

4 in all, 3 calls from him, 1 to him

1) He wanted, very quickly, the names of people a White House economist could call up to discuss the best ways of spending, say, \$150M on protection against soman: i.e. some people who really knew the subject and could explain it well. I suggested Frank Beswick and Jack Ooms, but would look into it further (which I did by calling up Rex Watson, q.v.). I called back to confirm these names and give their phone numbers, explaining that Beswick would feel inhibited about not talking through channels (so any call to him had best go to Watson first)

2) What did DM hydrolyse to? I referred him to the Jackson review article in *sternutators* in *Chem News* (1935). If the hydrolysis product --phenarsazinic acid? -- was non irritant, enough of it could stay down in the gut to wreak systemic arsenical intoxication. References to haemorrhaging from DM are to be found, Matt said, on the following pages of EATR 4108 (Oct 1967)--AD 822334--pp26,48,49,50,51,52,63.

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3) New analytical results have just come in. Some new compounds found. 200 ppm of dried plant material (not roots). Kapshon? Possibility of 'plant-altered fungal products'. The new samples are from both Laos (the new compounds) and Cambodia (much the same levels as first sample). Matt's comment: it looks more and more like a natural occurrence.

4) T2 is sufficiently water soluble to have contaminated wells.

5) Had learnt the designator of the Mineval doc: CDE TP 248 (April 1979) "RAF Document: MINEVAL". I said even this would make it no easier for me to get it.

6) DIA know take the view that the TAB antidote discovered in Yom Kippur war was not Russian, since they have found nothing very much to show the Russians have worked on such a formulation. Matt has yet to hear from Ezz about its provenance: will be seeing him in NYC next week.

7) The issue of New Yorker due out on 16 Oct carries an interview with Matt.

8) Don't forget the paper on synergism of satratoxin and another trichothecene.

9) Point he makes to inquirers is that the State backgrounders ~~cannot~~ make points which are contradicted by the open scientific literature. This suggests that USG has not been consulting the scientific community to the extent that they should. Which does not bode well.

10) Makes the poison-weakness point rather differently from me. Available T2 LD50 data suggests people would have to be exposed for 10 mins to a 700 mg/m³ airborne conc; but cloud would have passed by them well before ten mins were up.

Phone conv with Rex WATSON, 15 Oct 81

- 1) I asked his advice about names of good soman people (see MSM 14-15/10/81) He said they reckoned they had got the soman problem licked at Porton-- the use of reversible inhibitors to protect part of the biological catalyst; all that remained now was to develop out the details.
- 2) He reckoned the concept of catalytic protection was applicable to all supertoxics that might pose a threat, because these invariably acted by enzyme inhibition.
- 3) The tone of this implied that Porton was taking all the toxin stories seriously. He confirmed this when I asked him. Problem was, he said, that the Americans could not disclose their secret intelligence (because that would endanger sources) which, on the mycotoxin stories, is very persuasive.
- 4) When I asked if I might come down to discuss the mycotoxin affair in detail with his people, he said I should write in to see if this could be approved.
- 5) He was sorry he had had to turn down the Pugwash invite: he would have liked to have done it, but MoD disapproved.
- 6) Other soman names apart from Beswick and Ooms: someone from ICI, which is now doing a lot of work in the area (though they would probably feel inhibited from discussing it). Or someone from K&Blenz or TNO.