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10 Boulevard Baudin
Algiers

January 15, 1943

His Excellency, Mr. Robert Murphy
United States Minister to Algeria
Algiers

Dear Mr. Murphy:

The cable of January 3, 1943, from Mr. Norman Davis to Mr. Richard W. Allen discussed the American Red Cross' position in reference to the North African Relief problem in the event that Governor Lehman's organization should assume direct responsibility for it. In the last paragraph of said cable reference is also made to the services which Mr. Strobe had contemplated and by inference it seems clear to us that Mr. Davis wishes us to refrain from any such commitments until the situation is clarified.

The services referred to above were:

1. A study to evaluate the present nutritional state of the population and to determine the nature and gravity of such deficiencies as may be found.
2. A typhus fever study directed towards determining the extent to which the Army louse powder can be relied upon to disinfect a native civil population and also to establish whether in the face of an epidemic the powder alone or the powder plus chemical fumigation will stop transmission of the disease.

It is our considered opinion that both these studies should be held in abeyance pending our discussions in Washington and New York. At the same time, it has seemed advisable, while we are still in Algeria, to conduct preliminary talks with appropriate French officials and members of the Faculty of Medicine of Alger so that work could start promptly if the way is opened by Washington agreements.

We beg to report our conviction that the American Red Cross and the Rockefeller Foundation would be prepared to engage upon both these studies rather promptly. The nutrition study because of its nature is intimately related to the food relief program, but the typhus fever study is quite independent thereof and could in our esteem be engaged upon by direct negotiation with the Pasteur Institute of Algeria. As a matter of fact we have already established a clear understanding with Dr. Edmond Sergent, Director of the Institute, and we can report that the study can start in March if facilities are provided for the transportation of personnel and supplies from the United States.

We have discussed both these studies with Colonel Corby, the ranking American officer at Medical Headquarters in Alger, and we are in a position to quote his hearty approval of both. He expressed particular interest in the typhus study because of the value it may have to the health of the American Army.

This letter has as its primary objective to secure in principle your support to the issuing of Special Orders by Washington so that two or three members of the Rockefeller Foundation staff may proceed to Alger by air transport soon after our return to the United States.

Respectfully submitted,

Richard W. Allen
Vice Chairman
American Red Cross

Dr. George K. Strode
Associate Director
International Health Division
Rockefeller Foundation