

A Chronology of Events Relating to Chemical & Biological Warfare

1968

Sample file

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IMPORTANT NOTICE

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As with any compilation of this size, there is always a difficulty in deciding at what point to stop collating material and organize and refine the document for publication.

This working draft is, of necessity therefore, a snapshot of the progress towards the final publication. The intention for producing working drafts is to enable reviews of the work in progress. As the final publication format has yet to be decided, sample files are being posted in the form of annual sub-sets of the draft chronologies. Those interested in reviewing or contributing to fuller drafts are encouraged to contact Richard Guthrie at <richard@cbw-events.org.uk>.

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Introduction

Sources and methodology

The information gathered for this chronology comes from open-source documentation (such as news reports, academic papers, published governmental and inter-governmental reports, and national archives). Some of the material has been gathered directly by Richard Guthrie. Much of the rest of the material has been collected by the Harvard Sussex Program (HSP) and the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI). As in any exercise such as this, the compilation of material has been a collective effort.

To attempt to list all of those very many individuals who have helped put together the CBW archives at HSP and SIPRI over a number of decades would be an exercise doomed to failure.

With apologies for any mis-spellings, known contributors include: Joachim Badelt, Brian Balmer, Gordon Burck, Priya Deshingkar, Nicholas Dragffy, Treasa Dunworth, Rob Evans, Simon Evans, Daniel Feakes, John Hart, Peter Herby, Melissa Hersh, Mitslral Kifleyesus, Frida Kuhlau, Milton Leitenberg, Lora Lumpe, Rod McElroy, Kathryn McLaughlin, Caitríona McLeish, Rayissa Manning, Nicholas Martin, Matthew Meselson, Pamela Mills, John Parachini, Tony Randle, Sandy Ropper, Carolyn Sansbury, Jacqueline Simon, Jenny Smith, Justin Smith, Guy Stevens, Thomas Stock, Ralf Trapp, Fiona Tregonning, Emmanuelle Tuerlings, Jonathan Tucker, Simon Whitby, Henrietta Wilson, Jean Pascal Zanders, and Elisabetta Zontini. In addition to those listed above, there have been numerous people who have presented one or the other of the organizations with an interesting reference or obscure, yet valuable, article.

Chronology entries

All chronology entries are written in the present tense. Entries for the same date are put in the sequence of events that happened (if specific times are known) or are placed in the order that dawn rises around the world. This means that entries for Japan, for example, will appear before Iran, which will appear before Iraq, which will appear before Germany. Specific times for events are given in GMT/UTC, where known, and local time if that has been specified.

Holding entries are preceded by the letter 'H' to indicate this status. Entries containing questions to be resolved are preceded with the letter 'Q'.

The margins of this document have been set for double-sided printing.

VOLUME V
1 JANUARY 1966 THROUGH 31 DECEMBER 1970

(extract)

1968

68xxxx

Q XX Xxxx 1968 Romania starts programmes ‘in the domain of chemical weapons’, according to a Romanian Defence Minister speaking 26 years later. The programmes were halted in 1990.[1] *[*find more*]*

[1] Rompres (Bucharest) (in English), 1423 GMT 23 June 1994, as reported in BBC-SWB 27 June 1994; Radio Romania (Bucharest), 1000 GMT 30 June 1994, as reported in BBC-SWB, EE/2032 B/4 (12), 2 July 1994; Radio Romania (Bucharest), 1900 GMT 30 June 1994, as reported in FBIS-EEU-94-128, 5 July 1994, pp 33-34; [no author listed] (from Bucharest), ‘Romania does not make chemical weapons’, AFP, 30 June 1994; [no author listed] (from Bucharest), ‘Romania says Ceausescu had chemical weapons plan’, Reuters, 30 June 1994.

68xxxx

Q XX Xxxx 1968 ‘The nerve agent VX was last produced at Nancekuke in 1968. The total amount produced was less than 110 kilograms.’[1] *[*add more*]*

The first Nancekuke production of VX had been in 1957, some samples of VX were held at Nancekuke up to 1976 for studies into storage stability.[2]

[1] Jeremy Hanley, Minister of State for the Armed Forces, Written Answer [with letters from CBDE Chief Executive Graham Pearson], 20 July 1993, *Hansard*, vol 229, c168–74.

[2] Jonathan Aitken, Minister of State for Defence Procurement, Written Answer [with letters from CBDE Chief Executive Graham Pearson], 16 July 1993, *Hansard*, vol 228, c710-19.

680100

January 1968 In the United States, a military training manual entitled *Treatment of Chemical Agent Casualties* is published by the US Departments of the Army, the Navy and the Air Force. The manual includes the text:

Generally speaking, an incapacitating agent is any compound which can interfere with the performance of military duties. In actual usage, however, the term has come to refer primarily to those agents which—(1) Are highly potent and logistically feasible. (2) Produce their effects mainly by altering or disrupting the higher regulatory activity of the central nervous system. (3) Have a duration of action of hours or days, rather than momentary or fleeting action. (4) Do not seriously endanger life except at doses exceeding many fold the effective dose, and produce no permanent injury.

The manual continues:

Incapacitating agents would not be considered to include the following: (1) Lethal agents which are incapacitating at sublethal doses such as the nerve agents. (2) Substances which cause permanent or long-lasting injury such as blister agents, choking gases, and those causing eye injury. (3) Common pharmacological substances with strong central nervous system actions such as the barbiturates, belladonna alkaloids, tranquilizers, and many of the hallucinogens. These drugs, although effective and relatively safe, are logistically infeasible for large-scale use because of the high doses required. (4) Agents of transient effectiveness which produce reflex responses interfering with performance of duty. These include skin and eye irritants causing pain or itching (vesicants [*sic*]), vomiting or cough-producing agents (sternutators), and tear agents

(lacrimators). (5) Agents which disrupt basic life-sustaining systems of the body and thus prevent the carrying out of physical activity. Examples might include agents which lower blood pressure, paralyzing agents such as curare, fever-producing agents, respiratory depressants, and blood poisons. Although theoretically effective, such agents almost invariably have a low margin of safety between the effective and possible lethal doses and, thus, defeat the basic purpose of an incapacitating agent which is to reduce military effectiveness without endangering life.[1]

[*Note:* paragraph (4) of the section above relating to what is not regarding as an incapacitant excludes tear gases from this category, whereas the definition of incapacitants in the Defense Science Board Task Group on Biological and Chemical Weapons Development [see 18 February 1959] would seem to include them within this category.]

[1] US Department of the Army, *Treatment of chemical agent casualties*, Department of the Army technical manual TM 8-285. January 1968.

6801xx

Q XX January 1968 The British Army carries out an exercise, ‘Small Change’, in which the effects of the psychochemical LSD [also known as T3456] on tactical unit performance is assessed. Half the personnel of an infantry platoon receive an oral dose of 0.16 mg/man prior to conducting an anti-terrorist sweep as formed sections, each sweep involving an advance over four kilometres. A later report states: ‘Small Change showed that the platoon did not discharge its functions as well as would normally be expected. Overall its performance was adequate but it would have sustained a higher number of casualties than might have reasonably been expected. Unit efficiency fell by about 10% and the role of good discipline and mutual support between drugged and undrugged soldiers in mitigating the drug effects were demonstrated.’[1]

The exercise takes place on the trials range at Porton Down[2] and follows on from the earlier ‘Moneybags’ [see XX December 1964] and ‘Recount’ [see XX September 1966] experiments.

‘In January 1968 13 of the service volunteers who participated in field trial Small Change were given LSD ... We also now believe that work on LSD ceased in 1968 when the results of trial Small Change confirmed it was not a serious threat’.[3]

Some materials on the LSD trials are later placed in the public domain: ‘A search of the CBDE Information Service’s list of technical papers produced by CBDE and its predecessor organisations at Porton Down has identified four published papers concerning the work conducted with LSD in the 1960s. Three of these reports are concerned with the field studies. These are Porton Technical Paper 936 ‘A field experiment using LSD25 on trained troops’, Porton Technical Paper 979 ‘Recount — A second field experiment to assess the effects of T3456 on trained troops’ and Technical Note 53 ‘Small Change — A brief preliminary report’. As you know we have recently arranged for these papers to be made available in the Public Record Office at Kew at the end of January [1996] in

response to your earlier request to see information relating to trials with LSD involving service volunteers. We have recently located a fourth report, Technical Note 5 'The determination of T3456 in human plasma following oral administration' which concerns the laboratory based development of an analytical method to detect low levels of LSD in human plasma. This report is not yet in the Public Records Office but arrangements can be made for its early release should this be required. The library search also identified eight papers which include references to laboratory work involving LSD and other substances being tested on animals. The work was primarily concerned with analytical methods and the papers remain classified.' [4]

[1] Roger Freeman, Minister of State for Defence Procurement, Written Answer [with letter from CBDE Chief Executive Graham Pearson [*check*]], 8 March 1995, *Hansard (Commons)*, vol 256, c257-58, in response to a question from Dr David Clark MP; see also Rob Evans, *Gassed*, (London: House of Stratus, 2000), Chapter 8.

