

Please

Matt -
your letter
closed the
draft of my
2-14

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columns. I think

we are now in
perfect agreement.

February 2, 1970

Then

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Josh
School of Medicine

J. LEDERBERG 94304

Dear Josh,

Thanks for your quick reply to my paper on toxins. You have focused on the question of definitions. This is a mistake. The important points are: 1) We do not need toxin weapons. 2) If they can be successfully developed, they could represent a serious annoyance to us in the hands of non-nuclear nations. 3) If we apply the same policy to toxins as we do to chemical warfare generally, the President's initiative will lose force and effectiveness. This is because of the overlap in technology and the fact that people consider botulism and tetanus to be diseases no matter what definition technicians may agree upon.

I think the ideal thing for the President to say would be "I have already declared that the United States shall renounce the use of all methods of biological warfare. We have been asked whether this policy applies to toxins. Toxins are the poisonous but non-living products of living organisms. In several ways they occupy a place between chemical and biological warfare. However, in reaching our policy we have not been concerned with narrow technical definitions. Rather, we have sought to close the door as firmly as possible against the use of disease and the technology of disease as methods of warfare. Accordingly, I announce today that we extend our policy of renouncing the use of biological methods of warfare to include toxins. This step is in the best interests of the United States. Beyond that, it is in the best interests of all mankind. I have therefore directed that the U.S. shall renounce the use of all methods of biological warfare and of toxins as weapons of war. The U.S. will confine its biological research and also its research on toxins to defensive measures."

With best regards,

As ever,
Matt