



the Jane Goodall Institute

OFFICE OF THE FOUNDER

Statement From:

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Founder of the Jane Goodall Institute &
UN Messenger of Peace

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RE: Tactics used in garnering attention for animal welfare issues.

For many years I have worked to promote the humane treatment of chimpanzees and other animal species used in research, entertainment and the food industry. I have always found that the best way to influence people is through discussion; by attempting to find a way to reach their hearts rather than by arguing. Assuming that perhaps they have not realized the extent to which an animal can feel depression, pain and terror. But this approach does not always work, and some instances of cruelty cannot be condoned. If initial attempts to bring it to an end fail, it is necessary to be more assertive, confrontational – to start a media campaign to bring the issue before the public and create group disapproval.

One such series of experiments resulted in extreme terror to infant monkeys. Several animal rights groups, including People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA), asked if I would lend my voice to attempts to bring that work to an end. I was happy to provide a statement.

But the recent campaign against the researcher, Professor Suomi, which included writing letters to those living within a certain radius of his home, providing his home address and phone number, and urging them to visit him, is simply not acceptable. Alka Chandna, the author of the letter and PETA staff member, states that if she had a neighbor who was conducting such monkey experiments she would feel it was “similar to having a sexual predator in your neighborhood.”

My own name was used in PETA’s letter. This kind of vicious attack is unproductive and violates the ethical principles which we should all be working to promote. It is nothing but a form of the terrorism which is currently sweeping across the world. The fact that this vindictive campaign was also leveled at the Director of the National Institutes of Health, providing his home address and phone to number in letters sent to those living near him, makes it even more unethical considering that, under Francis Collins' leadership, all federally owned chimpanzees have recently and finally been retired from medical research so they can live out their lives in sanctuaries.

I call on PETA to renounce such tactics and I ask all of us who are interested in protecting animals to act in accordance with the values we seek to promote.

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