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DEPARTMENT OF BIOCHEMISTRY

BERKELEY, CALIFORNIA 94720

January 9, 1970

Dr. Matthew Meselson
The Biological Laboratories
Harvard University
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02138

Dear Matt:

Many thanks for your critical review of my paper on CW agents in the Vietnam war. I'm afraid the material is rather badly out of date. It was written for the Stockholm Conference on Vietnam in May of last year. A participant in that conference, David Marr of Cornell, suggested that I prepare a ms for a small journal of which he is a member of the editorial board. I think this journal, Asian Survey, is mainly a CIA production. Marr may be their concession to objectivity. He was a Marine in Vietnam, he stayed on after discharge, and eventually led a protest march in Saigon. Later he showed up here at Berkeley and took a Ph.D. in history, graduating last June. He speaks Vietnamese and has an impressive knowledge of the political situation in South Vietnam.

I was pleased to note that you will take over the AAAS study on herbicides and I wish you every success in this formidable but important assignment.

As you know, Bert has been trying since 1966 to get the AAAS to make this study. We thought we had made some progress last year at Dallas when they announced that the field investigation would be carried out. About the middle of last year we concluded that the study might never materialize and so we contemplated making one of our own. At about that time I noticed an item in the C&E News on the large claim, I think about \$8 million, by the Cambodians vs. the U.S. for defoliation in the eastern province of the former country. We were offered an advance of \$5000 by the Free Press, a Division of MacMillan, for travelling expenses of two biologists to Cambodia. Most unfortunately, however, the Cambodians wouldn't let us into the country. I surmise, without any hard evidence, that they were hoping to collect and didn't want their negotiations with the U.S. soured by contacts with people like the Scientists' Committee on CBW. In the last week or so relations with Cambodia have deteriorated somewhat and, at any rate, Bert and Art Westing were able to spend about a week over there. They think the trip

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was immensely rewarding. Now I expect we will have to re-activate our contract with the Free Press in order to requite the travelling expenses of Pfeiffer and Westing. I already have a chapter from Vennema, the Canadian M.D. who spent three years in a hospital in Quang Ngai, in which is described in some detail the cases of the gas victims. I presume your study will deal only with the herbicides, and hence I would appreciate any up-to-date information on CS, etc. I have your reference in New Scientist.

We will keep you informed about the plans of the SC/CBW.* I expect we will concentrate on the upcoming debate on the Geneva Protocol in the Congress and would appreciate any suggestions from you on how to rally support in the scientific community for ratification of an uncompromised version of that treaty.

With admiration for your effective contributions to the humanization of science,

Sincerely,



J. B. Neilands

JBN:sg

* Art Galston will serve as Chairman in 1970.