

# Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions

THE FUND FOR THE REPUBLIC, INC.

Box 4068, Santa Barbara, California 93103  
May 18, 1966

Dr. Matt Meselson  
The Biological Laboratories  
16 Divinity Street  
Cambridge 30, Massachusetts

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Dear Matt:

The statement that you sent to me, drafted, I judge, by you and John Edsel\*, could, I think, be improved. It is my memory that you told me over the telephone that it had already been endorsed by FAF\*, and should perhaps not be changed; but I think that it might be wise to change it.

First, I think that it is too long. It is so long and, in some ways, confusing, that many scientists and physicians might not want to sign it, because of difficulty in understanding it or disagreement with some of the points made. I tried to keep the Bomb-Test petition short and simple. Nevertheless, Edsel\*, although he signed it, suggested that the wording be changed. Also, some people such as Bethe, refused to sign it on the grounds that they did not have a personal knowledge justifying some of the statements made.

The goal of the petition, as expressed in the last paragraph, seems to me to be a weak one. I think that the goal expressed by the Pugwash Conference might have greater appeal. Should there not be an effort now to get an international agreement that would cut down on the amount of research and development in this field? In this petition you do not ask that research and development in this field be decreased.

In this petition there are some statements about which I am not sure. They might even cause me to hesitate to sign. The statement that CB weapons are likely to be far cheaper and easier to produce than nuclear weapons is one such.

The opening sentence is weak (wish to warn). I think that the opening sentence might state the purpose of the petition, and that this purpose should be stated again in the last paragraph.

The word "unprecedented" in the fifth line may be justified, but I think that nuclear weapons are more of a danger to the world now than chemical and biological weapons, and that this petition should not serve to decrease the apprehension about nuclear. Perhaps a positive statement about the dangers of nuclear war should be introduced, together with a statement about the added danger from chemical and biological weapons..

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(continuation of preceding paragraph)

The added danger comes in part from the possibility that a small number of people with rather small resources might manufacture a quantity of these weapons that would be hazardous.

The words "non-lethal" in the third paragraph should perhaps be in quotation marks, if they are used in the petition.

The fourth paragraph seems to me to be appropriate to an article on this subject, but not to a petition. The first two sentences show restraint and understatement. I think that a stronger statement is needed here. In fact, there are, I believe, too many qualifying adjectives and adverbs in the whole petition. For example, in the last sentence of this paragraph the words "so called", "non-lethal", and "likely" should be omitted.

Altogether, I think that the petition should be made shorter, simpler, and more straightforward.

General Rothschild in his book quotes a statement expressing the policy of the United States about <sup>thirty</sup>sixty-five years ago - the policy not to pledge ourselves to refrain <sup>from</sup> chemical and biological warfare. Has our policy been changed since then?

Should we not ask the President to stop using any such weapons in Viet Nam? This would be the short-range goal of the petition.

Should we not ask that a treaty be made to stop research and development in this field, perhaps including a pledge by the signatories of the treaty not to use any such weapons?

I should be pleased to see another draft of the petition, if you prepare one.

Sincerely,

*JR Lewis for Dr. Pauling*  
Linus Pauling