[2] Nicholas Soames, Minister of State for the Armed Forces, Written Answer [with letter from DERA Chief Executive John Chisholm], 18 July 1995, *Hansard (Commons)*, vol 263, c1169, in response to a question from Dr David Clark MP.

[3] James Arbuthnot, Minister of State for Defence Procurement, Written Answer [with letter from DERA Chief Executive John Chisholm], 18 April 1996, *Hansard (Commons)*, vol 275, c578, in response to a question from Dr David Clark MP.

[4] James Arbuthnot, Minister of State for Defence Procurement, Written Answer [with letter from DERA Chief Executive John Chisholm], 25 January 1996, *Hansard (Commons)*, vol 270, c326, in response to a question from Dr David Clark MP.

680222

H 22 February 1968 [In London, the inauguration of the JD Bernal Peace Library is marked by the convening of a two-day conference on the subject of chemical and biological warfare. Papers presented include: JP Perry Robinson, 'Chemical weapons'; CRB Joyce (London Hospital Medical School), 'The use of psychedelic agents in chemical warfare'; Dr V. Sidel (Physicians for Social Responsibility), 'A brief note on napalm'; I Malek (Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences), 'Biological weapons and defence'; A Galston (Yale), 'Defoliation — the herbicides and their effects'; J Mayer (Harvard), 'Starvation as a weapon — the effects of defoliants'; I Brownlie (Wadham), 'The legal issues in CBW'; E Langer, 'The United States' research programme'; R Clarke and JP Perry Robinson, 'Research and policy on CBW in the United Kingdom'; D Viney, 'CBW potential and policy — the Soviet Union'; F Kahn (Paris), 'Chemical weapons in use in Vietnam'; M Meselson (Harvard), 'The use of chemical weapons in the Yemen'; CF Powell (Bristol), 'Scientific ethics'; VW Sidel, 'Biological warfare and medical ethics'; S Rose (Imperial College), 'Implications for society'; JH Humphrey (National Institute for Medical Research), 'Practical proposals: introduction'; M Meselson (Harvard), 'Preventing the use of CBW'; and R Bjomerstedt (SIPRI), 'The work of the Swedish Peace Research Institute (SIPRI)'. See [no author listed], 'JD Bernal Peace Library London CBW Conference', *Scientific World*, March 1968]

680222

H 22 February 1968 [In London, the British Ministry of Defence publishes the latest annual Defence White Paper, *Statement on the Defence Estimates 1968* — any specific mention of CBW?]

680226

26 February 1968 In the United States, an experimental police dart gun loaded with apomorphine is demonstrated by firing into the thigh of a volunteer medical student. One journalist present describes the effects on the volunteer as: 'Within 75 seconds the victim felt a chill and began to get

glassy-eyed. His blood pressure dropped. In two minutes 45 seconds he felt nauseated. Five minutes later he was acutely ill. For an hour, he was helplessly stretched out on a mattress.' [1] Other reporting notes: 'Vigorous vomiting, it is thought, will immobilize any suspect'. [2] This second reportage, by the author of the Institute for Defense Analyses study on non-lethal weaponry [see November 1967], suggests the first known use on people of incapacitant dart weapons was 'several years ago' in a Georgia jail, when a veterinary dart gun loaded with sodium amytal was borrowed from a veterinary school to subdue a psychotic prisoner.

[1] [no author listed] (from Atlanta), United Press International, as in: 'Tranquilizer Gun Fells Man in Test', *New York Times*, 27 February 1968

[2] Joseph F Coates, 'Safe police weapons', *Science & Technology*, May 1968, pp 52-59.

680311

11 March 1968 In the UK House of Commons, the government replies to a number of Parliamentary Questions on CBW issues. On Gruinard Island one answer relates: 'Since 1939, 11 cases of anthrax, all in cattle, have occurred within 50 miles of Gruinard Island, and of these only three cases, which occurred in 1943, could reasonably be attributed to the Gruinard infection'. [1] Another states: 'In view of the very persistent nature of the anthrax organism it is not possible to estimate how long the contamination will last'. [2]

A reply to a question on regarding what is known about toxicity of CS is given: 'The toxicity of CS vapour, expressed in milligram minutes per cubic metre to give a 50 per cent. probability of death, has been estimated from experimental evidence to be 45,000 for rats and 150,000 for larger animals comparable with man. The latter is 50,000 times the dose which can be tolerated by a human being and about 200,000 times the amount needed to disperse rioters. CS has been used on a world-wide basis for about seven years, but no authenticated report has been received of death or injury resulting from its inhalation'. [3]

[1] James Hoy, Joint Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries and Food, Written Answer, 11 March 1968, *Hansard (Commons)*, vol 760, c222, in response to a question from Tam Dalyell MP.

[2] Roy Mason, Minister of Defence for Equipment, Written Answer, 11 March 1968, *Hansard (Commons)*, vol 760, c231, in response to a question from Tam Dalyell MP.

[3] Roy Mason, Minister of Defence for Equipment, Written Answer, 11 March 1968, *Hansard (Commons)*, vol 760, c227, in response to a question from Tam Dalyell MP.

680313

Q 13 March 1968 In the United States, an F-4 Phantom strike aircraft flies a test mission over the Dugway Proving Ground with chemical dispensers containing VX. One of the dispensers isn't completely emptied during the test, and an outlet valve remains jammed open. A VX cloud forms in a trail behind the aircraft, drifting into Skull Valley, north of the proving ground, and settling over a huge flock of sheep. Thousands of sheep die as a consequence in the following days. The cloud is said to travel over halfway to Salt Lake City, some 80 miles (130 km) away and is only dispersed by a rain shower. The DoD denies responsibility for over a year. [1]

[1] Roy Reed (from Washington), 'Gas or germ tests in air are scored', *New York Times*, 21 May 1969; Stephen Barber (from Washington), 'Official U.S. Map "Proof" of Gas and Germ War Tests', *Daily Telegraph* (London), 22 May 1969; Seymour Hersh, 'On Uncovering the Great Nerve Gas Coverup', *Ramparts*, June 1969, pp 13-18; Sterling Seagrave, *Yellow Rain: a journey through the terror of chemical warfare*, New York: M. Evans and Company, Inc., 1981, p 109; *Final Environmental Impact Statement for Activities Associated with Future Programs at U.S. Army Dugway Proving Ground*, Volume II, August 31, 2004, pp 1-16-17; [*add more detail??*]

680506

Q 6 May 1968 In the United Kingdom, the House of Commons Select Committee on Science and Technology

takes evidence at CDEE Porton Down for its inquiry into Defence Research. The testimony is later published by the committee.[1] *[*add more/leak inquiry*]*

[1] Reproduced in: House of Commons, Select Committee on Science and Technology, 'Defence Research', Second Report of session 1968-69, HC 213, 7 May 1969, pp. 235-47.

680526

H 26 May 1968 [*Observer* on Porton.]

680530

Q 30 May 1968 In London, Defence Minister John Morris tells Parliament that four rail wagon loads of CS have been transported from Nancekuke, Cornwall, to Surrey; that no other substances have made this particular journey; and that there have been no discussions between the Ministry of Defence and the police about additional safety precautions for such transport as this is 'fully covered' by 'Instructions for the Handling and Conveyance of Dangerous Goods by Rail and Road' issued by British Railways. *[*worth getting??*]* [1]

[1] John Morris, Minister of Defence for Equipment, 30 May 1968, Written Answer, *Hansard*, vol 765, c263-64, in response to questions from Mr Pardoe.

680611

Q 11 June 1968 In London, Foreign Office Minister Lord Chalfont responds to a letter from Sydney Bailey, possibly prompted by the recent revelations in the *Observer* newspaper [see 26 May]. This letter,[1] which becomes known as the 'Bailey letter', includes in the third paragraph an acknowledgement that the UK has no stockpiles of lethal chemical weapons. This acknowledgement is the cause of some controversy within the British Government. The letter reads:

Thank you for your letter of 29 May on the subject of biological and chemical weapons.

2. As you know, signatories to the 1925 Geneva Protocol accepted the prohibition of the use in war of lethal chemical and biological warfare weapons. The United Kingdom, along with other signatories, including the Soviet Union, reserves the right to use those weapons in retaliation against their use by non-signatories and violators of the Protocol. In this connexion it is important to note that although the United States did not ratify the Protocol its basic position on lethal chemical and biological weapons is close to our own. The United States has repeatedly made it clear that it would never be the first to use such weapons.

3. Given our reservation, we are not debarred by the Geneva Protocol from the manufacture of these weapons. Nor are we debarred from exchanging information about our research into these weapons or from exporting them to countries which follow a similar policy. But in fact we have no stockpiles of these lethal weapons and therefore there is no question of export.

