

Langmuir

January 22, 1992

Gary R. Johnson, Editor
Politics and Life Sciences
Lake Superior State University
Sault Saint Marie,
Michigan 49783

Dear Mr. Johnson,

I want to apologize for my failure to respond to your letter of October 24, 1991 sent to my old address in Chilmark, MA. I did not receive it until November 7th when I had just learned of a serious medical problem that led to my hospitalization for major surgery. I am only now coming out of a rather prolonged convalescence minus a right kidney and a coincidental repair of an abdominal aortic aneurysm.

Only now have I been able to study the Peter Barss paper that you submitted for critical review. Although it is obviously too late for a 1000 word commentary for simultaneous publication I am sufficiently interested and sympathetic with the broad view of the article to add these belated comments, not for direct quotation without further clearance with me, but without objection for share with others who may be interested. (see my own distribution list below.

I warmly endorse your plan to publish the Peter Barss paper with a series of carefully prepared commentaries. I hope others have been able to comply. Since I have already reviewed an earlier draft I shall refrain from further comment on the manuscript except to say that it has been greatly improved. Furthermore I recognize that it is not written for a scientific publication but for a broad lay audience. You are in a far sounder position to rule on its publishability.

Few thoughtful people can argue with the paper's main thesis that incidents of actual or suspected Chemical, Biological or Toxin Warfare are in all essential respects epidemics and should be investigated as such along the well established principles and practices of epidemiology. This is so obvious to epidemiologists as hardly to be worth mentioning, but, I fully agree, not to the general layman or to governmental or military leaders. The idea deserves endless reiteration and open discussion, so that when the next CBTW episode occurs the instinctive first reaction of all concerned must be the recognition that this is an epidemiological problem.

The logical follow-up of this proposition is that epidemiologists around the world must be brought on board. This was the

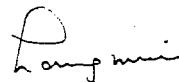
Dear Matt,
I await a call from you - Thursday 1/23.
Don't know Barss and Mass - they seem
rather naive but deserve encouragement.

I move to Baltimore, a retirement community - in mid Feb!

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underlying justification for the formation of the Epidemic Intelligence Service in 1951. The "Medical Establishment" influenced heavily by the Surgeon General's Office of the Department of Defense was openly hostile even to the discussion of the subject of Biological Warfare but the idea of a program to train a large number of epidemiologists for both civilian and defense needs was warmly supported. Furthermore the upstart outfit CDC in Atlanta was willing to do it. No one, not even the schools of public health objected to the government running a large educational "training" program.

I look forward to reading the Barss paper and the commentaries when they appear. I sincerely hope you stimulate a continuing dialogue.

Sincerely yours, 

Alexander D. Langmuir, MD,

cc Peter Barss
Matthew Meselson
Philip S. Brachman
Alexis Shelokov
James H. Steele
Barbara Rosenberg