

9/17/71

Dear "lo,

I had to be in DC all day, didn't get a chance to see the paper until tonight, and I'd gone to bed when I thought I'd better write this note before I forget. I am concerned that with the overwhelming weight of the evidence so burdensome to the attackers, it is especially important to be more than usually careful in any literature and statements not to give them the kind of thing for when they always get a large hearing, innocent error.

What brought this to mind is today's Wash Post story quoting an unnamed "authoritative source" as saying that a dumdum bullet had been used on one prisoner. I would doubt it very much, particularly with the rest of the description, which includes multitudes of fine fragments. As soon as I saw it I phoned a friend on the Post at home, explained something about bullets (on which I've had to become a kind of lay authority), gave him a thoroughly dependable source for checking, and he felt it was important enough to phone the right desk about and said he would. A proper explanation could avoid one of those nasty insertions into the Congressional Record that sometimes get extensive press coverage and can be mailed for almost nothing.

I have no way of knowing if anyone is planning to use this in any literature, but if you know of someone who may be, please suggest that if they want to use this designation that they make it "dumdum type". There are non-dumdum bullet designed for "humanitarian" hunting and varminting that are made to work as the description in the Post says and are not, really, dumdum bullets. It is, in a sense, worse if any policeman slipped a hunting-type bullet into his weapon instead of the kind issued by public authority, but it is not really called a dumdum, and nobody except an expert would understand if the answer was that nothing except such and such a munition was used and there is no evidence any was mutilated into a dumdum.

This kind of thing is one of the reasons I immediately phoned you and others to insist upon the kind of testing I specified, to insist that the fact of it and the results be made public (and if there is no by-name identification, there is no reason not to make the results public and every reason to holler coverup if they make this false claim).

The extensiveness of the reported fragmentation in this case from the Post, which may have been widely reported elsewhere and I'd have no way of knowing it, is more typical of a very soft bullet, which is inclined to fragment into small pieces, whereas the hardened bullets supposedly used against humans, i.e., humanitarian under the Geneva Convention, ordinarily will not go into so mean pieces. A dumdum becomes something like a screw when it hits flesh, whereas the soft bullet mushrooms on impact and they is even more inclined to go into tiny pieces under the right circumstances. If you want to get a little more on this, consult the index to FRANK-UP under Remington-Peters ammo or Core-Lokt or probably one will give you the other. If anyone is going to do any work on this, they should go to a sporting-goods store and get all the ammo catalogues, including for a Mosler bullet, which is a very special one that could also act the reported way and is not a dumdum. But isn't it worse if any cop used any bullet designed to tear animals apart as a concept of humanitarian animal-hunting when he was shooting against humans?

Hurriedly.

JP - return in my file