4. As far as non-lethal agents such as tear-gas are concerned it has never been authoritatively concluded that the Geneva Protocol prohibits their use in war. Incendiary weapons, which are not normally grouped with biological and chemical, fall into two categories. First, there are those such as napalm, which use phosphorus as an igniting agent, and second, those called fire bombs, which are ignited by a pyrotechnic fuse. Phosphorus is of course a chemical agent, and the first use of weapons containing it might be prohibited by the Geneva Protocol. Fire bombs, on the other hand, definitely fall outside the terms of the Protocol. Unfortunately the term 'napalm' is often loosely applied by the press and public to describe what are in fact, fire bombs.

5. Although we are not debarred from the export of chemical agents, as I have explained, the only one which we export is the unpatented anti-riot CS gas which is used by police forces in Commonwealth and other countries to control civil disturbances. Each application for export is carefully scrutinised.

6. We do not deploy or export napalm weapons, nor have we exported fire bombs. If we were asked to provide fire bombs to another country, such a request would receive the usual careful scrutiny which we apply to all requests for arms. We would, of course, take into account all political, economic and humanitarian considerations before arriving at any decision.

7. As regards the exchange of classified information, the Minister of Defence for Equipment has said in the House of Commons in March 1968 [see 11 March] that arrangements are confidential; I am afraid I can add nothing to his statement.

8. I hope that this will satisfy you that we comply with our international obligations. But I agree with you that the present international regime is far from satisfactory, Her Majesty's Government would like to see further action taken to deal with biological and chemical weapons in the arms control and disarmament context. Proposals to deal with those weapons were included in the Western plan for general and complete disarmament tabled at the Eighteen-Nation Disarmament Committee in 1962. We are now carefully considering the whole question of what particular arms control objectives we should pursue at the Eighteen-Nation Disarmament Committee after the conclusion of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, and the possibility of further action on chemical and biological weapons is one to which we are giving particularly careful thought.'

[*Note:* Sydney Dawson Bailey (1916-1995) was one of the original members of the Disarmament Advisory Panel established by Lord Chalfont soon after taking office as Minister for Disarmament at the Foreign Office in 1964. After receiving this letter he writes back to Chalfont asking if he can show the letter to others — this may indicate that he is not sure whether he received the reply as a member of a government committee or as a member of the general public. The request to give wider prominence to the letter causes a stir within government.]

[1] In PRO file 10/182 *[*full ref, is Bailey's original letter on file??*]*

680612

12 June 1968 In London, on the floor of the House of Commons, the Ministry of Defence is asked what stocks of nerve gases are held. A junior Minister replies: 'The only stocks of nerve gases currently held are small quantities necessary for the development and testing of defensive measures. It is not the practice to reveal which gases they are'. Challenged as to whether other countries are manufacturing nerve agents using British patents, the Minister responds: 'I am not aware of any gases manufactured under British patent elsewhere. If [the questioner] sends me details I shall willingly look at any case he has in mind'.

[1] John Morris, Minister of Defence for Equipment, 12 June 1968, Oral Answers, *Hansard*, vol 766, c221, in response to questions from David Kerr MP.

680617

H 17 June 1968 [John Morris WA on Porton publication policy — 'There are arrangements for the exchange of information on Defence R. and D. with the United States, Canada and Australia and with other members of N.A.T.O. These include information on defence against biological warfare. In addition much of the work of the Microbiological Research Establishment is published in scientific literature and is therefore generally available.']

680619

19 June 1968 In an exchange on the floor of the House of Commons following a statement on the recently agreed nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, a junior Foreign Office Minister is asked whether the Government will be putting forward 'any proposals to the United Nations for a treaty on chemical and biological warfare, in view of the great public anxiety which has arisen in the last few months on this question?' Frederick Mulley responds: 'priority should be given to seeing what can be done in the chemical and bacteriological fields. But I would say that we have a protocol. Although it may not be entirely as we would have wished 40 years after it was propounded, the 1925 Geneva Protocol prohibits the use of poisonous gases and biological and bacteriological means of warfare'.[1]

A written answer provided today lists the number of experiments on animals that took place in 1967: Rabbits 816; Guinea Pigs 4721; Rats 16 121; Mice 42 098; Hamsters 1025; Voles 60; Frogs 477; Sheep 221; Pigs 82; Monkeys 63; Chicks 300; Dogs 9; Cats 151; leading to a total of 66 144.[2]

[1] Frederick Mulley, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, 19 June 1968, Statement, *Hansard* (Commons), vol 767, c1112–13, in response to questions from Eric Lubbock MP.

[2] John Morris, Minister of Defence for Equipment, 19 June 1968, Written Answers, *Hansard* (Commons), vol 767, c144–45, in response to questions from Tam Dalyell MP.

680619

H 19 June 1968 [In New York, the UN Security Council adopts resolution 255 on security assurances. Includes: '1. Recognizes that aggression with nuclear weapons or the threat of such aggression against a non-nuclear-weapon State would create a situation in which the Security Council, and above all its nuclear-weapon State permanent members, would have to act immediately in accordance with their obligations under the United Nations Charter; //2. Welcomes the intention expressed by certain States that they will provide or support immediate assistance, in accordance with the Charter, to any non-nuclear-weapon State Party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons that is a victim of an act or an object of a threat of aggression in which nuclear weapons are used;'] Adopted 10–0 with five abstentions — Algeria, Brazil, France, India and Pakistan.]

680621

Q 21 June 1968 In London, Defence Minister John Morris replies to a number of Parliamentary Questions on CS and on Porton Down.[1]

He states that the CS grenade being manufactured in Surrey by Schermuly Ltd is covered by British Patent No 967660. [**worth getting??**] 'rights in which are held by Her Majesty's Government'. On transport of CS from Nancekuke in Cornwall to Surrey he says: 'CS is packed in specially labelled sealed steel drums and transported in accordance with the instructions' given in an earlier answer [see 30 May].

Questioned about the Porton establishments, he says: 'Each of the main establishments at Porton has its own advisory board. That for the Microbiological Research Establishment has 11 members excluding Crown servants. That for the Chemical Defence Experimental Establishment has 9 members excluding Crown servants. No member from either board receives a grant for research. A member of a sub-committee which reports to the board for the Chemical Defence Experimental Establishment has been in receipt of a grant under a contract which is about to expire, but he is not a member of the board itself.'

[1] John Morris, Minister of Defence for Equipment, 21 June 1968, Written Answers, *Hansard* (Commons), vol 766, c181–82, in response to questions from Tam Dalyell MP.

680622

H 22 June 1968 [The Director of the Microbiological Research Establishment, CE Gordon Smith, writes in *Nature* — the MRE 'has two principal functions: to assess the risk to the British people and armed forces of attack by biological warfare, and to devise means of protection against such attacks ... none of its work on biological warfare has an offensive objective ... at least W per cent of the work is unclassified and is published whenever results of sufficient interest and importance are achieved. Only information of advantage to a potential attacker is withheld. Recent criticisms of the ethics of medical and other scientists at MRE are quite unjustified. MRE staff are not involved, and would resist becoming involved, in any work with an offensive objective. They realize the dangers of biological warfare

(much better than their critics) and feel it is their duty to try to ensure that proper protection can be provided for their fellow citizens and for British forces if biological warfare is used against them' — CE Gordon Smith, 'Microbiological Research at Porton', *Nature*, vol 218, 22 June 1968, p 1114–16.]

68064

H 24 June 1968 [Letter from JM Barnes and 11 others sent to Times, published two days later — 'The doubts which have been cast on the nature of the work of the Chemical Defence Experimental establishment at Porton imply that the scientists working in the establishment are socially irresponsible. We are scientists who know the work and the staff of the establishment well, and we know that both are devoted to the protection of the country from a real threat.//No one has yet produced a global disarmament plan that will work, and the rate of progress is so slow that it may be a very long time before disarmament becomes a reality. Until there is disarmament there must be effective protection against chemical attack.//The work of CDEE is directed to finding out what we must protect against and how to create the protection. Without this work we might have no breathing space in which to strive for a less menacing world.']

680626

H 26 June 1968 [WA on CS]

680627

H 27 June 1968 [21 FRS (inc 8 Nobels) write to PM asking for all MRE research to be published, letter from BRAB members appears in Times (the day after a letter from chem equiv) [see 24 June].]

680627

Q 27 June 1968 In London, the Foreign Office and the Commonwealth Office distribute to certain missions new guidance on the subject of biological and chemical weapons.[1] [**what did this replace??**] The note reads:

There has been considerable public and Parliamentary concern in recent months over the work done at the Microbiological Research Establishment and the Chemical Defence Experimental Establishment at Porton Down. The following is primarily for your own information but you may draw on it in reply to questions, except for paragraphs 3, 7, 9 and 10.

