

August 28, 1995

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Matthew S Meselson  
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USA

Dear Dr. Meselson,

I wanted to update everyone on the status of the chemical and biological weapons project. There does not appear to be a need for a regular mailing so I will contact people periodically to keep everyone abreast of the activities of Human Rights Watch with relevance to CBW.

The Arms Project has contacted most of the well-known public experts on CW or BW issues (that I have learned of) and many, despite their busy schedules, have agreed to help when needed. Though there are undoubtedly many more people who could lend their expertise to this project, the bulk of work that HRW will now do on CBW issues is research into recent allegations and attempts to formulate plans and contingencies in the event that people need to be sent to investigate claims of alleged use. Several people have expressed interest in joining a mission if one is called for and, with our contact with Physicians for Human Rights and other organizations, we should have an adequate number of volunteers who would be willing to participate.

I have accumulated some of the publicly available material on conducting investigations into possible CBW use, however, if you are aware of useful information please let me know. We are also beginning to expand our CBW library, so if you are aware of some more obscure sources of information please let me know (if you would like me to get you some information, contact me likewise).

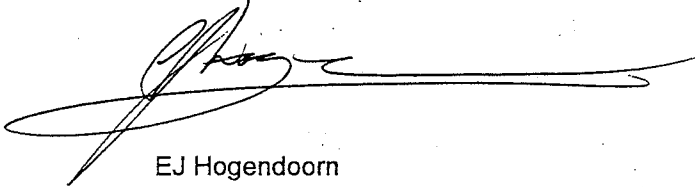
Currently Human Rights Watch is investigating allegations of CW use in Yugoslavia and allegations of CBW use in Burma. A recent New York Times report of alleged CW attacks on the former "safe area" of Zepa describes symptoms which are remarkably like those to be expected from a BZ attack (quoting Prof. J.P. Robinson): In 1993 the ASA Newsletter reported that the former Yugoslav army had produced BZ in significant quantities. This article was based on information provided by Gen. Slatko Binenfeld (A former high-ranking JNA NBC defense officer who is Croat), who also claims that large quantities of CS gas were also produced. A questionnaire was developed with the help of Dr. Alistair Hay, Dr. Martin Hugh-Jones, and Dr. Brian Davey which was given to our researchers in Tuzla. Unfortunately our researchers have not yet had access to refugees from Zepa, but they will use the questionnaire when they do. Further research has also brought to our attention credible claims of the use of Chlorine-filled shells, by the Army of Bosnia-Herzegovina, and allegations that Serbian forces have used CS in a military capacity (this is not currently illegal under international humanitarian law, but we are researching the issue and may do some work on this - if you have opinions, information regarding this, please let me know).

Our concerns in Burma are based on reports of CW use in a successful month long siege of the Kawmoora stronghold of the Karen in February and a subsequent report of CW use on 27 April 1995. There have also been reports of BW attacks in 1993-94, which have been covered by the media and publicized by Baroness Cox of the House of Lords. Reports speak of an attack on 12 August 1993 and in early 1994 - after which the villagers fell ill from a disease resembling Cholera or Shigella (ASA Newsletter). The United States considers Burma to be a "probable possessor" of CW and there is interesting circumstantial public evidence that the Burmese government was attempting, with the help of German and Italian industry, to develop a CW capacity in the 1980s. Experience with Iraq show how easily such an effort (both CW and BW) may be hidden. I have contacted a number of other organizations and expressed our intent to investigate these claims, hopefully that may turn up some more information.

If you can shed any more light on these issues or have any other suggestions, please do contact me. Also, if you become aware of any other people or programs who may be willing to help the Human Rights Watch

Arms Project (especially if they are from non-US or European countries), please let them know of this program, or let me know their name and address.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'EJ Hogendoorn', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

EJ Hogendoorn