



FEB 15 1990

Office of the Assistant Secretary
for Health
Washington DC 20201

Frank Press, Ph.D.
President
National Academy of Sciences
2101 Constitution Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20418

Dear Dr. Press:

As you know, an article published this past November in the Chicago Tribune made a number of allegations about the research practices of Dr. Robert Gallo of the National Cancer Institute, National Institutes of Health (NIH). In accordance with its normal procedures, the NIH now is engaged in an inquiry to determine what, if any, significance the charges might have and whether a formal investigation of possible misconduct is indicated. With a view to ensuring both the fact and appearance of objectivity for the inquiry, Dr. William Raub, the Acting Director, NIH, has asked me to solicit the assistance of the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) in nominating candidates for a special advisory panel. The panel would counsel NIH's Office of Scientific Integrity regarding the focus of the inquiry and the analysis of the findings. If a subsequent investigation proves necessary, the panel would be asked to continue its advisory role through that phase as well.

I endorse Dr. Raub's request. What we need specifically is a list of names of ten distinguished scientists who can be expected to make informed, unbiased judgments about the issues raised in the Chicago Tribune article. We would hope that the NAS and IOM will have contacted these individuals and received assurance that they would at least be willing to listen to a request from NIH for their services. The nominees should be drawn from a variety of scientific disciplines and be prepared to commit to a minimum of two to three meetings at the NIH over the next several months. The NIH will select the first six or seven individuals according to discipline from the NAS-furnished list who will accept this duty.

I hope that the NAS will be able to assist us in this matter. Please call me if discussion of this request would be helpful.

Sincerely yours,

James O. Mason, M.D., Dr.P.H.
Assistant Secretary for Health and
Acting Surgeon General