2. The research at both Establishments is defensive, for the purpose of assessing the threat of chemical and biological attack and of seeking to prepare defences against these weapons. Naturally, this involves assessment of the offensive potential of chemical and biological agents. The only production at Porton Down is of small quantities as necessary for the development and testing of defensive measures. The activities at Porton Down are fully in conformity with our obligations under the 1925 Geneva Protocol.

3. (For your information) A statement that we have no stockpiles of chemical weapons made during the course of an enquiry by the Parliamentary Select Committee on science and technology was revealed last month as the result of a leak to *The Observer*. This episode is under investigation. Meanwhile we are not denying the truth of the statement but we are not inviting attention to it. It has however been publicly known for some time that we have no stockpiles of biological weapons. [**since when was this 'known'??**]

4. A very high proportion of the research done at Porton Down is published and some of the results applied to civilian uses. But the primary task of the Establishments is for defence and for normal reasons of military security about defensive preparations it would not be in the public interest to declassify the remainder.

5. As a result of the present concern over chemical and biological weapons, it was announced on 12 June [see 12 June] that Open Days at the Microbiological Research Establishment would be arranged. The Open Days, which will take place sometime after the beginning of October, will show the greater

Not for quotation or citation

part of the work going on there. There is however certain information which must remain classified for reasons of national security. A balance has to be maintained between public security and the natural desire of the public for information.

6. Exchange of information with the United States, Canada and Australia takes place under the general terms of the Technical Cooperation Programme (instituted in 1958) and of the Basic Standardisation Agreement of 1964. In neither case is there a special agreement covering chemical and biological warfare. Details of the information concerned are confidential, but it is generally assumed that CBW information is included under these agreements and this has not been denied.

7. (For your own information). In the Technical Cooperation Programme, Sub-group E deals with chemical and biological defence. Under Sub-group E are Working Panel E1 (Chemical) and B2 (Biological). Collaboration within these working panels is confined to defensive aspects, but again this necessarily involves assessment of the offensive potential of chemical and biological agents. Research information on the nerve gas group V has passed to the United States but the basic scientific information is well known and could be developed by any country with the necessary facilities.

8. If you are asked whether the information on CS was provided to the United States under these arrangements, you should point out, that CS is a riot control agent and not a lethal chemical warfare agent. It was invented in the United States in 1928 and was developed at Porton a few years ago as an agent very much safer than anything else previously used. Information about it has been released to the United States and to 60 other countries. It has been used on a world-wide basis for about seven years, and no authenticated report has been received of death or injury resulting from its inhalation. No exclusive rights in respect of CS gas itself are vested in Her Majesty's Government, and it can be made in the United States, France or anywhere else. There are other agents on the market and in current use and it should not be assumed that casualties reported from irritant gases have anything to do with CS.

9. (For your own information). For some years all requests to export CS and riot control devices containing it to the United States have had to come to the Ministerial Committee on Strategic Exports. Exports to any other countries are considered at official level. Manufacturing know-how of a CS composition combined with a container does however have a UK patent and has been released to the United States. We do not know whether the Americans are in fact using this particular combination in Viet Nam. It is believed that they are using other agents. [**INSERT note??**]

10. (For your own information). In 1964, we exported small quantities of CS to Switzerland and the Netherlands and there are two current orders for Sweden and Switzerland. Devices containing CS are however made in the UK and exported commercially.

11. If you are asked about incendiary weapons, you should take the line that they are not traditionally grouped with biological and chemical weapons.

[1] Foreign Office and Commonwealth Office, 'Biological and Chemical Weapons', Telno Guidance No. 169, Guidance Nos 155 and 156, 27 June 1968, in PRO file FCO 10/183.

680700

July 1968 In the United States, Edgewood issues a confidential Technical Memorandum entitled *Nonlethal Agents in Crime and Riot Control*. [1] It says: 'The intensive search at Edgewood to find incapacitating agents for military application has led to the discovery of several types of nonlethal agents with properties suitable for use in crime and riot control'. It then goes on to identify the more promising chemicals, having observed: 'The ideal agent is one that essentially immobilizes the person, but leaves him manageable and on his feet. It would be undesirable to use an agent that psychologically disturbs an individual or in any way makes him mentally difficult to manage. Furthermore, when a person is physically incapacitated, visual observation is generally sufficient to indicate whether it is safe to approach

him'. The agents identified in the Memorandum — respiratory irritants, anaesthetics, analgesics, tranquilizers, glycolates, and vomiting agents — are listed in Annex 2.

[1] B Witten, *Nonlethal agents in crime and riot control*, Edgewood Arsenal Technical Memorandum EATM 133-1, July 1968, AD392476.

680701

1 July 1968 In Moscow, London and Washington, parallel ceremonies are held to open the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty for signature. The Soviet Government publishes a memorandum on 'some urgent measures for stopping the arms race and for disarmament', copies of which are circulated at the ceremonies. [1] Section 6 of the memorandum, entitled 'Prohibition of the Use of Chemical and Bacteriological Weapons', reads: 'The Soviet Government has on several occasions drawn the attention of other states to the threat posed for mankind by the use of chemical and bacteriological weapons. Voicing the general concern of the nations over such a threat the UN General Assembly at its 21st Session adopted a resolution [see 5 December 1966] calling for strict observance by all states of the principles of the Geneva Protocol of 1925 for the prohibition of the use of chemical and bacteriological weapons, condemning all actions contrary to this objective, and inviting all states to accede to the Geneva Protocol.

'However, this important decision of the General Assembly is not carried out by some countries, and first of all by the United States of America. Furthermore, the USA uses chemical weapons in its aggressive war in Vietnam. In view of that the Soviet Government proposes that the Eighteen Nation Committee consider ways and means of securing observance by all states of the Geneva Protocol for the prohibition of the use of chemical and bacteriological weapons.'

[1] 'Memorandum by the Government of the USSR on Some Urgent Measures for Stopping the Arms Race and for Disarmament', as reproduced in: *Pravda* [English language edition], 2 July 1968.

680701

1 July 1968 In London, Foreign Office Minister of State Fred Mulley tells the House of Commons: 'We think that when the Eighteen-Nation Disarmament Committee reconvenes, it should work for further measures in the nuclear field to follow up the Non-Proliferation Treaty [see 1 July Moscow, London and Washington], but that it should also give serious consideration to non-nuclear disarmament problems.

'A priority here will be for the Committee to consider what can be done in regard to chemical and biological weapons, with a view to strengthening and bringing up to date the existing agreement in this field, the 1925 Geneva Protocol.' [1] [See also 19 June.]

[1] Fred Mulley, Minister of State, Foreign Office, 1 July 1968, Written Answers, *Hansard* (Commons), vol 767, c167, in response to a question from Tam Dalyell MP.

680701

Q1 July 1968 In London, the Ministry of Defence sends a memorandum on Allington Farm to the House of Commons Select Committee on Science and Technology for its inquiry into *Defence Research* which reads:

The primary function of Allington Farm is to provide the 'biological aids' which include laboratory animals, fertile eggs, sera, etc., required for the research programmes of the Chemical Defence Experimental Establishment and the Microbiological Research Establishment at Porton Down, and also by the David Bruce Laboratories (The Army Vaccine Laboratory) at Everleigh, Wilts. A continuing programme of research aimed: (a) at improving the quality of laboratory animals for research generally, and (b) achieving higher standards of laboratory animal health and husbandry, has been in operation for some

fifteen years. The results of pioneer work in these fields has been and is being published in the scientific literature.

According to the memorandum, professional veterinary and technical staff collaborate closely with the scientific staffs of the Porton establishments and supervise animal care and usage, as recommended by Littlewood Committee [see *XX* April 1965]. Surplus laboratory animals from the farm are sold at commercial rates to other government departments, to universities and to other Home Office registered laboratories requiring them. Allington Farm also farms some 1300 acres of the safety zone of the Porton Range on commercial lines. Costing of this farming activity shows it to be a profitable enterprise.

The memorandum is later published by the committee.[1]

[1] Reproduced in: House of Commons, Select Committee on Science and Technology, 'Defence Research', Second Report of session 1968-69, HC 213, 7 May 1969, pp. 482.

680702

H 2 July 1968 [further PQ on porton publication policy — see 17 June]

680702

Q 2 July 1968 In London, the office of Foreign Office Minister Lord Chalfont is minuted by the AEDD [**CHECK**] on the question of chemical weapons stockpiles and the 'Bailey letter' [see 11 June].[1] The minute reads:

We have consulted the Ministry of Defence about Mr. Bailey's enquiry whether he could show Lord Chalfont's letter on this subject to others. The Ministry of Defence have asked that the letter should not be so treated, since paragraph 3 of the letter confirms that we have no stockpiles of lethal chemical weapons. The reasons for the Ministry of Defence request are as follows.

