Confidential: from J.H.Humphrey. 2nd February 1970

Dear Matt,

Steven Rose was recently in Moscow and had a lengthy discussion with Academician Millionshchikov, Academician Imshenetsky and Dr.Lev Melnikov . The outcome of these discussions was that the Russians were very keen to concoct a letter which could be signed by some of them, by some British scientists and some American scientists which might start the ball rolling for action to be taken at the forthcoming International Congress of Microbiology and possibly at the Congress of Biochemistry.

I have drafted a letter which is enclosed, and would be grateful if you would send me any comments or improvements you may suggest. If you think the whole idea is crazy, say that also !

It is possible that Steven Rose has already sent you an account of his meeting.

Yours ever,

John

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+CONFIDENTIAL+

Draft to Professor Steven Rose,
Professor Matthew Meselson,
Professor M.R.Pollock,
Dr.Martin Kaplan.

We are mindful of the request of the Secretary General of the United Nations,in the foreword to his Report on chemical and bacteriological (biological) weapons and the effect of their possible use, that Members of the United Nations would 1. renew the appeal to all States to accede to the Geneva Protocol of 1925 ;

2. make a clear affirmation that the prohibition contained in the Geneva Protocol applies to the use in war of all chemical, bacteriological and biological agents (including tear gas and other harassing agents),which now exist or which may be developed in the future;

3. call upon all countries to reach agreement to halt the development,production and stockpiling of all chemical and bacteriological (biological) agents for purposes of war and to achieve their effective elimination from the arsenal of weapons.

We note that the 18 Nation Committee on Disarmament has before it a Draft Convention for the Prohibition of Biological Methods of Warfare proposed by the United Kingdom on July 10th 1969, and a Draft Convention on the Prohibition of the Development,Production and Stockpiling of Chemical and Bacteriological (Biological) Weapons and on their Destruction proposed by the U.S.S.R. on September 24th 1969. Both these proposals,while emphasising the value of the Geneva Protocol, go well beyond it by outlawing the use of such weapons in war under all circumstances.

We note also that on November 25th last year,President Nixon announced that he had ordered the destruction of American stocks of biological weapons,and endorsed the aims of the British proposal. He stated simultaneously that he is to ask the consent of the U.S. Senate for ratification of the 1925 Geneva Protocol, and pledged that the United States would not use lethal or incapacitating gases (though this term apparently does not include CS) in war except in retaliation against their use by an opponent.

The stage is therefore set for action, but this could be held up by the acknowledged difficulties of devising means of ensuring with reasonable certainty that such Conventions were being observed.Research on and development of chemical and biological weapons would come to a halt without the co-operation of chemists and biologists. Scientists could therefore play a key role in ensuring that any declared intention of Governments not only to accede to the Geneva Protocol but also to outlaw the use of chemical and biological weapons in war was adhered to. One way would be for them to pledge themselves individually not to take any part in research or development of offensive chemical or biological warfare systems. However, even if

responsibility in such matters. It would be more effective for scientists to undertake to report any evidence that work of this kind was being undertaken in any country to an international body of scientists competent to assess and investigate such reports, and with authority to make representations at national and international government levels. With such an arrangement it would be extremely difficult to keep secret any clandestine work carried out on a significant scale . Although some false alarms would almost inevitably be raised, it should be possible to devise a system whereby these were verified before they led to unnecessary action.

We wish to put the case for the creation or the designation of one or more international bodies which could (1) receive individual pledges of the kind discussed above and (2) receive and investigate reports of research upon or development of biological or chemical agents for offensive use in war. Since both these functions are somewhat negative, a third might be added - namely to encourage international collaboration in the use of microbial agents or potentially toxic chemicals for peaceful purposes.

In particular we wish to suggest that the International Council of Scientific Unions, and the relevant International Unions themselves (e.g. the International Unions of Microbiology, of Biochemistry or of Pure and Applied Chemistry) should consider whether, with the assistance or advice of experienced bodies (such as the U.N.Special Agencies, the Atomic Energy Commission and the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute), they could undertake such responsibilities.

J.H.Humphrey. 2.2.1970.