

WORLD HEALTH
ORGANIZATION



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APR 21 1969

In reply please refer to: N64/372/31
Prière de rappeler la référence:

17 April 1969

Dear Josh,

I apologize for the delay in answering your letter of 3 April. I have been away. With regard to your comments:

Item 1. Agreed.

2. Many of us have been trying to convince, directly or indirectly, the military authorities of the great powers that CBW is of no particular value to them, but once a weapon becomes militarily operational they hang on to it. This is true of chemical weapons, but not as yet (we believe) for biological agents. A credible military argument. Nerve gas could have reduced considerably the casualties in the island-hopping attacks in the Pacific during the last war. One of the more immediate and realistic aims is to outlaw all aspects of biological agents for warfare.

Your second paragraph of this item will be covered below, i.e. putting ideas into heads.

3. See the enclosed draft for some BW agents that probably can be kept more or less localized. For the use of recombinants see the description of influenza. Your last paragraph of this item is exactly what we have been concentrating on in Pugwash.
4. A good point, but again the question of truth (at this time) or consequences (later). I don't know the answer.
5. This line of thought will certainly be incorporated into the final draft on possible ecological consequences.

Now, about ideas in heads, even of psychotics. You may not know that there was a threat not long ago of LSD in a water supply of a large western European city by rebellious youth. There are enough brains amongst them to think of all possibilities. It is a difficult and delicate decision to make about projecting hypotheses to the public (or to scientists for that matter. See, for example, the section on yellow fever in the enclosed.). I incline to the view that in all but very exceptional circumstances it is best to bring everything out into the open. The whole question of CBW has been surrounded by a mystique by the military, for example, that clearly serves their purposes which are usually not consonant with peace. The latter is not their job. All this, however, requires a long discussion.

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Dr Joshua Lederberg
N64/372/31

17 April 1969

The enclosed draft will give you an idea how we are progressing. We shall fill in gaps during the coming weeks, and I shall send you any material that may be of interest. I have prepared the descriptions of biological agents in the enclosed that you may wish to read and send comments. They will be very welcome. I regret very much that you cannot be with us on 19 and 20 May to go over the final draft.

Many thanks for your help.

Sincerely yours,



Martin Kaplan

... ENCL: draft report