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PRESIDENT

Dr. Leonard Solon
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Dear Leonard:

Thank you for yours of July 25th.

I was glad to see the update on radio protectants you sent me. There is a sporadic literature, as you doubtless know, about using WR2721 and other protectants as adjuncts to focussed radiation in therapy.

Our common wisdom about military matters is that deterrence is all. You are in danger of being accused of nuclear war-mongering if you reopen discussions of civil defense and the like -- or is it one of your statutory responsibilities to worry about rescuing survivors from nuclear attack in New York City?

As to your more concrete question about applying these agents in HIV: I suppose the nexus of rationale is protecting the immune system. My own understanding of mechanism is limited but from what I can see the protectants act at the chemical level of radiation injury (mopping up free radicals etc.) and it is hard to see how there would be any relationship with that and the biological attack on the immune system that follows upon HIV infection. I suppose one could argue that anything is worth trying and peroxide-mediated cytocide may be involved. The place to direct such suggestions would then be to Dr. Anthony Fauci at the NIAID.

Glad to hear from you.

Yours sincerely,

Joshua Lederberg