

FAX From: Arnold Schechter, MD, MPH**SUNY Health Science Center, Clinical Campus at Binghamton****PHONE: (607)770-8521****88 Aldrich Avenue****DATE: September 20, 1994****FAX: (607)770-8623****Binghamton, NY 13903****TO: Admiral Elmo R. Zumwalt, Jr**

I very much enjoyed working with you. I believe the trip went well. 

1. The EPA extended its timetable to one year from now for final dioxin assessment!

2. Most environmental groups were pleased with the document in general, as were we.

3. I received my copy and am beginning to review it.

4. Most environmentalists I spoke to this week believe veterans compensation should now be increased, but the VA has not commented yet.

5. I believe it is essential to place an infrastructure in Vietnam and in the USA for health related Agent Orange studies from the very beginning, for several reasons:

a. If we do not do so, the studies will fail. Getting scientifically valid results, which our veterans (and the Vietnamese) need, is very difficult anywhere, and much more so in Vietnam. Every scientist new to Vietnam makes serious errors the first few years.

b. The communist government in Vietnam will try very hard to have an excess of health effects attributed to Agent Orange, ignoring other causes, including DDT, chemicals used during the war, infectious diseases, drug and alcohol abuse, malnutrition, etc. Weak studies will discredit our work and slow down compensation for our veterans.

c. Industry will try very hard to make certain Vietnam dioxin studies fail. They will want good researchers who do not understand Vietnam to do the work and produce negative results. Without coordination, these researchers will write excellent grants, better than I could in their specialized fields, but not be able to handle the field conditions of Vietnam.

d. If we do not demand a US and Vietnam office with at least a small amount of funding and a permanent staff of 3 full time persons, one scientist, one Vietnam specialist and one secretary, I may be cut out of the picture on one or another excuses. If we require experience in Vietnam with proven results, then I must be in the funding loop.

I will try to put together several main points for our press conference for me. I was a little disturbed by the mistaken quotation in the Washington Post where I appeared to be disagreeing with what you and I both know is the case, that dioxins cause birth defects in animals and humans, despite the evidence in Vietnam being VERY weak.

Warmest regards. I will be in DC Thursday night, staying with my brother in law again. When should we meet Friday to review our work. Should we go into DC together?