2. An official statement that we have no stock-piles of chemical weapons was revealed in May, as the result of a leak to The Observer [see 26 May], during the course of an enquiry by the Parliamentary Committee on Science and Technology. It was at first assumed that this fact would in future be treated as public knowledge and on this assumption the Ministry of Defence agreed to the letter to Mr. Bailey. Subsequently however, the question whether the statement that we have no stockpiles of chemical weapons should be de-classified was submitted to the Chiefs of Staff who decided that this should not be done. The position now is that the Ministry of Defence are not denying the truth of the statement, but they are not inviting attention to it and do not want it repeated more than absolutely necessary.

3. The attitude of the Ministry of Defence is not altogether logical. The statement in question received considerable notice. It can in any case be officially confirmed that we have no stocks of biological weapons, so that questions are naturally asked about stock-piles of chemical weapons. Unnecessary suspicions are only aroused if we fail to give a clear answer. We have made these points to the Ministry of Defence. But since this is primarily a matter for them, we see no alternative but to accept the ruling of the (Chiefs of Staff).

4. I recommend, therefore, and the Ministry of Defence agree, that the background should be explained to Mr. Bailey on the telephone and that he should be asked not to give further circulation to the letter. The point to stress is that we do not want to invite attention to the statement which was improperly leaked to the Observer.

5. Mr. Bailey may of course tell any one that we have no stocks of biological weapons, that we do not export biological and chemical weapons, and that the only production at Porton Down is of small quantities prepared as necessary for the development and testing of defensive measures.

At the end of the minute there is a handwritten annotation, dated 3 July, by the minister: 'This sounds like the worst sort of obscurantism to me — and of the kind that makes everyone concerned look very foolish. I am most reluctant to accept this Chiefs of Staff ruling, which is quite illogical. You cannot make a public statement secret again by saying it should not have been 'de-classified'. If the Ministry of Defence prove

immovable at official level, I would like a letter drafted from me to the appropriate MoD minister.'

[1] In PRO file FCO 10/182 [**full ref**]

680703

3 July 1968 In London, a Scottish Office Minister, having been asked how much CS has been purchased by or on behalf of Scottish police forces since 1965, tells the House of Commons: 'I am informed that initial supplies of 32 grenades were purchased in 1965 and that five grenades have since been purchased to replace four used in practice and one in a incident involving an insane person. ... [The Secretary of State for Scotland] has advised chief constables that those weapons should be used only to deal with armed criminals or violently insane persons in buildings from which they cannot be dislodged without danger of loss of life, or as a means of self-defence in a desperate situation, and that in no circumstances should they be used to assist in the control of disturbances.' [1] [See also 20 May 1965.]

[1] Norman Buchan, Under-Secretary of State for Scotland, 3 July 1968, Written Answers, *Hansard* (Commons), vol 767, c227, in response to a question from Tam Dalyell MP.

680704

H 4 July 1968 [Home Sec on CS in HoC, OA, 1681-83 and PM on CBW and MRE c1685.]

680709

Q 9 July 1968 In London, Ronald Hope-Jones, Head of the Atomic Energy and Disarmament Department, Foreign Office, writes to KT Nash, Assistant Under-Secretary (Policy), Ministry of Defence, on the subject of 'Stockpiles of Chemical Weapons' [see 2 July].[1] The letter reads:

As you know, a confidential official statement that the UK has no stockpiles of chemical weapons, made during the course of an enquiry by the Parliamentary Select Committee on Science and Technology, was leaked by Tam Dalyell to the Observer in May [see 26 May]. I understand that the question whether the fact that we have no stockpiles of these weapons should be de-classified was subsequently submitted to the Chiefs of Staff, who decided that this should not be done. The position now, as I understand it, is that the Ministry of Defence are not denying the truth of the statement in question, but that you are not inviting attention to it and do not want the fact of our having no stockpiles of these weapons repeated more than absolutely necessary.

2. I am writing to urge that the Ministry of Defence policy of not publicly stating and confirming that we have no stockpile of lethal chemical weapons should be reconsidered. The reasons for urging this course are as follows.

3. The statement leaked by Mr. Dalyell to the effect that we have no stockpiles of chemical weapons received considerable notice at the time. It is now, whether we like it or not, public knowledge, and will no doubt have been duly noted by foreign governments interested in the question. If evasive answers to questions on the point are now given, or we seek to blur the truth of the statement leaked to the Observer, quite unnecessary suspicions about activities at Porton and the Government's policy in regard to chemical weapons are bound to be aroused. In view of the current public agitation in regard to chemical and biological weapons, there would seem to be every advantage in our stating clearly that we have no stockpiles of these weapons. Indeed, this is implicit in the public statement that we are permitted to make, namely that the only production at Porton is of small quantities of chemical and biological weapons prepared as necessary for the development and testing of defensive measures.

4. Account must also be taken of the fact that it can be officially confirmed that we have no stocks of biological weapons. This naturally leads to questions about the position in regard to stockpiles of chemical weapons.

5. The difficulties into which the current policy on this issue can lead have been illustrated by a recent problem about which we have consulted your Department. In a letter written to a member of the public in early June [see 11 June], Lord Chalfont confirmed (with your agreement at the time) that we have no

stockpiles of lethal chemical weapons. The correspondent has now asked if he could show this letter to others; and you have said, in the light of the latest ruling by the Chiefs of Staff, that this should not be done because of the statement on chemical weapon stockpiles. This seems to us to be an anomalous position, and one which is not easy to defend. Unfortunately, once a fact has become public knowledge, even if this was due to an improper leak, it is impossible to act as though it had never been revealed.

6. We should be most grateful to know whether the Ministry of Defence, on reconsideration, would be prepared to agree that it should in future be made known, in line with the official statement leaked during the enquiry by the Parliamentary Select Committee, that the position is that we have no stockpiles of lethal chemical weapons.

7. I am sending a copy of this letter to Major-General Gibbon and to Walker (MGO (Sec)).

[1] In PRO file FCO 10/182 [*full ref*]

680711

H 11 July 1968 [US Deputy Secretary of Defense states that, although the United States is not a party to the Geneva Protocol of 1925, it had consistently supported the worthy objectives which the Protocol sought to achieve, and it believes that all states should do likewise. Also this day, US General Wheeler says that the Soviet proposal [see 1 July] was ‘obviously designed for other than serious negotiations’, basing this observation on the fact that the proposal was accompanied by an accusation that the United States was involved in a war of aggression in Viet-Nam.]

680716

16 July 1968 In Geneva, British Foreign Minister Frederick Mulley addresses a plenary session of the Eighteen Nation Committee on Disarmament (ENDC). The Committee has been considering its priorities for future action following the completion of the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) [see 1 July]. He says:

my own priority for action in the non-nuclear field concerns chemical and biological warfare. ... Some countries claim that nothing more is needed in this field than that all States should adhere to the 1925 Geneva Protocol ... and strictly observe its principle. I recall the resolution of the General Assembly on this subject in the twenty-first session [see 5 December 1966] and, of course, would like to see all countries which have not done so already ratify the Protocol. But I cannot agree that this is all that is needed, and there are three points to which I would draw attention. The first is that the States which are parties to the Protocol — I think there are fifty-four of them — have not all undertaken exactly the same obligations. Many of them, including the United Kingdom, have reserved the right to use chemical and biological weapons against non-parties and violators of the Protocol. Secondly, even if all States were to accede to the Protocol there would still be a risk of large-scale use of the proscribed weapons as long as States have the right to manufacture such weapons and to use them against violators. Thirdly, there is no consensus on the meaning of the term “gases” in the phrase “asphyxiating, poisonous or other gases and all analogous liquids, materials or devices”. The French and English versions of the Protocol do not correspond exactly and this has led to disagreement on whether non-lethal gases are covered by the Protocol. It is also argued that the term “bacteriological” as used in the Protocol is not sufficiently comprehensive to include the whole range of possible biological agents of warfare. Unhappily, there have been considerable developments in both the chemical and biological means of warfare in the forty-three years since the Protocol was concluded. This suggests that there is a strong case for either revising the Geneva Protocol or trying to negotiate some additional instrument to clarify and strengthen its provisions while keeping the Protocol itself in being. My preference is for the latter course and my Government has for some considerable time been studying the problems involved. These studies will be finalized shortly and I hope then to put some positive and specific proposals before the Committee with a

suggestion that it adopt them as a basis for consideration with a view to taking action in this field at an early date.

He notes that in going beyond the Geneva Protocol, there are fewer problems in the biological area than the chemical and ‘therefore, that one answer may be to make a distinction between chemical and biological weapons in our approach to the problems involved’. While new instruments would be needed for both chemical and biological warfare, ‘I think it may be easier first to tackle agents of biological warfare and seek to conclude an instrument on biological warfare which would go beyond the Geneva Protocol and actually ban the production and possession of agents of biological warfare’. He proposes to submit a working paper on the subject.

