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October 14, 1963

Congressman Robert W. Kastenmeier  
House of Representatives  
Washington, D. C.

Dear Congressman Kastenmeier:

Because I know of your previous interest in the area of chemical and biological warfare, I am writing to enquire if your staff can without undue trouble supply me with background materials on this subject.

My interest in chemical and biological warfare stems from my conviction that, at least in the case of biological weapons, the cost of potential, if not existing, agents and delivery means could be made so low as to come within the reach of very many nations not now possessing mass destructive capability. There follows from this possibility the consideration that, regardless of whatever immediate battlefield advantages large countries might see in the operational use of toxic warfare, in the long run the change in the military environment which could result from the introduction of radically cheap weapons would work almost wholly to the disadvantage of large powers. I am concerned that our planners may have given too much attention to the immediate battlefield advantages and disadvantages of toxic warfare and too little attention to the long-term hazard of permanently changing the world military environment by introducing or even stimulating the introduction of toxic weapons.

Sincerely yours,

Matthew Meselson,  
Associate Professor of  
Molecular Biology

MM / JAS