

Huddinge, February 27, 1970

Dr Matthew Meselson
Dept of Biology
Harvard University
Boston, USA

Dear Dr Meselson,

I write to You from several reasons. First You was a participant of the events at MIT on March 4 last year and second because of Your concern about the development and use of chemical and biological weapons. I am a young research worker within a group concerned with the eventual possibility to prevent tumors in humans by means of a vaccine. I have grown aware and alarmed by the relative isolation of the academic community in the society and the dangers which may arise from this situation. Therefore, the events of March 4 were hopeful indeed.

I received something like a shock, however, as I was informed, by a letter from Dr Theodore Rosebury to the Society for Social Responsibility in Science, that the events were not treated at all in the press in the US, or otherwise regarded as "libelous or pornographic".

At the time being I am trying to spread information about CBW and related subjects here in Sweden. I have received kind help from the SSRS and concerned scientists like Dr Victor Sidel and certain encouragements from J B Neilands of Berkeley.

You are most certainly aware of the criticism against the deployment of the ABM-system delivered by Hans Bethe. I think this type of criticism is the only one which eventually may affect decisionmaking in Pentagon and Washington. I rather doubt, that strategists and generals listen to phrases about human value, humanity etc. I think that a similar line of criticism can be applied to the question of CBW. I am of course referring to the changes, by adaptation and mutation, which may occur in microorganisms in large epidemics. When the bacterias and viruses are transmitted from host to host they may well undergo changes concerning virulence, antigenic specificity and species specificity. This has been treated to some extent by Milton Leitenberg.

On March 28 to 30 there is a symposium to be held here in Stockholm on Vietnam. At the meeting concerned with CBW I have been asked to deliver a paper. J B Neilands has been invited, but I do not know if he shall have the possibility to come here. By Neilands I have been told, that the hearings in december in the Congress constitute the latest and most comprehensive material on CBW from the USA. The report has been mailed to me, but I have not seen it as yet. Because of this I have a few requests, which I hope You will have the time to consider.

Do You have any material on this question, which You consider could be of any help ?


Did You observe the "blackout" about the events of March 4 and if so, would You take the trouble to inform me ? Would You like to discuss this with colleagues of Yours ? I have made a similar suggestion to Prof Victor Weisskopf at MIT.

All this may sound a bit dramatic to You, but as You may understand we are greatly shocked by the Chicago trials here in Europe. The letter of Dr Rosebury further contributed to this. The lack of information through ordinary newsmedia may appear more clearly when viewed from Europe.

I would very much appreciate Your view on this and related subjects. You are, of course, free to give my adress to anybody interested in these matters.

With best wishes

Sincerely Yours


Sven Ekberg

Adress: Glömsta Herrgård,
141 49 Huddinge, Sweden