The Minister puts forward a further idea:

I would take up a proposal contained in the draft resolution submitted by the Maltese delegation at the last session of the United Nations General Assembly and suggest that our co-Chairmen on behalf of this Committee should request the Secretary-General to prepare a report on the nature and possible effects of chemical weapons and on the implications of their use, with a view to giving this Committee an international scientific basis for future consideration of further measures for their limitation and control, as well as focusing public opinion on the issues involved. This would follow the precedent of the recent very valuable report on the effects of the possible use of nuclear weapons which has been so often quoted in our discussion. The British Government would be willing, of course, to play a full part in the preparation of such a report.[1]

[1] As reproduced in ENDC document ENDC/PV.381, 16 July 1968.

680716

Q 16 July 1968 In London, the Secretary of State for Defence, Denis Healey, speaks to reporters on his return from visiting the defence facilities at Porton Down. His visit follows recent controversies [see [*ref*]]. He declares that work at the establishments will remain secret and states that he now knows all the secret work that is going on, some of which he had not known before. He says: ‘I am not only satisfied it is genuinely defensive; I am also satisfied of the reasons why it should remain secret’ and adds that only about 20 per cent of the work is secret. He promises that the open days will go ahead as planned [see 12 June] and expresses the belief that a great deal of public anxiety could be allayed if more information was given about the nature of the work which had to be kept secret and why it should be so. He also indicated that the government was searching for means for effective international control of biological weapons — ‘a total ban with effective verification’.[1]

[Note: although some media place emphasis on the 20 per cent secrecy figure as being new, it is the same figure that has been bandied about for some time, e.g., see 22 June.]

[1] [No author listed], ‘Some Porton work must remain secret — Healey’, *Financial Times*, 17 July 1968. [*Guardian or Times coverage??*]

680718

18 July 1968 In London, the Secretary of State for Defence, Denis Healey, gives evidence to the House of Commons Select Committee on Science and Technology for its inquiry into Defence Research. His testimony begins in public then moves into a private session. During the evidence heard in private he says: ‘One has to accept there is a potential threat to this country from both chemical and biological weapons. The view we have taken is that we must maintain, as you were told at Porton, an adequate defence capability in both fields. In the field of chemical weapons we have a very good capability indeed so far as our services are concerned. It is not so easy to conceive of the use of chemical weapons against a civil population in these islands. Their use against soldiers in Europe is something we must almost expect if there were a war in Europe. We have not felt it necessary, nor indeed did

the previous Government, to develop retaliatory capability here, because we have nuclear weapons, and obviously we might choose to retaliate in that way if that was the requirement. But this is a thing one has to keep under continuous review. As I have said publicly when I came back from Porton two days ago [see 16 July], in the biological field it is very difficult to form a fully satisfactory estimate of the nature of the threat in this theatre, but the possibility is there, and we are therefore doing research on defence against these weapons, for a very small cost indeed, which I think is well worth continuing. The real question is whether we can find some way of relieving public anxiety lest we are developing offensive capability by some means or other. This is what I am looking at the whole time.' The testimony is later published by the committee.[1]

[Note: this statement, once public, becomes the first official public acknowledgement of the UK's lack of retaliatory CW capability.]

[1] Reproduced in: House of Commons, Select Committee on Science and Technology, 'Defence Research', Second Report of session 1968-69, HC 213, 7 May 1969, pp. 425-50.

680718

18 July 1968 In London, the subject of whether the Microbiological Research Establishment, Porton Down, should be transferred from the Ministry of Defence to the Department of Health is raised once again [see 4 July] during Prime Minister's questions in the House of Commons. The Prime Minister responds: 'These matters are of course kept under review, Sir. But in the Government's view the present balance of argument favours the existing arrangements.'

Further exchanges follow: 'Is the Prime Minister aware that some of us are shaken by the statement attributed to the Secretary of State for Defence after his visit to Porton on Tuesday [see 16 July] by helicopter, that he now knows a lot of things about CBW and Porton that he had not known before and that no one had told him before? ... Is it not painfully clear that the decision to keep [MRE] Porton under the Ministry of Defence was in fact taken at a time when senior members of the Cabinet were not aware of all the facts?' The Prime Minister responds: 'I would have thought that, whenever a visit of this kind takes place, something is learned from it. All that was needed to take this decision was known. All that had to be known was known when this decision was taken. As I have said, we are keeping it under review. There might be a case for transfer in the future, I am not closing the door to that at all.'[1]

[1] Harold Wilson, Prime Minister, 18 July 1968, Oral Answers, *Hansard* (Commons), vol 768, c1660, in response to questions from Tam Dalyell.

680720

H 20 July 1968 [*Nature* { 'Porton Revealed', *Nature*, vol 219, 20 July 1968, p. 213. } and *Economist* { 'The Shuddermakers: What goes on at Britain's secret research establishments at Porton, Wilts, is anathema to left-wing agitators. But it is a necessary precaution', *The Economist*, vol 228, no 6517, 20 July 1968, p. 20. } articles on Porton.]

680724

Q 24 July 1968 In London, a Defence Minister confirms details for open days at MRE Porton Down to the House of Commons: 'Open days are to be held at the Microbiological Research Establishment on Wednesday, 23rd October, and the two succeeding days. I hope that Members [of Parliament] will take advantage of this opportunity to visit the Establishment. ... Invitations will also be issued to representatives of universities, learned societies, research associations, local authorities, industry, the Press and a

number of organisations likely to be interested in the work of the Establishment.'

[1] A separate answer today gives details of sources of animals used for experimental purposes: '65,222 of the animals used for research at the Porton Research Establishments in 1967, and subsequently destroyed, were bred at Allington Farm [see 1 July], a Government establishment also situated at Porton. The remaining 922 animals, comprising chicks, pigs, frogs and monkeys, were purchased from farmers and other suppliers.'

[2] Also today, Tam Dalyell MP apologises to the House of Commons for the leaking of the transcript of evidence taken by the Science and Technology Committee at Porton Down [see 6 May] to *The Observer* newspaper [see 26 May]. He is reprimanded by the House by a vote of 244-52 after a long debate.[3] [**more, inc privileges report**]

[1] John Morris, Minister of Defence for Equipment, 24 July 1968, Written Answers, *Hansard*, vol 769, c136-37, in response to a question from Mr Ellis.

[2] John Morris, Minister of Defence for Equipment, 24 July 1968, Written Answers, *Hansard*, vol 769, c136, in response to a question from Mrs Lena Jeger.

[3] *Hansard*, vol 769, c587-666.

680726

26 July 1968 In London, the House of Commons is told, in response to a question about Gruinard Island [see 11 March]: 'The most recent examination took place on 4 September 1967. The next examination will take place later this year.'

[1] John Morris, Minister of Defence for Equipment, 26 July 1968, Written Answers, *Hansard* (Commons), vol 769, c229, in response to a question from Mrs Ewing.

680730

30 July 1968 In Geneva, the Polish representative addresses a plenary session of the Eighteen Nation Committee on Disarmament (ENDC). He suggests the proposal for a study by the UN Secretary-General on the nature and possible effects of chemical weapons and on the implications of their use [see 16 July] should instead include issues related to both chemical and biological weapons.[1]

[1] As reproduced in ENDC document ENDC/PV.385, 30 July 1968, pp 18-24.

680801

Q 1 August 1968 In the UK, the Firearms Act enters into force, having received Royal Assent on 30 May. The section of the Act defining weapons subject to general prohibition includes: '(b) any weapon of whatever description designed or adapted for the discharge of any noxious liquid, gas or other thing' and '(c) any ammunition containing, or designed or adapted to contain, any such noxious thing'.[1] These provisions replace similar provisions that had been contained in the Firearms Act 1937.

[Note: (1) Sub paragraph (c) is later amended by the Firearms (Amendment) Act 1988 to read: '(c) any cartridge with a bullet designed to explode on or immediately before impact, any ammunition containing or designed or adapted to contain any such noxious thing as is mentioned in paragraph (b) above and, if capable of being used with a firearm of any description, any grenade, bomb (or other like missile), or rocket or shell designed to explode as aforesaid'; (2) By the Transfer of Functions (Prohibited Weapons) Order 1968, SI 1968/1200, the functions of the Defence Council are transferred to the Secretary of State.] [**Add case law, e.g., hydrochloric acid bottle and electro-shock??**]

[1] Firearms Act 1968 c27, Section 5, paragraph 1.

680806

Q 6 August 1968 In Geneva, the United Kingdom submits to the ENDC a 'Working Paper on Microbiological Warfare'. [1]

The paper is presented in person by British Foreign Office Minister of State Fred Mulley. The paper includes:

The United Kingdom Delegation consider that the 1925 Geneva Protocol is not an entirely satisfactory instrument for dealing with the question of chemical and microbial warfare. The following points may be noted:

(i) Many states are not parties to the Protocol and of those that are parties many, including the United Kingdom, have reserved the right to use chemical and bacteriological weapons against non-parties, violators of the Protocol and their allies.

