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1972, and 3 others will be studied in the near future. So far, no evidence has been detected of biological damage due to radioactivity in the body. These men, as well as other plutonium workers at the Los Alamos Scientific Laboratory, are being urged to join the U.S. Transuranium Registry.

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Ecological Assessment

Twin bills are pending in committees in both houses of Congress that would appropriate up to \$10 million to the National Academy of Sciences for a study "to assess the extent of the damage done to the environment of South Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia as the result of the operations of the Armed Forces of the United States in such countries, and to consider plans for effectively rectifying such damage." These bills will not pass without the active support of the scientific community.

Following is the text of a supporting letter to Senator J. W. Fulbright (D-Ark.), chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, signed by 78 members of the Department of Zoology of the University of California at Berkeley:

We, the undersigned, members of the Department of Zoology, University of California at Berkeley, wish to voice our strong support of S. 3084, The Vietnam War Ecological Assessment Act of 1972, and we urge you to lend your own support to its passage. We are professional biologists, representing a wide range of political opinion, acting collectively in response to our individual concern as United States citizens.

Many of us are teachers or researchers in ecology, who have devoted our professional lives to furthering basic knowledge of the structure and function of ecosystems. One overwhelming result has emerged from our work and from that of others: ecosystems are enormously complex. This complexity makes it almost impossible to predict the subtle, indirect, and delayed consequences of even the most simple and seemingly minor changes made by human beings. The widespread disturbances of local ecosystems by our armed forces in Southeast Asia are neither simple nor minor, and the force

of their indirect and delayed effects may far outweigh their immediate and obvious consequences.

For this reason we feel that it is imperative that appropriate broad-scale, in-depth studies be initiated as soon as possible to determine both the short and long term ecological and human consequences of defoliation, deforestation, bombing, and chemical residues in the battlegrounds of Southeast Asia. Unlike the expense of reconstructing a building or a highway, the cost of ecological reconstruction rises sharply with every month's delay. A million dollars now may save hundreds of millions five years hence.

For all these reasons, and for the sake of future generations in Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia, we implore you to support the Vietnam War Ecological Assessment Act.

We urge other concerned individuals and groups to support this legislation. Letters regarding the House bill (H.R. 13010) should be addressed to Representative Thomas E. Morgan (D-Pa.), chairman of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs.

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Suffering Legions?

When exposed almost continuously to colonies of white rats and mice, I noted the gradual onset of some personally very upsetting symptoms: puffing of the eyelids; watering of the eyes; nasal congestion; sneezing; and extreme respiratory discomfort, including wheezing and bronchial coughing. Continued research with rodents became difficult.

As a probable result of my experience with rodents, I am now allergic to most furry creatures, as well as to pollens and molds. Such an allergy limits my ability to work at pharmaceutical research, where the white rat is the animal of choice.

At first I thought my experience was unique and I had best suffer in silence, but I have recently met other biologists who suffer the same symptoms. Have I had the bad (or, hopefully, the good) fortune of meeting most of the world's supply of fellow sufferers, or might there be silently suffering legions?

DAVID A. GOODMAN

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