

~~SECRET~~

Doc#360
CW

THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20301

22 NOV 1977

68.

The Honorable Cyrus Vance
Secretary of State
Washington, D. C. 20520

DECLASSIFIED IN FULL
Authority: EO 13526
Chief, Records & Declass Div, OIG
Date: NOV 04 2015

Dear Cy:

I have read your letter of October 23, 1977, regarding chemical munitions with great interest and share your concerns in the critical area of chemical warfare (CW). As you know, I have issued policy guidance to implement PD-15, which supports the current CW negotiations while preserving our potential ability to produce our own binary chemical weapons if negotiations fail to show progress.

First, let me assure you that there are no funds included in either the FY 1978 or FY 1979 defense budget for facilities for production or pre-production of binary chemical weapons. We have included some limited research and development funding for binary weapons. The only plans that we are developing for production are contingency plans of the sort we have for any conceptual weapons system, not firm plans.

To place our CW program in perspective, I want to emphasize that the major effort of our present programs is to provide improvements in our protective posture, both in research and development of new items and procurement of standard equipment. These programs have been fully supported by Congress and I plan to continue them. We would be pleased to provide you and your staff a complete briefing on the programs and the DOD assessment of the CW threat at your convenience.

Even while we are negotiating a treaty to ban chemical warfare, the threat of the use of chemical warfare against our forces remains great. Several of our Unified Command commanders have recently communicated to me personally their concern about the minimal nature of our protective posture and about the need for improving our CW posture in line with the threat facing US forces and our Allies. Nevertheless, we have already demonstrated considerable restraint in our own offensive capability. I hope this will provide a favorable climate for negotiations. Since 1973, we have unilaterally demilitarized more than 7,000 tons of chemical agents and a large number of munitions. This stockpile reduction, coupled with the fact that no chemical weapons have been produced since 1969, should have already achieved the psychological advantage you mentioned. Perhaps it will elicit a Soviet response to the US initiative. However, our combined intelligence analysis has continued to show no abatement of the rather significantly expanded Soviet activity in the chemical warfare field.

OSD, 330, 80-0017, box 45, 370.64 CDR (Aug-Dec) 1977

~~Dept of State~~

~~SECRET~~

15-11-0562

SEC DEF CONTR No. X-3330

370.64 CDR

~~SECRET~~
~~SECRET~~

2

I do not feel it would be prudent to forego the necessary long-lead planning required for the research, development, and pilot production of binary munitions. We do plan to follow the guidance provided in PD-15, supporting to the fullest the on-going negotiations, and preparing for a review and reassessment at the beginning of the FY 1980 budget cycle unless significant progress is made in Geneva prior to that time.

Sincerely,

Harold

DECLASSIFIED IN FULL
Authority: EO 13526
Chief, Records & Declass Div, WHS
Date: NOV 04 2015

Office of the Secretary of Defense 50 U.S.C. § 552
Chief, RDD, ESD, WHS
Date: 04 NOV 2015 Authority: EO 13526
Declassify: Deny in Full: _____
Declassify in Part: _____
Reason: _____
MDR: 15 -M- 0562

SECRET
~~SECRET~~