(ii) Jurists are not agreed whether the Protocol represents customary international law or whether it is of a purely contractual nature.

(iii) Even if all states were to accede to the Protocol there would still be a risk of large-scale use of the proscribed weapons as long as states have the right to manufacture such weapons and to use them against violators and their allies.

(v) The term "bacteriological" as used in the Protocol is not sufficiently comprehensive to include the whole range of microbial agents that might be used in hostilities.

(vi) The prohibition in the Protocol applies to use "in war". There may therefore be doubt about its applicability in the case of hostilities which do not amount to war in its technical sense.

... *[*add para 2??*]*

3. ... As far as chemical agents are concerned it seems unlikely that states will be prepared to forego the right to produce and stockpile such agents for possible use in war unless adequate verification procedures can be devised and applied and problems of definition, etc. resolved. However, the use of microbiological methods of warfare has never been established, and these are generally regarded with even greater abhorrence than chemical methods. The United Kingdom Delegation therefore consider that in this field the choice lies between going ahead with the formulation of new obligations and doing nothing at all — in which case the risks and the fears of eventual use of microbiological methods of warfare will continue and intensify indefinitely.

4. The United Kingdom Delegation therefore propose the early conclusion of a new Convention for the Prohibition of Microbiological Methods of Warfare, which would supplement but not supersede the 1925 Geneva Protocol. This Convention would proscribe the use for hostile purposes of microbiological agents causing death or disease by infection in man, other animals, or crops. Under it states would:—

(i) declare their belief that the use of microbiological methods of warfare of any kind and in any circumstances should be treated as contrary to international law and a crime against humanity;

(ii) undertake never to engage in such methods of warfare themselves in any circumstances.

5. The Convention should also include a ban on the production of microbiological agents ...

...

10. Consideration should be given to the possibility of including in the Convention an article under which the parties would undertake to support appropriate action in accordance with the United Nations Charter to counter the use, or threatened use, of microbiological methods of warfare. If such an article were included it might be endorsed by the Security Council in rather the same way as the Council welcomed and endorsed the declarations made by the United States, the Soviet Union and the United Kingdom in connection with the Non-Proliferation Treaty. *[*more?**

Speaking to the ENDC, Mulley says:[2] ' I should stress again, as I did in my speech on 16 July [see 16 July], that our purpose is to supplement and not to supersede the Geneva Protocol of 1925. ...

' I contest the view, therefore, that the 1925 Protocol or similar declarations against first use is all we need or that ... the Geneva Protocol has prevented the use of chemical and biological warfare in the past, notably in the Second World War, and that by implication the Protocol can be relied upon to prevent the use of these horrible weapons in the future. I cannot accept that argument. I know of no evidence to support the view that Hitler did not resort to the use of gas because of

respect for the Geneva Protocol. Respect for international law was not one of his strongest points, as far as I recall — and I had some first-hand experience of his concern for another Geneva Convention, concerning prisoners of war. In my opinion a more likely explanation of his restraint was fear of retaliation. And although chemical warfare was not used in the Second World War, it was used in the 1930s and has been used again since then.

'But the most eloquent evidence of the fear of the use of these weapons, and the lack of faith in the Protocol's power to prevent their use, lies in the fact that the armed forces of all the major Powers are trained and equipped to defend themselves at any rate against chemical methods of warfare, and that those countries are engaged in expensive research programmes to produce countermeasures against attack by microbiological agents. I am sure neither of those precautions will be abandoned even if the Protocol is ratified by all states.'

*[*more?**

[1] United Kingdom, 'Working Paper on Microbiological Warfare', ENDC/231, 6 August 1968.

[2] ENDC/PV.387

680813

H 13 August 1968 [In Geneva, the Soviet Representative Alexei Roshchin tells the Eighteen Nation Disarmament Committee: 'The proposal to revise the Geneva Protocol is a dangerous one. If we were to follow that course we might destroy an already existing, useful and important international document on the prohibition of chemical and bacteriological weapons without having replaced it by a better or indeed by any other international instrument — a treaty or convention that would provide for the prohibition of the use of such types of weapons.']

680814

Q 14 August 1968 In London, further letters are written as part of the on-going correspondence relating to responses to questions about whether the UK holds stockpiles of chemical weapons [see 9 July].

One letter,[1] from Fred Mulley, Foreign Office Minister of State, to the Secretary of State for Defence, Denis Healey reads:

I am writing to you about a decision taken by the Chiefs of Staff on 8 August *[*get*]* to uphold the policy that we can confirm, when asked directly, that we do not have a stockpile of chemical weapons but that otherwise this information should not be publicised. This matter has just been brought to my attention.

The present policy seems to me to be anomalous. In unclassified letters to individuals I may confirm, so long as I am directly asked, that we do not have a stockpile of chemical weapons, a fact that was leaked during the recent enquiry by the Parliamentary Select Committee on Science and Technology [see 26 May]. But the recipient is apparently expected to keep this information to himself, though there is no need for me to tell him this unless he asks. Whilst I can understand that in other circumstances it might have been logical to conceal the truth, this is no longer practicable, since the fact that we have no stockpile of chemical weapons has become public knowledge, has received considerable notice in the press, and will not have escaped the attention of foreign governments interested in the question.

If the Government fail to make the position about stockpiles of chemical weapons clear, or are evasive, quite unnecessary suspicions are likely to be aroused about our activities at Porton Down and about the Government's policy over chemical weapons. These suspicions are bound to be aggravated by the fact that it can be officially confirmed that we do not have a stockpile of biological weapons.

I would therefore urge that the current policy be reversed. Apart from the considerations I have already given, there seems to be definite advantage, from the political point of view, in stating clearly that we do not have a stockpile of chemical

weapons and I do not believe that this would prejudice our present military position or any future military decisions.

Another letter,[2] from KT Nash, Assistant Under-Secretary (Policy), Ministry of Defence, to Ronald Hope-Jones, Head of the Atomic Energy and Disarmament Department, Foreign Office, reads:

I am now in a position to reply to your letter of 9th July [see 9 July] which has been considered by the Chiefs of Staff and Ministers here.

2. I should explain first that if we were starting from scratch, our view would be that to any enquiries about stockpiles the reply should be that we 'neither confirm nor deny'. This line has served HMG well on a number of occasions in the past in relation to other matters, and in our view the subject of CW stockpiles would have been very suitable for such treatment.

3. Unfortunately we are not starting from scratch; but I know you appreciate that in our approach to the question we must still consider the security aspects and the military benefits of different ways of public treatment. On this basis I am afraid that we cannot go along with your view that there is 'every advantage in our stating clearly that we have no stockpiles of these weapons'; there is no military advantage in so doing. As we see it, the aim must be to make the best of the situation militarily as well as politically in the light of the disclosures that have been made already.

4. Following your letter, therefore, we have considered the situation again; and our review has confirmed us in our belief that, while to be evasive in reply to direct questions would not do anyone any good, we should volunteer nothing further, but be prepared to confirm that we have no stockpile of chemical weapons when we are asked directly. Any discussion tending to go beyond this specific question would be clinched by reference to the whole of the statement (shortly to be published) which the Secretary of State for Defence recently made to the Select Committee [see 18 July]: - 'We have not felt it necessary, nor indeed did the previous Government, to develop retaliatory capability here, because we have nuclear weapons, and obviously we might choose to retaliate in that way if that were the requirement. But this is a thing one has to keep under continuing review'. Given that any questions which actually arise can thus be answered in a straightforward manner, we envisage no great awkwardness will result for either of our Departments; and we hope that you will feel able to agree with this.

5. There remains the question whether the recipient of the letter Lord Chalfont wrote [see 11 June] may show it to other people. Our view remains that we should like you to ask the correspondent to regard it as information given to him personally; we hope that your relations with him will make this possible. (Presumably there is nothing else in the letter on which it would be possible to base a refusal of the request?)

[1] Letter from Fred Mulley, Foreign Office Minister of State, to Denis Healey, Secretary of State for Defence, entitled 'Stockpiles of Chemical Weapons', dated 14 August 1968 (marked Confidential), in PRO file FCO 10/182.

[2] In PRO file 10/182 [*full ref*]

680828

Q 28 August 1968 In Geneva, the report of the current session of the Eighteen Nation Committee on Disarmament (ENDC), which had started on 16 July, is agreed. Acknowledging the proposals from the UK [see 16 July] and Poland [see 30 July] for studies by the UN Secretary-General, the Committee agrees 'to recommend to the General Assembly that the Secretary-General appoint a group of experts to study the effects of the possible use of chemical and bacteriological means of warfare. Because of the importance of this matter, the hope was expressed that the report on this study would be referred at an early date to the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Committee'. [1]

[1] ENDC/236, 28 August 1968 [*get original*].

