

THE ROCKEFELLER UNIVERSITY

pro bono humani generis

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Joshua Lederberg
UNIVERSITY PROFESSOR

December 12, 1990

Dr. Frank Press
President
National Academy of Sciences
Washington, DC

Dear Frank:

Our joint US-USSR Academies group on BW-CISAC issues met last week at Swiftwater, Pa., in connection with a visit to the Salk Institute Government Services Division, vaccine production plant. This works under contract with the U.S. Army to produce vaccines for exotic diseases beyond the purview of domestic, commercial vaccine producers.

Unanimously, speaking from both sides, we fear that the most imminent and dangerous potentiality for rupture of the internationally agreed prohibitions on Biological Weapons has arisen from Iraq.

We understand that this is not the usual precedent, but the situation seems so emergent that we felt some statement was necessary to be sure that Saddam Hussein has received accurate signals about how the world would feel about this contingency. We are not indicting him, and would be relieved if he indicated his understanding of that message by repudiating the statements and threats that have been attributed to him. This is all the more important in the light of the egregious failure of the world community to respond appropriately to his reintroduction of chemical weapons in the Iraq-Iran war.

The statement would have additional merit by its testimony of US-USSR scientific solidarity on this issue; and I can assure you the Russian members of the group were no less vehement than we.

They will be carrying this draft to Marchuk and the President of the USSR Academy of Medical Sciences; and we believe it will have the greatest impact if it could be issued in parallel from the respective academies and the IOM.

The circumstances are unprecedented too.

If this level of manifestation is not feasible, we are prepared to proceed over our own signatures as citizens of the US, the USSR (and the world). The attached text is the one jointly agreed to by the indicated signatories.

Sincerely,
Joshua Lederberg