



1965

11 June,

Dear Matt,

Enclosed is correspondence from John Humphrey that is self explanatory. I shall speak to him in London next week. I shall probably see 2 members for a few minutes and a London Zoological Society meeting as I shall try to determine his reaction to John's letter.

Thanks for the revised copies of your paper. I shall be staying at Rottollet's house Monday to Thursday and shall have an opportunity to discuss the entire matter with him.

Regards,

Robert

Dear Martin

I enclose for your information a copy of
a letter which I have sent to Dr Billy Kenton
Chief Scientific Advisor to the Secretary of State for
Defence. The letter is self explanatory, though
its tone may be more direct than you would
choose - this however is done intentionally

Yours sincerely,

J. H. H. Humphreys

"Document A" is the draft report of the three members of
the B6 study group at Torsholm

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

(Can you let me have another copy of
each of these? J.H.H.)

Dr M. Kaplan

La Chaux, La Pallantone, Vevey, Geneva

24th June 1965

Personal

Dear Sir Solly,

Wayland Young told me that you are prepared to be approached about the possibility that M.B.B. Fortan 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 Harbord's Very 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 the "western" and two "eastern" countries), the example and the lessons learned might be applied in other more important areas.

I think that PW 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 starty-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

Atk June 1965

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.L. to be deeply engaged, and one which is as relevant to a peaceful as to a potentially warlike world. Dr. Otto Maaloe, Professor of Microbiology at Copenhagen and an active member of the Study Group, discussed the possibility with John Andrew and then with myself that M.R.L. might be willing to join in, or at least to discuss the value of, co-operative work along these lines (some of which might be aided by the M.R.C.). I think that M.R.L. could not do this without some official blessing from yourself. Maaloe or I (but better Maaloe) would gladly come to discuss in more detail with you, if you wish, the arguments in favour of encouraging M.R.L. to help to a limited extent, either now or in the future.

One of the greatest drawbacks to intelligent evaluation of B is that much is based on surprise - fed by wild-sounding statements by one or two U.S. 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 B would be liable to interpretation as bluff or double-bluff, I wonder whether there is not a good case for presenting an evaluation in - say - wayland Young's "Nuclear Disarmament and Defence"? However I would not care to have to prepare such an evaluation myself!

Yours sincerely,

J.H. Humphrey

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