain. If Britain holds clearly to its traditional interpretation of the Protocol, I think we will eventually come around to the same position. The important point is that the U.S. position is probably not frozen.

With warm regards,

As ever,

Matthew Meselson

MIM:bs
Encl.