

Office of the White House Press Secretary  
(Key Biscayne, Florida)

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THE WHITE HOUSE

On November 25, 1969, the President renounced all offensive preparations for and any use by the United States of biological or bacteriological agents and weapons in war. Since that decision, at the direction of the President, a comprehensive review of United States policy and military programs concerning toxins has been in progress.

Toxins are chemical substances, not living organisms, and are so regarded by the U.N. Secretary General and the World Health Organization. Although the effects of some toxins are commonly described as disease, they are not capable of reproducing themselves and are not transmissible from one person to another.

However, the production of toxins in any significant quantity would require facilities similar to those needed for the production of biological agents. If the United States continued to operate such facilities, it would be difficult for others to know whether they were being used to produce only toxins but not biological agents. Moreover, though toxins of the type useful for military purposes could conceivably be produced by chemical synthesis in the future, the end products would be the same and their effects would be indistinguishable from toxins produced by bacteriological or other biological processes. Accordingly, the President has decided that:

- The United States renounces offensive preparations for and the use of toxins as a method of warfare;
- The United States will confine its military programs for toxins, whether produced by bacteriological or any other biological method or by chemical synthesis, to research for defensive purposes only, such as to improve techniques of immunization and medical therapy.

The President has further directed the destruction of all existing toxin weapons and of all existing stocks of toxins which are not required for a research program for defensive purposes only.

The United States will have no need to operate any facilities capable of producing toxins either bacteriologically or biologically in large quantities and therefore also capable of producing biological agents.

These decisions have been taken with full confidence that they are in accord with the overall security requirements of the United States. These decisions also underline the United States support for the principles and objectives of the United Kingdom Draft Convention for the Prohibition of Biological Methods of Warfare.

The United States hopes that other nations will follow our example with respect to both biological and toxin weapons.

The renunciation of toxin weapons is another significant step, which we are willing to take unilaterally, to bring about arms control and to increase the prospects of peace.

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