

Montagu

September 24, 1994

Cheri Montagu  
P. O. Box 27611  
San Francisco, CA 94127

Dear Ms. Montagu:

Thank you for your letter of August 1. Briefly put, it seems to me that the most practical definition of chemical weapons is those weapons intended for use in warfare because of their toxic effects on people, animals or plants. International prohibition, whether the 1925 Geneva Protocol or the nearly completed Chemical Weapons Convention, would become difficult to apply and enforce if some chemical weapons were permitted and others were prohibited. This is an argument of practicality.

Eliminating one entire category of weapons, namely chemicals, certainly does not imply approval of those which the world is not yet ready to prohibit. But it seems the world is ready to prohibit chemical weapons and since they are particularly indiscriminate and usually directly against those without protection, it seems to me worthwhile to banish them. I have written something more on this score in the enclosed.

Sincerely,

Matthew Meselson  
Professor of Biochemistry  
and Molecular Biology