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Health Science Center
Syracuse

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Clinical Campus

P.O. Box 1000
Binghamton, NY 13902

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Admiral Elmo R. Zumwalt, Jr
1500 Wilson Blvd Suite 641
Arlington, VA 22209

Dear Admiral Zumwalt:

I am writing again to follow up our discussion as to what our strategy should be at this time.

I am writing today because I read another Veterans Administration Agent Orange study in my copy this week of the Annals of Epidemiology, a copy of which is enclosed. Again, there is a negative cancer study, but ignoring the exposure index which we all know is best, dioxin measurement in human tissue. Considering that the VA is funding the IOM-NAS reviews, and has recommended that the VA should do most future Agent Orange health research, I think we need to mobilize at this time with great vigor and efficiency.

I suggest we try to raise funds for you and for me (at least) to go to Vietnam together in the next 6 months on a fact finding trip with maximum press coverage to document that Vietnam and American universities can produce major research results useful to American Vietnam veterans concerned about Agent Orange. You are the most prominent person in this field and I am the senior (and only?) US physician dioxin and Agent Orange researcher in Vietnam. Each of us have had press coverage on this topic in most major media upon which we could build.

We need to work with the American Legion and other major veteran groups for a very large lobbying effort to see that there is money in the budget targeted for Agent Orange health and environmental studies, conferences, and publications-for at least \$10 million yearly. This should be used for independent university and medical school research, not government research. We might want to see that a coordinating center is established for the work;

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I could and would like to organize this at my medical school.

We should also raise small amounts of funds to keep the Vietnam research alive. I cannot continue for much longer with small foundation support alone, since these foundations are limited in the number of years they will fund a given project. I think I am now ready to conduct small pilot health studies in Vietnam. But it will take a budget of over \$100,000 each year to do a good job.

Please let me know what you think of the above suggestions, and what you feel would be the best next steps.

With best wishes, I remain

Sincerely yours,

Arnold Schecter, MD, MPH
Professor of Preventive Medicine
SUNY - Health Science Center
Clinical Campus at Binghamton
88 Aldrich Ave
Binghamton, NY 13903

PS I do not remember if I addressed your request for information concerning the second international Agent Orange Conference in Vietnam. The quality of the abstracts handed out at the meeting was so poor in every way that I believe it is much better not to circulate them in the USA. Despite this, the Vietnamese plan to publish a more extensive version, I was told. They will not help our efforts, but harm our work, in my opinion.