

B. for Kuan
6215 Redwing Court
Bethesda MD 20817

December 14, 1989

Dear Matthew

Thank you for sending me the draft of your article on biological disarmament. I read it with great interest. I am certain it will be useful to us in preparing the third BW-review conference.

Allow me to make just one small comment. On page 8 you state "In addition, such information is also required for all research centers and laboratories with next-lower level (BL3) containment facilities specializing in biological defense work." According to the final declaration of BW Rev. Conf. II all research centers that "specialize in permitted biological activities directly related to the Convention" have to be declared, i.e. regardless the level of containment. This was limited somewhat in the report of expert-meeting in April 1987 that stated that data should be provided on each research center "which has containment unit(s) and specializes in research or development for prophylactic or protective purposes against possible hostile use of microbial and/or other biological agents or toxins."

This means that a laboratory that is specialized in this kind of work will have to be declared, even if the containment level is only BL2. It is, strictly speaking, not even necessary that the containment units are used for BW-related work.

Among parties to the BW-convention still quite some confusion seems to exist about what actually should be declared. One of the questions we should address in preparation of BWRC III is how we can refine, clarify and build upon the agreed data-exchange. The definitions used for levels of containment, for example, differ from country to country. I believe it would be very useful if sometime in 1990 a seminar would be organized to discuss questions like this into somewhat more detail. Also the other 3 confidence building measures should be reviewed into detail, e.g. the exchange of information on abnormal outbreaks of infectious diseases. Should, e.g., the recent occurrence of the ebola-virus among laboratory-monkeys in the US be declared?

Thank you again for sending me your article. My best wishes for a merry christmas and a good 1990.

B. for Kuan