

*DeWitt*



# Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory

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Matthew Meselson  
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Cambridge, MA 02138

Dear Prof. Meselson,

This morning while sitting in an allergist's office being tested for my reactions to noxious weeds, I was reading a recent issue of Life which featured an article about a Harvard biochemist who studied 'yellow rain' in IndoChina and concluded that it was bee feces. No doubt you have seen it. There is a different reason for this note, however. I returned to my office after listening to a colloquium by Edward Teller on the Strategic Defense Initiative. It was a grand performance by Teller---grandiose, vague, misleading, and full of his paranoia about the Russians. From the wisdom of Edward Teller I learned that any kind of technical arms control treaties with the Russians are worse than useless because the Russians always secretly violate them. As examples of this point, he asserted with absolute certainty that:

- 1.) 'Yellow rain' in IndoChina was a Soviet product used to kill 10,000 rebellious Hmong tribemen, and thus a clear violation of the Chemical and Biological Warfare Treaty. Secret State Dept. documents provide ample proof.
- 2.) Several thousand Russian civilians died in Sverlovsk in 1979 of anthrax. The Soviets claim that it was intestinal anthrax but since they won't provide bodies to us for autopsy, it must have been pulmonary anthrax caused by a biological warfare plant in Sverdlovsk. Again in Teller's mind, this incident is a proven example of Soviet violation of the Biological Warfare Treaty.

It is easy for you or for me to dismiss Teller's assertions as the passionate beliefs of wild old man who hates Russians. The problem is that he is all too convincing to other audiences, notably at times conservative Congressmen.

Since the AAAS Meeting in May I have had a number of opportunities to speak and write as a critic of the Star Wars program. My AAAS talk will appear in the November issue of the Bulletin of Atomic Scientists. For your amusement I am enclosing some recent news clippings that illustrate the arguments that are going on out here.

Sincerely,

*Hugh DeWitt*  
Hugh DeWitt ✓

cc: Milton Leitenberg, Swedish Institute  
of International Affairs