

COPY

June 8th, 1965

Dear Martin,

I enclose for your information, a copy of a letter which I have sent to Dr. Solly Zuckerman, Chief Scientific Advisor to the Secretary of State for Defence. The letter is self explanatory, though its tone may be more deprecatory than you would choose. This however, is done consciously.

Yours Sincerely,

John Humphrey

"Document A" is the draft report of the third session of the BW study group at Trieste.

"Document B" is the note of the informal discussion in Geneva, May 9th.

Can you let me have another copy of each of these? JHH

Dr. M. Kaplan
La Chenaie,
La Pallanterie,
Vesenaz, Geneva

8th June, 1965

Personal

Dear Sir Solly,

Wayland Young told me that you are prepared to be approached about the possibility that M.R.E. Porton might be encouraged or permitted - if willing - to give some advice to a Pugwash Study Group on Biological Warfare (of which I am a rather peripheral member).

The background to this Study Group is a discussion which took place at ^{the} Karlov Vary meeting of the Pugwash Committee last year, at which were discussed two linked questions:-

- (a) The problems facing small nations in keeping abreast of methods of defence against BW and,
- (b) The possibility that a pilot inspection scheme, involving countries belonging to the Western and Eastern blocs, might be set up in relation to BW - BW being chosen because it was considered to be a potentially important, but at the moment relatively non-sensitive area of defence activities.

The hope is that if a genuinely useful voluntary inspection scheme could be worked out, and shown both to be practicable and not to lead to friction when applied on a limited scale (in two "western" and two "eastern" countries), the example and the lessons learned might be applied in other more important areas.

I think that BW may have received perhaps undue emphasis at past Pugwash meetings, because the physicists, who predominate, are worried about BW as something of which they do not have the measure (by contrast with nuclear warfare, concerning the possibilities of which enough is known and discussed to make its consequences - within limits - predictable). I also think that even a successful inspection system relating to BW is likely to be less of use as a means of making this form of warfare improbable than as a political gesture. However the Study Group exists, and is composed of able and not unduly starry-eyed persons, who are taking their task quite seriously. They have met three times (though I personally only attended one meeting) and the present stage of the discussions is summarized in the two enclosed documents (A and B).

Although I have, with the knowledge of the Study Group, kept first Henderson and then Gordon Smith informed of what has been going on, they have expressed not surprisingly, no more than a polite interest.

The reason for approaching you is that the Study Group has reached the conclusions marked in documents A and B, relating to the development of methods for very rapid detection and identification of micro-organisms - an activity in which I understand M.R.E. to be deeply engaged, and one which is as relevant to a peaceful as to a potentially warlike world. Dr. Ole Maaløe, Professor of Microbiology at Copenhagen and an active member of the Study Group, discussed the possibility with John Kendrew and then with myself that M.R.E.

might be willing to join in, or at least to discuss the value of, cooperative work along these lines (some of which might be aided by the WHO). I think that M.R.E. could not do this without some official blessing from yourself. Maaløe or I (but better Maaløe) would gladly come to discuss in more detail with you, if you wish, the arguments in favor of encouraging M.R.E. to help to a limited extent, either now or in the future.

One of the greatest drawbacks to intelligent evaluation of BW is that much is based on surmise - fed by wild-sounding statements by one or two US generals - on the part of persons who are not really in the know. Although I suppose that any evaluation by someone who really is involved in defence against BW would be liable to interpretation as bluff or double-bluff, I wonder whether there is not a good case of presenting an evaluation in - say - Wayland Young's "Nuclear Disarmament and Arms Control"? However, I would not care to have to prepare such an evaluation myself!

Yours sincerely,

J.H. Humphrey

Sir Solly Zuckerman, F.R.S.,
Chief Scientific Adviser to the Secretary of
State for Defence,
Ministry of Defence,
Whitehall,
London, S.W.1.