680902

2 September 1968 Soviet political authorities pass a resolution on a major expansion of chemical-weapons programmes, according to a list published some years later. [1]

[1] From a list, published in the Russian-language journal *Posev* (1999, no 1), of resolutions passed during the period 1926-89 by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the USSR Council of Ministers. The list is adapted from information made available from Russia by Lev Fedorov, president of the Union of Chemical Safety, but otherwise cites no sources.

680902

H 2 September 1968 ['Pumping out the nerve gas well in Denver has been delayed by mechanical problems with the pump. The poisonous fluids are being pumped into a ninety-acre asphalt-bottomed "evaporation lake" at the [Rocky Mountain] arsenal.' — 'the Pogo Equation' in Sterling Seagrave, *Yellow Rain: a journey through the terror of chemical warfare*, New York: M. Evans and Company, Inc., 1981, p 261 [*find more??*].]

6810xx

Q XX October 1968 The agent CR is first authorized for use by British forces, in the form of an aerosol or with water cannon. A wheeled dispenser is introduced in December 1974, a vehicle-based version is deployed in 1976 and a projectile delivery device authorized for use in 1977. [1] The aerosol form of CR is a hand-held squirt device known as a self-protection aid device (SPAD). Authorization for CR to be held in readiness for use has always been subject to ministerial approval. [2]

Thirty years later, a defence minister tells Parliament: 'We have no records of CR having been used operationally by the Armed Forces. ... Its possible use has also been authorised on a small number of occasions where the armed forces have responded to a request for assistance for law enforcement purposes from the civil power. CR is only authorised as a non-lethal self-defence option where the risk to the safety of military personnel is considered particularly high.' [3]

[1] John Spellar, Minister of State for the Armed Forces, Written Answer, 27 April 2001, *Hansard* (Commons), vol 367, c415W, responding to a question from Kevin McNamara MP.

[2] John Spellar, Minister of State for the Armed Forces, Written Answer, 8 May 2001, *Hansard* (Commons), vol 368, c17W, responding to a question from Kevin McNamara MP.

[3] John Spellar, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Defence, Written Answer, 17 December 1998, *Hansard* (Commons), vol 322, c657, responding to a question from Ken Livingstone MP.

681014

14 October 1968 In the United Kingdom, the Ministry of Defence is criticized for its policy on experiments with humans taking LSD [see XX January]. The Reverend John McNichol, founder of the National Association of Drug Addiction, condemns the practice as irresponsible. [1]

[1] [no author listed], 'Troops given LSD in Porton tests', *Times* (London), 15 October 1968.

681015

15 October 1968 Nigeria deposits its instrument of accession to the 1925 Geneva Protocol with the French government, together with the following reservation: 'The Protocol is only binding on Nigeria in relation to States effectively bound by it and it ceases to bind Nigeria towards any States whose forces or the armed forces of whose allies fail to respect the prohibitions laid down therein.'

681017

H 17 October 1968 [In the United Kingdom, a reorganisation of Ministerial responsibilities leads to the creation of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) from the merger of the Foreign Office (FO) and the Commonwealth Relations Office. The Atomic Energy and Disarmament Department of the FO becomes the Disarmament Department of the FCO. AEDD head, Ronald Hope-Jones, becomes head of the new DD.]

681024

24 October 1968 James Watson, joint winner of a Nobel Prize with Francis Crick for the discovery of DNA, urges the abandoning of all research on biological warfare. In a press interview published the next day, Watson calls biological weapons ‘impractical’ and recommends the military facilities working in this subject area be transformed into institutions studying dangerous diseases.[1]

[1] Victor Cohn, ‘Nobel Winner Calls Germ War Studies Useless’, *Washington Post*, 25 October 1968.]

681023-25

H 23–25 October 1968 [MRE open days. Lidar demonstrated]

681030

Q 30 October 1968 While observing a British Army exercise in West Germany, a newspaper correspondent writes ‘More than a third of the gun ammunition stockpiled by the Communist forces in Eastern Europe is believed to be filled with gas, most of it probably nerve agents of one kind or another’. [**more**][1]

[1] David Fairhall (from Willebadessen), ‘Russia’s nerve-gas shells’, *Guardian* (London), 30 October 1968.

681113

Q 13 November 1968 In London, GN Gadsby, Head of the UK’s Chemical Defence Establishment, tells a seminar that defence scientists believe that between 15 and 20 per cent of Soviet Munitions stockpile is chemical [see also 30 October]. The seminar, held at the Royal United Services Institute, is also addressed by Gordon Smith, head of the Microbiological Research Establishment — the other defence establishment at Porton — who describes a simulated attack on Britain in which a harmless agent was sprayed off the east coast; measurements from which showed that the agent effectively blanketed the south of England below the line from Birmingham to the Wash [see **REF BACK**].[1]

[1] [no author listed], ‘Gas war build-up by Russia’, *Times* (London), 14 November 1968, p 12.

681123

H 23 November 1968 [‘West German scientist Dr. Ehrenfried Petras defects to East Germany, claiming he had been working on chemical and biological warfare projects for the Bonn government. He asks for asylum to work “in the service of peace.” Bonn denies the Petras charges, insisting that it studies only defensive problems.’ — ‘the Pogo Equation’ in Sterling Seagrave, *Yellow Rain: a journey through the terror of chemical warfare*, New York: M. Evans and Company, Inc., 1981, p 261.]

681206

6 December 1968 Mongolia deposits its instrument of accession to the 1925 Geneva Protocol with the French government, together with the following reservation: ‘In the event of the violation of this prohibition by any State vis-a-vis the Mongolian People’s Republic or its allies, the Government of the Mongolian People’s Republic shall not hold itself bound by the obligations of the Protocol with regard to that State.’

681217

17 December 1968 The Syrian Arab Republic deposits its instrument of accession to the 1925 Geneva Protocol with the French government, together with the following reservation: ‘The accession of the Syrian Arab Republic to this Protocol and its ratification thereof shall in no way signify recognition of Israel or lead to entry into a relationship with it regarding any matter regulated by the said Protocol.’

681220

Q 20 December 1968 The United Nations General Assembly adopts resolution 2454 A (XXIII) on the Geneva Protocol.

The resolution also calls for the Secretary-General of the United Nations to establish a ‘Group of Experts’ to report ‘on chemical and bacteriological (biological) weapons and the effects of their possible use’. The resolution recommends ‘that the report should be based on accessible material and prepared with the assistance of qualified consultant experts appointed by the Secretary-General, taking into account the views expressed and the suggestions made during the discussion of this item at the twenty-third session of the General Assembly’ [**INSERT full text**]

681228

Q 28 December 1968 The United States mission to the United Nations transmits an airgram to the State Department on ‘XXIII General Assembly: Evaluation of Results in the Disarmament Field’.[1] The airgram includes: ‘The Soviet agreement to use the formula ‘chemical and bacteriological (biological)’ throughout the terms of reference (TR) for the SYG’s [UN Secretary-General’s] CBW effects study represents an advance in obtaining acceptance of the US position on this issue. This is particularly true in light of the precedent, to which we earlier expected the Soviets to cling, of the term ‘chemical and bacteriological’ in the ENDC report that recommended the SYG study. [see 28 August]

‘The US Delegation encountered some difficulty in arriving at an acceptable resolution (2454A) [see 20 December] on the CBW study due to the assertiveness of the Polish Delegation and a tendency on the part of the Canadians and British not to fight with the Poles about points that were of more interest to the US than to Canada and the UK. Moreover, a strong UK objection to the TR worked out by the US and Soviet Delegations, and accepted by the Canadian Delegation, almost wrecked US effort to provide the TR to the SYG. The UK Delegation continued to press its objection to the ‘bacteriological (biological)’ formula with the Secretariat and the US Delegation even after the TR had been read to the First Committee and handed over to the Secretariat. The UK Delegation hopes this difference will not affect the CBW study, but the UK and Soviet experts may not be able to avoid a resumption of the dispute when drafting the CBW study report.’

[1] Airgram From the Mission to the United Nations to the Department of State (Drafted by Alan F. Neidle, David L. Aaron, and Richard L. McCormack on 21 December, and cleared by Peter S. Thacher, Committee I Executive Officer), 28 December 1968, Department of State, Central Files, DEF 18-6, marked ‘Confidential’, [electronic copy available via Department of State website] [**URL?**]

681228

H 28 December 1968 [‘Geologist Dr. David M. Evans tells an ecological conference that America has 110 deep wells for disposal of chemical warfare agents (up from only 2 in 1950) and warns that they are causing permanent damage to farmlands and urban areas in the Southwest. He said there is “an absolutely beautiful correlation” between the number of gallons poured in and the number of earthquakes produced’ — Sterling Seagrave, *Yellow Rain: a journey through the terror of chemical warfare*, New York: M. Evans and Company, Inc., 1981, p 262 [**more??**].]