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COMMITTEE FOR RESPONSIBLE GENETICS

February 11, 1985

Dr. Joshua Lederberg
President
Rockefeller University
New York, NY 10021

Dear Dr. Lederberg:

I am writing on behalf of the Committee for Responsible Genetics (CRG) to ask for your endorsement of a statement on the proposed Aerosol Test Facility at the Dugway Proving Ground.

The CRG has become concerned about the long term consequences of construction of the proposed facility for the purposes of "testing and evaluation of defensive material and procedures... against toxic biological agents." We believe that construction and use of this facility risks stimulating a biological arms race with long term implications far more serious than the conjectured threat which the facility is designed to counter.

We do not believe that this laboratory is likely to serve useful defense functions that cannot be achieved equally well through other less dangerous means. Innocuous agents with properties similar to those of biological and toxin weapons can be used in simulative tests to determine the effectiveness of defensive measures. This approach would be less expensive, safer, and less provocative.

The proposed facility will almost inevitably stimulate similar types of research and development in the Soviet Union. The ultimate results of actions and counter actions on the part of the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. and possibly other countries is likely to be expanding research and development efforts for biological warfare. This may blur critical distinctions between defensive and offensive biological research and between research and development. Any of these developments would dangerously erode the 1972 Biological Weapons Convention.

The enclosed statement calls for Congress to rescind approval of plans for construction of the Aerosol Test Facility, a Congressional inquiry into the DOD's Chemical Warfare and Biological Defense Program, greater Congressional oversight over proposals of this nature, and reaffirmation of the U.S. commitment to the Biological Weapons Convention.

We are circulating the "To Prevent a Biological Arms Race" statement among scientists, lawyers, physicians, and clergy to gather support from a broad base of prominent individuals. We plan to submit the statement with the names and affiliations

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Terri Goldberg
Executive Director



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of the endorsers to appropriate legislators. We will hold a press conference to inform reporters of the status of the proposed facility and the statement. We have collected approximately 60 endorsement, primarily from biologists.

Please fill out the enclosed form and indicate whether you support the statement.

I look forward to hearing from you. Thank you for your attention to this request.

Sincerely,

Terri Goldberg
Terri Goldberg,
Executive Director