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Dr. Richard M. Krause  
Director, NIAID  
Dept. of Health, Education and Welfare  
National Institutes of Health  
Bethesda, Maryland 20014

Dear Dr. Krause:

I was very glad to get your letter of March 16 as a way of opening what I hope will be a consistent and productive discourse about research approaches to tropical diseases.

As you may know, I spent several years on the Advisory Committee for Medical Research at WHO. I would have to say that the most rewarding accomplishment was to reenforce support for the TDR initiative there together with Gus Nossal and Christian DeDuve. We felt very strongly that this particular arena was likely to be the most useful and effective one for the application of basic biological and biochemical knowledge to problems of the utmost human importance. I would be the first to support the emphasis on "appropriate technology" whenever and wherever this is up to the task. Your remarks about genetic mechanisms in the evolution of parasites and in their adaptation to our counter measures must, as you know, have struck a responsive chord with my own thinking. It appalls me that we know very little more about the fundamental biology of plasmodium falciparum than we did 35 years ago when I was a Navy hospital corpsman in a parasitology laboratory at Saint Alban's Naval Hospital. I remember taking time out from diagnostic smears to try to count the chromosomes of falciparum; and I doubt that this has been done any better up to the present time.

I do look forward to tangible occasions to go into more detailed research strategies. You probably know that I have also been in touch with Kenneth Warren of The Rockefeller Foundation and we had a meeting just a few days ago to help plan some high level pedagogy about tropical disease biology.

Since you are so familiar with The Rockefeller University traditions and environment I would also particularly welcome your suggestions about the most efficacious ways in which the University could play a part in what will surely be some of the most exciting developments in medical science of the next few decades.

Unless you happen to be planning to be in New York during the weeks of April 24 or June 26, I suspect that we may have to defer a closer engagement until after September 1 when I will have moved body as well as soul to the New York campus. If there is anything more urgent that needs to be done or talked about before that, I hope you will let me know. Dave Hamburg has also asked me to reenforce the IOM's positions in international health and I will certainly do what I can on that front as well.

Yours sincerely,

Joshua Lederberg,  
Professor and Chairman,  
Department of Genetics

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