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Dear Gerry:

This is not the formal letter from me for your booklet, but a more personal letter.

First, let me tell you how much I was impressed by you personally. I already knew you were a good man in other ways. I do want to take this opportunity, however, to emphasize a few points that are now probably clear to you anyway from our discussions last week:

1. One of your points to me in your memo was that you were not about to comment on the LAV-IIIB relatedness even though you discuss the data and even though you have been pressed to comment. I have been through all this in 1984-86. I am the one (June 1984) who told Montagnier about heterogeneity (he was surprised). We knew of heterogeneity first because we had more than one isolate. I specifically told him about the unusual relatedness of IIIB and LAV then -- five years ago. Of course, the sequence was then published in 1985 (just four years ago) and the relatedness of IIIB and LAV duly noted in many talks. Four years ago, Science ran an editorial (perhaps two) on the very subject. If these were not enough, the point was repeatedly made in presentations by M. Alizon in 1985-86, i.e., IIIB and LAV close relatedness. Alizon always showed ARV for contrast, but never the other isolates from my laboratory reported in 1984, like RF with their great differences. And if this too were not enough, you will recall Mal Martin and Rabson's entry into retrovirology with a Cell editorial with 0 new data but highlighting the IIIB-LAV proximity. So, although obviously this data you have compiled is of great value and use, and although it makes IIIB-LAV relatedness still clearer -- the major implication is a very old story. Thus, I can certainly imagine you being pressed, but I imagine it being only from someone who wishes to use you in ways that are neither scientific nor high minded.

2. A second point has to do with your concern mentioned in your memo to Tony Fauci that this is critical to the history of the discovery of HIV. I do not think so. Please review the history published in the January Scientific American, which only two people on earth really know, Montagnier and myself. Not even our closest co-workers really knew many various aspects. The discovery in our joint view is roughly a 50-50 contribution. We consider idea, technology, help, first isolate, mass continuous production, and evidence of causation. The history of the discovery of the AIDS virus then is of one shown to cause AIDS. The relatedness or its lack of IIIB-LAV is not so relevant to this.

Thanks again for sharing the information.

Sincerely yours,

Robert C. Gallo

cc: ✓ Dr. Broder  
Dr. Fauci  
Dr. Temin