

SSchoettle

DEPARTMENT OF BIOCHEMISTRY AND MOLECULAR BIOLOGY
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7 Divinity Avenue
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Dr. Enid C.B.SSchoettle
International Affairs Program
The Ford Foundation
320 East 43rd Street
New York, NY 10017

Dear Enid:

In response to your letter of June 17, I am glad to give you my impression of Stuart Schwartzstein's proposal "For a Chemical/Biological Weapons Information Pro-ram".

I have talked with Mr. Schwartzstein on several occasions and find him to be a scholarly person with considerable knowledge about foreign affairs generally and Southeast Asia in particular. His proposal is aimed at convincing a wider circle of individuals and organizations that chemical weapons have indeed been used in Southeast Asia and Afghanistan. Included in its objectives is the collection and improvement of available data bearing on such use. A proposal for scholarly studies is somewhat inconsistent with the statement that "There is no question in the minds of Freedom House's Board that (1) chemical/biological agents have been and are being used in Southeast Asia and now in Afghanistan, ... (2) and that they are being used in some places for genocidal purposes ...". I understand, however, that Mr. Schwartzstein is planning to leave Freedom House and pursue this subject elsewhere. In that case, it may be possible to do the work in a more scholarly and less pre-committed manner than this proposal would indicate. From talking with Mr. Schwartzstein I am reasonably confident that he is capable of conducting critical studies of this problem even though he personally finds the evidence for the Freedom House view more compelling than I do.

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In particular, Mr. Schwartzstein has discussed with me his wish to convene a workshop meeting of experts representing diverse fields and different viewpoints where the evidence could be gone over carefully. To my knowledge no such meeting or workshop has taken place anywhere. If the problem were simply to prepare for, conduct and publish the proceedings of such a workshop I would be glad to give it a most favorable recommendation. Such a proposal should provide a certain amount of detail regarding the questions and fields to be covered and the participants to be invited.

I would not, however, recommend support of the proposal in its present form.

Yours sincerely,

Matthew Meselson
Professor of Biochemistry
and Molecular Biology

MM/db