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THE BIOLOGICAL LABORATORIES  
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CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS 02138

February 2, 1970

Dr. Charles A. Janeway  
The Children's Hospital  
300 Longwood Avenue  
Boston, Mass. 02115

Dear Dr. Janeway:

Thank you for your letter of January 27 and for copies of your correspondence with Dr. John Appley. I agree completely with your assessment of the significance of this information. The problem is the population base. We need information on people in the countryside and people exposed to spraying at that. The fact that sprayed areas are almost always Viet Cong strongholds add to the difficulty.

Recently I spoke with Dr. Marjorie Nelson who has recently returned from the American Friends Service Committee Hospital at Quang Ngai. They handle a few hundred deliveries a year there. She is aware of no increase in birth defects. However, my information is that there has been no spraying near Quang Ngai.

A new and interesting complication has arisen in the 2,4,5-T story. There is a possibility, as yet unproven, that the active teratogenic factor is not 2,4,5-T itself but rather an extremely toxic impurity. This is symmetrical tetrachlorodibenzodioxine. The toxicity of this material has been known for some time. There is now great interest in it because of the possibility that it may be present as an impurity in a large range of agricultural and industrial materials. I have a fair amount of information on the subject, in case you are interested.

With best regards,

Sincerely yours,

Matthew Me selson

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