

Johnstone

Date: Thu, 18 Oct 2001 18:55:56 -0400 (EDT)  
From: Matthew S. Meselson <msm@wjh.harvard.edu>  
To: CRAIGSTONE@aol.com  
Subject: reliable information

Dear Craig,

Believe nothing unless said by identified scientifically knowledgeable US officials. The Detrick/USAMRIID Commander Major General John Parker is such a person. He has said three relevant things:

- 1) The Florida and Daschle Senate strains are sensitive to all antibiotics tested.
- 2) The strain is a "common variety".
- 3) Under the EM the material looks clean, presumeably meaning mainly spores with little debris. This tells nothing about the fineness of the "powders".

No person who fits the above criterion has to my knowledge said anything about fineness, that is particle size distribution, of the "powders". Senator James Frist, who mentioned something to the effect of "1-2 micron diameter" does not fit the criterion. Moreover, he could have meant the size of the individual spores, telling nothing about fineness of the material. Or he could have been talking in the abstract, not specifically about the samples.

Yesterday's NYT, cited un-named "officials" saying that the material was of a high degree of fineness and went on to say that such material could distribute itself through a subway system. Any official saying the former anonymously is irresponsible and certainly not to be believed. Any journalist who publishes these anonymous statements is unprofessional.

What is needed is for the USG to designate a knowledgeable scientist from Detrick and another from CDC to appear regularly before the public to say what they do and do not know. So far what we see is disarray.

Circulate this if you like.

Best,

Matt.

Matthew Meselson  
Department of Molecular and Cellular Biology  
Harvard University  
7 Divinity Avenue  
Cambridge, MA 02138 USA  
email: <msm@wjh.harvard.edu>  
telephone: (617) 495-2264