



OFFICE OF THE UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301

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RESEARCH AND  
ENGINEERING

3 JAN 1978

Professor Joshua Lederberg  
Department of Genetics  
Stanford University School  
of Medicine  
Stanford, CA 94305

Dear Professor Lederberg: *Josh:*

This is in response to your 7 November 1977 letter concerning your thoughts on DoD support of research at universities. I was particularly pleased to see that many of your suggestions coincide with my own perceptions of what DoD's role should be in support of the national research effort.

I agree with you that we should approach the problem of strengthening DoD's ties with universities very carefully and prevent the sine wave effects that some of the past federal programs seemed to generate. To avoid such problems, you might be interested to know that we plan to have an Oversight Committee for the new DoD-university program (DSEP). I will forward your excellent suggestions to that group for their consideration.

Your comment concerning research in tropical diseases is cogent. You will be pleased to know that our substantial funding in this area has been maintained and, for example, will increase 6% over inflation in the next year to enable our military laboratories, particularly the overseas laboratories of the Navy and the Army, to continue their vital work on tropical diseases of military significance. The World Health Organization has taken note of our capability and may increase use of these labs as a source of training and research experience for health professionals. Approximately half of our current research on infectious diseases is now done collaboratively between military laboratories and medical school investigators.

Your last comment concerning the somewhat difficult task of making operational people realize the importance of new technology is well appreciated by me and my staff since the primary function of my office, that of Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Research and Engineering (Research and Advanced Technology) is to foster new ideas and help

along technology transfer. In that capacity, I agree with you that it is sometimes difficult to make others realize potential threats which are either long range or not easily recognizable.

Thank you again for your thoughts, and I certainly would appreciate your continued interest in this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Ruth".

Ruth M. Davis  
Deputy Under Secretary of Defense  
for Research & Engineering  
(Research & Advanced Technology)