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From: "R.L.Garwin ((914) 945-2555)" <RLG2@watson.ibm.com>  
To: msm@wjh.harvard.edu  
Subject: Yellow Rain confernce.

Ref: Our discussion of 18 December 1998

Dear Matt,

Here is what I have just send to George Tenet.

I'll keep you posted.

Dick Garwin

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December 18, 1998  
(Via FAX to 9-1 (703) 482-3064)

Mr. George J. Tenet  
Director of Central Intelligence  
Washington, DC 20505

Dear George,

In May 1995, I had the honor and pleasure of participating on behalf of CIA in the two-day conference in which we told the full-story of CORONA, and this Fall I attended the conference revealing the full story of the U-2.

I believe that it would be useful for CIA to sponsor an unclassified conference to review the 1979-1983 "yellow rain" incidents in Laos. At that time, the Soviet Union was accused of involvement in the use of tricothecene mycotoxins against the Hmong people, and the accusation gained considerable credence. In 1979 dozens of people died in Sverdlovsk in an anthrax epidemic that more recently has been traced by (Harvard Professor of Biochemistry) Matt Meselson and his colleagues to a sudden atmospheric release of anthrax from a point source at a military facility in the city. This after the Soviet Union has maintained for years that it was not inhalation anthrax but anthrax caused by eating infected meat. So no one doubts that the Soviet Union had an extensive program in BW, and of course we have much additional information in this regard.

In the yellow rain story, Meselson and his colleagues have done extremely important work over the years, which I reviewed with Matt just recently. I believe that any intelligence professional, reviewing this evidence, is highly likely to agree with Matt's conclusions that the yellow rain itself is bee feces, and the evidence for mycotoxins is in doubt. This conclusion is backed by a lot of field work and supported by much other evidence in analysis of the samples (pollen digested by bees); in analysis of the possible toxins, and by repeat interviews of the Hmong.

Matt Meselson is an outstanding scientist, and a gentleman. Such a conference, convened by CIA, might lay to rest the theory of "yellow rain as toxin", or it might cast doubt on the "yellow rain as bee feces"! I believe that Matt has the same attitude toward laying out the facts, independent of which way it turns out. Either way, I think it would be a very useful contribution and milestone toward final judgments openly arrived at.

Doug MacEachin enthusiastically supports holding such a conference. I think that your sponsorship (or sponsorship at a lower level in the intelligence community) is highly desirable in order to encourage attendance by those intelligence professionals who were involved at the time. If it would be helpful, I believe that I could arrange co-sponsorship of such a session on behalf of the Council on Foreign Relations or the American Academy of Arts and

Sciences.

Very best personal regards.

Sincerely yours,

Richard L. Garwin

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