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May 22, 1994

Mr. John Maddox
Nature

Dear John:

I'm puzzled over your keeping Matt dangling in the wind. He is leaving Wednesday evening for a European trip and would like to submit his paper elsewhere by then if you cannot accept it as he left it with you.

I hear that you do not want to risk its being refereed and hence put it in Commentary. I guess that would be possible but only if were not cut, and I gather that it would have to be. This returns us to its being refereed. It has been examined and most favorably commented on by the most knowledgeable people in the field (including our intelligence people who have worked the problem over and over); and I am sure Matt would welcome further substantive reviews.

I can understand that you would not want reports of ordinary investigations of presumptive arms control treaty violations in Nature. But his paper stands so far above that both in the central importance of the issue it addresses and in the quality of the science used that it should not be excluded by such an pedestrian filter. Indeed, I think it will be a classic and that is the view I had from both Graham Pearson and Josh Lederberg with whom I have discussed it.

Anyway, that's how I feel as a bystander. But, do decide if you can accept it as he left it with you, subject to refereeing, or not and let him know. It surely deserves prompt publication and a month has passed since I thought it was settled at his meeting with you in London.

With warmest regards

Paul