

Stockholm, March 31, 1970

Dr Matthew Meselson,
Professor of Biology
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Dear Dr Meselson,

Thank you very much for your encouraging letter of march 16. I do share your view that the opening up of Detrick and other facilities would be wellcome and sound a step indeed. There is a danger, however, that such a move at the same time may serve to "disarm" those concerned critics who wants more: that is a ban on all gases and herbicides in warfare in the future. If the administration does not include these now workable weapons systems, the conclusion is that they ban the use of unreliable weapons while continuing to use the efficient ones and eventually development of new weapons for future use. As you say, the ban on these weapons is just as wellcome, as the research and development of biological weapons is insane in all respects, including the military point of view. Also, if the US Government does not include the ban to gas and the herbicides, picloram and cacodylic acid currently in use in Vietnam, I can not see what the gain would be for the vietnamese people or the status of the present administration in the eyes of world opinion.

At the international conference on Vietnam held here in Stockholm I had the opportunity to discuss the matter briefly with professor J.B. Neilands of Berkeley and professor W Davidon who represented American Friends Service Committee at the meeting. They both hold the view, as do most serious observers in the field I understand, that these weapons should be banned. I was further informed, that the agent responsible for malformed offsprings in mice and rats was the dimer dioxane, present as an impurity in the 2,4,5-T preparation that the Bionetics Labs tested. Still, there IS an increase of malformed children born in South Vietnam today in the defoliated zones. This may be caused by stress, starvation, disease and other factors associated with the war. Our knowledge is too limited, however, to make any definite statements about this at the time being. I am sure you agree on this point. Further, the use of crop-~~destruction~~ destructions amount to no less than the use of starvation as a weapon. I am sure you are familiar with the writings of professor Mayer on the issue, and I need not comment on that further.

As you know the definition on CBW in the report to the United Nations last year is far from satisfactory as far as these weapons are concerned. The definition on biological warfare says that the agents shall "depend for their effects on their ability to multiply in the person, animal or plant attacked." This leaves quite a lot of things out. At the time being, there may not be a major danger that insects and insect pests shall be used. This is no guarantee for the future, however. Also, the definition on chemical weapons says "direct" toxic effects. Any mad general could twist almost anything so as not to be considered as "direct" effect. And worse: they ll do it if they find it necessary, I'm afraid. This may well strike back at future generations, and I think it must be our responsibility now, to secure some "code of conduct" in this area, as obviously the political opportunity is better than ever before and most of the weapons systems have not been sufficiently developed as yet.

Then, how to go abot it? Where can pressure be applied to give desired effects?

Neilands told me there was going to be a meeting on the question at the Federations Annual meeting in Atlantic City in April. I hope the point I have mentioned shall be discussed at the time. In the meantime, I shall contact the swedish disarmament delegation and try to speak to our representatives in the UN, so as to forward these points.

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Now, I apologize for the length of my letters, but as you understand I am extremely concerned about these matters and at the same time I find the time ripe for major changes in the area. I do have some requests, and I hope you will have the time and opportunity to ponder on them.

Do you have any possibility to forward the points I have mentioned at the meeting in Atlantic City, and further, continue to work on people in Washington and other places?

Do you have the time to inform me about how things develop?

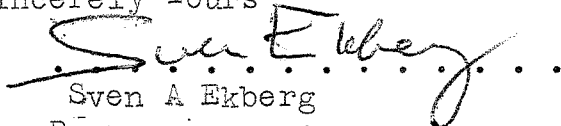
Do you have any suggestions about what we can do here in Sweden, which might contribute to a solution in the matter?

During the month to follow I shall be occupied in writhing for different newspapers and magazines here in Sweden. If there is any recent development in the field, would you please let me know?

I want you to know, that we really appreciate the work you have performed so far to put some sanity into the heads of mad military and other planners within the field of CBW.

With best wishes

I am Sincerely Yours



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