

1 Stevens Close
Kew, Vic., 3101
Australia.
3 February 2003

Dear Matthew,

Thank you for your letter of 6 November and the article "Striking Terror". I agree with everything you have said in it, my criticisms are more a matter of emphasis. You mention the "possibility of long-lasting contamination" after an anthrax attack. I think I would have said "likelihood". The anthrax attack on Senator Daschle last year tells us that a little bit of military anthrax goes a long way. On the question of the possible use of Smallpox I find it hard to convince people that the release of the virus anywhere would lead to a pandemic which would spread throughout the world. One has only to recall the influenza pandemic of 1920 which killed 20 million people world wide. This before there was widespread air travel. Friend and foe alike would suffer. I hear people talk about retaliation in kind with BW. Two epidemics rather than one?! Incidentally, how reliable is the man Alibek?

You also mention the possibility of strengthening international law with a further Convention. I am sure that there are gaps in the present corpus of law that could well be filled. However given the present US administration's flouting of the laws we already have I fear a new Convention might be ignored. The mindless sadism of the camp at Guantanamo Bay makes one wonder what the Geneva Conventions were all about. When is a POW not a POW? If he is not, should he not be protected by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights? There is also a question of Habeus Corpus.

Our Prime Minister seems intent on following the US into Iraq. Many here think he has lost the plot, but then one might diagnose paranoid schizophrenia in many of our capitals!

I hope that you and your family are well. Please give my greetings to Julian when you see him. On the face of it it seems unlikely that we will all have a Happy New Year!

Warmest regards

Shirley