

Wade

The New York Times

229 WEST 43 STREET
NEW YORK, N.Y. 10036

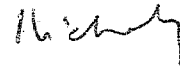
February 24, 1984

Dr. Matthew Meselson
Harvard University
Department of Biochemistry
7 Divinity Avenue
Cambridge, Mass. 02138

Dear Matt,

You may be interested in the vapidness
of this counterattack. Don't know if or when
we'll publish, but probably soon.

Yours,



Nicholas Wade

Enc.

301 897 8899

W. L. Wade

{ 261349}LETTERS EX ARMS CONTROL AGENCY{SY9 129045 02-23 0066.1 {}

<BF>This is being called in by the public affairs office of the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, Washington, D.C. It is written by their assistant director for verification and intelligence in response to the Feb. 2 Editor's Notebook item by Mr. Wade.<LF>

In criticising the U.<TH>S. Government's scientific methodology used in determining Soviet and surrogate use of toxin-based yellow rain in Southeast Asia and Afghanistan (New York Times Editorial Notebook of Feb. 2, 1984), Mr. Wade violates the very scientific principles he espouses. Seized with the hypothesis of Dr. Matthew Meselson that toxin-contaminated bee feces or food have caused the death and illness of thousands in Laos, Kampuchea and Afghanistan, Mr. Wade chooses to ignore a fundamental scientific principle: consideration of all data. Even though all data are not in the public domain, he discounts the bulk of available evidence which does not fit his hypothesis. Likewise, he apparently fails to take into account that the President's decision regarding Soviet compliance in the chemical and biological and toxin warfare area was based in part on data not publicly available. Furthermore, the technical statements he makes regarding the Government's analyses are simply not accurate as the public record documents.

As has been reported to the Congress and the U.N., evidence of the Soviet chemical and toxin warfare extends far beyond the isolation of trichothecene toxins from physical samples collected at alleged attack sites and from body fluids of the victims. Use of testimony by refugees, defectors, journalists from many nations, medical personnel and officials of international aid and relief organizations have documented military attacks with toxic agents resulting in illness and sometimes death of the victims. Striking similarities in the descriptions of toxic agent attacks in Southeast Asia and Afghanistan by people of different cultural backgrounds and who exhibit identical medical symptoms after exposure to yellow rain further substantiate human rather than natural sources of these problems. Post-attack medical surveys by aggressor forces to observe the effects of the toxic agents also cannot be ignored. Nor can intelligence data corroborating military activity in the areas at the times of alleged attacks be discounted.

Voluminous data from a multitude of independent sources has enabled the U.<TH>S. Government to conclude confidently that chemical and toxic agents have been used against people in Laos, Kampuchea and Afghanistan. Numerous esteemed members of the American scientific community _ outside the government and with access to the intelligence data _ have been consulted from the outset of the analytical effort and concur in the Government's conclusions. Additionally, independent confirmation of the U.<TH>S. Government's findings has come from foreign scientists, governments and international organizations.

In contrast, swarms of bees in these combat zones have never been reported or associated with subsequent illness. In fact, the only evidence to relate these hypotheses to yellow rain is the finding of pollen in some samples collected at attack sites. The alternative Meselsonian "hypotheses" are supported largely by bald speculation