

bcc: Matt Meselson

Holdren

JOHN P. HOLDREN

Professor of Energy and Resources
Energy and Resources Group
100 T-4, University of California
Berkeley, California 94720

Rocky Mountain Biological Lab
Box 519, Crested Butte, CO 81224
303 349-5801
(12 June - 12 August 1990)

23 July 1990

Ms. Mary Page
Program on Peace and International Cooperation
John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation
140 South Dearborn Street, Suite 1100
Chicago, Illinois 60603

Dear Ms. Page:

This is in response to your request for a review of the proposal by Matthew Meselson and Julian Perry Robinson for a joint Harvard-Sussex program of research and outreach on the issues of chemical and biological warfare.

I have read the proposal, and I have known Professors Meselson and Robinson and their work on CBW for nearly 20 years. They are and have done everything they claim -- the two leading independent researchers on this subject in the world, who have thought, written, educated, lobbied, and influenced more and more effectively on CBW issues than everyone else working in the field combined.

I believe, moreover, that the CBW theme is fully as timely and as important, in the context of international peace and security problems more generally, as the authors say. The potential for damage and disruption if these weapons are not brought fully under control is immense, and the need to seize quickly the opportunities that now seem within reach is compelling. The activities for which Meselson and Robinson are requesting support are well conceived and as certain to be effective as anything in the peace and security field that the Foundation could fund.

The cost seems steep at first glance, but that is only because support is being requested for five years. I strongly support this long-term approach to funding the best people; it is an appalling waste of the energies of people of this caliber, who are genuine international resources and very scarce ones at that, to have to worry constantly about where the next year's funding will come from.

My only quibble with the proposal (which I mention here mainly to prove I really read it!) is that in describing the need for the project the authors downplay a bit the extent and effectiveness of what has already been done -- including by themselves. The Pugwash Conferences, for example, which the authors give only the barest mention in passing, have held some 15 rather successful international workshops on chemical weapons issues -- bringing together scientists, policy makers, and negotiators from the South as well as from East and West -- and Meselson and Robinson themselves have played key roles in these meetings. But that does not detract a whit from the need for what they are proposing now, and I hope the Foundation gives them every nickel they are asking for. It will be money very well spent.

Sincerely,

John P. Holdren

JUL 27 1990