

James Russell Wiggins . . . Carlton Cove Brooklin, Maine 04616

November 6, 1969

NOV 14 1969

Dear Dr. Meselson:

Thank you for sending R.C. Hope-Jones' letter to me.

I think he does not at all grasp the objections that this country has to signing conventions that seem to have a method of enforcement in them when that guarantee is unenforceable.

It has been this country's view repeatedly that it would not enter into a thermonuclear pact outlawing underground testing of thermonuclear weapons unless some means of detection satisfactory to this country and reasonably likely to divulge a violation were incorporated in the convention.

The United States would be caught in a very curious and contradictory predicament if it were to sign a convention outlawing bacteriological warfare the enforcement of which is even more difficult than that involved in thermonuclear warfare. Perhaps we might get over this hurdle by saying openly and publicly that the imperfections of the draft convention is in this circumstance well understood and that no one expects the investigative and enforcement procedures to work, but there would be a contradiction and an inconsistency in our policies that I think would be embarrassing.

I recognize the force of what he says about the small countries. The possibilities of a detection would be so remote, however, that I am not at all sure that the treaty would inhibit them.

I hate the element of self-delusion in a treaty that commits the Soviet Union to any policy without any means of detection or enforcement. Since I am quite confident that they will go ahead and manufacture the means of bacteriological warfare in any case, I would prefer not to be a party to the deceit involved by a treaty that gave the impression that we thought they were going to adhere to it.

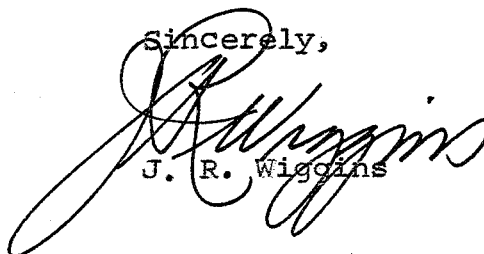
It was not much elaborated on at the proceedings, but there really is a profound argument against signing a convention that creates the illusion of a security that does not exist.

Mr. Hope-Jones' father had the satisfaction of knowing that his comrades had in fact been pulled into the Thames. He would not have

been much comforted by an illusion that they had fallen into the Thames when, in fact, they were actually bone dry on the bank.

I think this country had enough of this kind of self-deluding peacemaking in the Kellogg-Briand Pact.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "J. R. Wiggins". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

J. R. Wiggins

Dr. Matthew Meselson
Harvard University
The Biological Laboratories
16 Divinity Avenue
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02138