

20 January 2000

Dear Max,

Here are some items of possible interest in connection with what you are writing. My principal activity in the BW sphere at present, together with my friend Julian Robinson at Sussex, is to bring into existence a new international convention that we have drafted to criminalize biological and chemical weapons under international law, similar to the international law against torture that was involved in the Pinochet case.

A person in the MoD who could arrange for you to meet Vladimir Pasechnik is Mr. Paul Schulte whose office telephone number in London is 171 218 2296. I will send him an email or telephone him to say that you may call.

I accept what Alibek says in his book about his own activities at Stepnagorsk but believe that much else that he says needs independent confirmation before it can be accepted as correct. This in no way detracts from the international criminality of the continuation of the Soviet BW program after the BWC entered into force in 1975, after the US properly terminated its own vast program. After all, anthrax is bad enough! If you look at page 191 of Guillemin's book you will see that the wind direction on Monday March 30 1979, the day that Alibek says the Sverdlovsk anthrax release took place, is opposite to the direction proven in the maps preceding page 239 in her book. We explained this to Ken months before his book came out but it had no effect. From this and other things I conclude that Alibek is not scrupulous about checking what he has heard from others.

I understand that Pasechnik is easy to talk with and has a somewhat different—although certainly not opposite—perspective on some of the things that Alibek says. Last I knew, Pasechnik was publishing on bacterial toxins from the open (Public Health) part of Porton.

All good wishes,

Matt

Dear Max,

Here follows my comment on your review being sent also by fax:

1) As some of what Alibek says is certainly correct, some certainly not correct, and much unverified, you may wish to enter a disclaimer to the effect that even though some statements may be in error those that we now know to be correct are horrific enough to make the essential point that....

2) page 2, para 3, line7: "...Government had BY THEN proposed..."

3) page 2, para3, line 9: "Biological Weapons Convention which NOW HAS 143 STATES PARTIES, including the United States and the RUSSIAN FEDERATION.

4) page 3, last line: "But no matter, biological weapons SPENDING CONTINUED.

5) page 4, para3, line 5: [Does Alibek say that he had a laboratory at Koltsovo? I had thought not but may be wrong. Check this point in his book.]

6) page 7, para 1: Regarding inhalation tularemia, "Health Aspects of Chemical and Biological Weapons" WHO, Geneva 1970, page 76 states that "A case fatality rate of approximately 25% could be expected if a virulent strain were used. If an antibiotic-sensitive strain of relatively low virulence were used, with the aim of incapacitating, as opposed to killing, deaths would be considerably reduced but still be appreciable in number."

During the 1950s the principal US lethal agent was anthrax. This was replaced by P. tularensis as the standardized and weaponized US lethal biological agent.

7) page 8, para 2, line 1: "In JANUARY 1980, a Russian magazine..."

8) page 8, para 2, line7: "...Jeanne Guillemin recounts her INVESTIGATIONS IN SVERDLOVSK together with a team of scientists and doctors to discover..."

9) page 9, para1, lines 3-6: "Meanwhile....certificates". Interviews with victim's families in Sverdlovsk do not support this statement.

10) page 9, para 3: [Refer to Gorbachev letter to NYT faxed to you earlier today.]

11) page 10, para 4, line 3: "...SOVIET Academy of Sciences..."

12) page 11, para 1, line11: "...international Biological Weapons Convention ..."

13) page 11, para 2: Can we be sure about Mirzabekov knowingly aiding a BW offensive program?

14) page 13, para 2: I believe that substantial protection of civil populations by post-exposure therapies is a fantasy. Certainly some people can be saved so it is worth having some contingency plans. But the majority remain at risk.

15) page 13, para 2, lines 10-15: "...the US government currently opposes any protocol to the Biological Weapons Convention that would give it teeth by including inspections for biological weapons activities analogous to the inspections for chemical weapons activities routinely practiced under the 1993 Chemical Weapons Convention.

16) The immensity of the Soviet strategic offensive BW program is not unique. Until its abandonment and renunciation in 1969, the US strategic offensive program was also immense. And I must add that many "nice" people who I knew and who still believe they did right participated in it.

The great difference between the US program and the Soviet is not what went on before the BWC entered into force but rather that the Soviet Union illegally continued after that.

In doing so, President Nixon, to his immense credit, said "Mankind already hold in its hands too many seeds of its own destruction."

Jeanne and I look forward to seeing you in Washington in April.

Warm regards,

Matt.