

August 18, 1969

Dr. Bruce D. Howard
Box 14
U.S. Naval Medical Research Unit No.2
APO San Francisco 96263

Dear Dr. Howard:

Thank you for your encouraging letter of August 6. I agree with you that a technical book on CB warfare is needed. I would attempt to write one if I were not such a terribly slow writer. Some of the need will be satisfied by a book now being prepared by a British friend, Mr. Julian Perry-Robinson. It will be a rather scholarly book and will not be completed for perhaps nine months to a year.

For your interest, I enclose a copy of testimony I presented to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee April 30, 1969. I have thought of attempting to convert this testimony into a primer partly like that you suggest except that arms control considerations would be stressed. If I actually do this, I will certainly reread your letter and the list of topics you suggest before going ahead. Please keep in touch with me if you have any further thoughts on this subject.

Sincerely yours,

Matthew Meselson
Professor of Biology

MM:las
Encl.

BOX 14

U. S. NAVAL MEDICAL RESEARCH UNIT NO 2

APO SAN FRANCISCO 96263

IN REPLY REFER TO:

August 6, 1969

Dr. Mathew Meselson
Biological Laboratories
Harvard University
Cambridge, Mass. 02138

Dear Dr. Meselson:

Most biologists and physicians I have encountered are quite ignorant of the technical aspects of chemical and biological warfare. To my knowledge there is no widely distributed source to consult on this matter. (I have yet to see the new United Nations report which may contain the desired information but is unlikely to be widely distributed). To correct this deficiency I have often thought it would be useful to have an objective CBW "primer" for use by physicians, biologists and other scientists, and aimed at a somewhat higher than Scientific American level. I would visualize the information to be contained in an article in such a journal as Science and/or some medical journal like New England Journal of Medicine. The recent publicity about present United States CBW policy magnifies the need and opportunity for publication of such a CBW primer.

I was about to write and submit an article on this subject but realized I would have two major difficulties because 1) I have no access to unpublished information on the subject and thus my article could suffer from gross inaccuracies by omission; and 2) my name would not lend sufficient authority to the article.

I would like to urge that you write such a primer. An article by you would not meet with the above objections.

I believe these topics should be discussed: 1) The nature of the chemical agents--their effects, mechanisms of action, therapeutic possibilities (and impossibilities) 2) The nature of the biological agents--clinical course, epidemiology, therapeutics, mechanisms of increasing viability (eg. nature of spores) and virulence (eg. ease of producing antibiotic resistant strains, properties of RTF) 3) Problems of delivery and control of spread 4) Possible adverse consequences of development and employment of CBW agents (eg. pandemic by drug resistant, vaccine resistant strain) plus likelihood of such events.

BOX 14

U. S. NAVAL MEDICAL RESEARCH UNIT NO 2

APO SAN FRANCISCO 96263

IN REPLY REFER TO:

(2)

I do hope that you will think as I do about the desirability of your producing a review of the technical aspects of CBW.

Sincerely yours,



Bruce D. Howard, M.D.
Assistant Professor of
Biological Chemistry (on leave)
UCLA Medical School

BDH:mm

P.S. I should explain the letterhead. I was drafted into the Navy Medical Corps (and by the way asked to work on CBW, an invitation I declined). I was sent to a medical research unit in Taipei, Taiwan where I will spend another year and am working on cholera vaccines.