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FYI

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

January 2, 1992

Dear Nick:

Clearly both of our situations have changed substantially since we last communicated. Let me begin by congratulating you on your new appointment at Harvard and even more, let me congratulate you on becoming a grandfather. I would appreciate it if you would let me have Julia's address because I have lost touch with her since the days when we were all at the Wright Laboratory in the early 1960s.

The material in your letter concerning the possible use of new bioscience to make possible more stringent enforcement of the international ban on trade on elephant ivory is certainly interesting and I was impressed by the specificity that you demonstrate in your article in *Nature*.

My problem, however, is that it is not clear to me how, in a practical sense, customs officers would actually use this new expertise at the actual point of entry.

As I understand it, ivory flows through a great many channels in Africa with little possibility of control except when it finally passes through customs into industrialized countries. To date, my informants here tell me that a ban at this point has proved to be surprisingly effective but in large part because it is simply a go, no-go, call that customs inspectors make readily and on the spot. How customs inspectors at the very many different points of access into the U.S., for example, just to take this country alone, could possibly avail themselves of and interpret the laboratory analysis that you propose with its relatively high level of sophistication is not yet clear to me.

I suspect that the Federal agencies will be reluctant to provide financial support for the database project you suggest until they can be convinced that it will be an essential component of a practicable and feasible actual application on the front line of customs officials activities. I would suspect that the kind of studies they would want to see would necessarily involve a full-scale review of past and present trafficking issues, possible means of enforcement, and availability in costs testing to the respective countries.

I am intrigued and delighted by the science but, I suspect that you have a substantial way to go before you will be able to convince the appropriate agencies here in Washington to provide the kind of support that will be require for the project that you have mind.

It was good to hear from you and in the meantime warmest best wishes to you, to Kerstin, to her daughter, and, of course, to Julia.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. Allan Bromley', with a stylized, flowing script.

D. Allan Bromley
The Assistant to the President
for
Science and Technology

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