

NIXON RENOUNCES GERM WEAPONS, ORDERS DESTRUCTION OF STOCKS; RESTRICTS USE OF CHEMICAL ARMS



SPEAKS ON GERM WARFARE POLICY: President Nixon addressing newsmen yesterday at the White House. Henry A. Kissinger, adviser on national security affairs, is at right.

A UNILATERAL ACT

Use of Defoliants in Vietnam War Will Be Continued

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British draft, Page 16.*

By JAMES M. NAUGHTON
Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Nov. 25 — President Nixon pledged today that the United States would never engage in germ warfare and renounced all but defensive uses of chemical warfare weapons.

However, the White House made it clear that Mr. Nixon would exempt the use of tear gas and chemical defoliants, which the United States has been using in Vietnam.

The President pledged unilaterally not to make any use of bacteriological weapons, even to retaliate against an enemy attack. He ordered existing American germ warfare weapons destroyed and asked the Defense Department for recommendations on the disposal of the stocks.

'Initiative Toward Peace'

Mr. Nixon reaffirmed United States policy against the first use of lethal chemical weapons and extended the policy to include first use of "incapacitating weapons." White House sources later said that phrase did not include tear gas, which the Administration classes as a "riot control" weapon.

Reliable sources reported, however, that the President intended to impose closer control on the use of tear gas in Vietnam. It was suggested that, by guidelines or in some other fashion, he would tighten the restriction on the use of the gas, to limit both the instances and the purposes for which it is used by American forces.

In his statement, the President described his decisions as "an initiative toward peace."

He said, "Mankind already carries in its own hands too many of the seeds of its own destruction. By the examples we set today, we hope to contribute to an atmosphere of peace and understanding between nations and among men."

Two Compacts Cited

In an apparently unrelated action at the United Nations, the Soviet Union called today for a new international pact barring production of chemical and bacteriological weapons.

The coincidental emphasis by both the United States and Soviet Union on the need to halt the proliferation of chemical and biological weapons served to underscore the apparent desire of the world powers to think more seriously about disarmament.

The declarations today came barely a day after the United States and Soviet Union com-

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pleted ratification of the nuclear nonproliferation treaty. And they occurred as negotiations for a limitation on strategic arms were going on at Helsinki, Finland.

Senator Clifford P. Case, Republican of New Jersey, said he saw in the related developments "an initiative which could bring the world closer to the real security of general arms control."

Mr. Nixon's policy statement focused on two international compacts—the 1925 Geneva Protocol prohibiting the first use of "asphyxiating, poisonous or other gases and of bacteriological methods of warfare" and a new British proposal for a halt in production and stockpiling of germ warfare weapons.

The President discussed his statement with bipartisan Congressional leaders at the White House before making it public.

He said he would resubmit to the Senate the Geneva protocol, which has been signed by 62 nations but was never adopted by the United States. The Senate Democratic leader, Mike Mansfield of Montana, said it should receive swift approval this year.

"I see no reason why there should be any controversy," Mr. Mansfield told reporters. "It's 44 years overdue."

Mr. Nixon also said the United States would "associate itself" with the British proposal at the Geneva disarmament talks. Only Canada has previously indicated support of the United Kingdom draft proposal. Mr. Nixon cautioned, however, that the United States would "seek to clarify" provisions of the draft "to assure that necessary safeguards are included."

The British draft proposes to "reinforce" the Geneva Proto-

col by describing more specifically a total ban on the use of germ warfare and destruction of existing bacteriological weapons.

The decision to retain a retaliatory arsenal of chemical weapons, but not of germ weapons, was apparently a result of Mr. Nixon's belief that "biological weapons have massive, unpredictable and potentially uncontrollable consequences." They could produce global epidemics and "impair the health of future generations," he said.

The President said neither the decision to support the British proposal nor his decision to limit American bacteriological efforts to research would "leave us vulnerable to surprise by an enemy who does not observe these rational restraints."

"Our intelligence community will continue to watch carefully the nature and extent of the biological programs of others," he said.

Early reaction from key members of Congress was generally favorable. Senator J. W. Fulbright, Democrat of Arkansas and chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, who had urged the President to resubmit the Geneva Protocol, said he was pleased. He also predicted swift approval.

Senator Charles E. Goodell, Republican of New York, called Mr. Nixon's action "a great decision for the future of mankind."

The House Republican leader, Gerald R. Ford, of Michigan, saw in the announcement a "highly salutary impact" on the strategic arms talks in Helsinki.

"In taking the United States out of the field of germ warfare," Mr. Ford said, "the President has made it abundantly clear to the American

people and to peoples throughout the world the great devotion that this nation has to the objective of universal peace."

Representative Richard D. McCarthy, upstate New York Democrat who has led a year-long campaign against United States research and production of chemical and biological weaponry, said in a news conference that Mr. Nixon's decision should be "hailed as a very significant thing."

But Mr. McCarthy said that tear gas used in conjunction with weapons that kill should also be banned. He referred to the technique in Vietnam of flushing enemy troops out of bunkers with tear gas and then firing at them.

Mr. McCarthy also said he believed defoliants should not be used "in Vietnam or elsewhere" until it was determined they have no adverse effect on human life and said that at some future point he would like to see a treaty outlawing the use of napalm and phosphorous bombs.

The White House sources contended that, "technically, tear gas is not considered an 'incapacitating agent' — the term used by the Geneva Protocol—because "its effects are very much limited in time and it dissipates immediately."

According to the source, at least one of some 80 nations that have ratified the 1925 protocol, Australia, takes the same position, that tear gas is a riot control agent, not a weapon of chemical warfare.

It was unclear precisely what effect the President's announcement would have on the Defense Department. Testimony released today by the House Appropriations Committee disclosed that the Army has spent \$203.8-million in chemical and biological weapons research since 1963.

Jerry W. Friedheim, a

partment, said that active materials for bacteriological weapons were generally not storable. He said it was assumed the President's order to destroy such weapons would cover also the means of their production and delivery.

Mr. Friedheim said it was possible that some facilities would be closed.

Ronald L. Ziegler, the White House press secretary, said in response to questions from reporters that the methods of destroying the bacteriological weapons would be determined after the Defense Department had studied the problem.

The White House sources said that all biological programs would be confined to research to find methods of immunizing persons against bacteriological attack. As much as possible, this research will

be shifted from the Defense Department to the Department of Health, Education and Welfare, the sources said.

The President's action today followed six months of study by the Administration of all aspects of chemical and biological warfare. Mr. Nixon said it was the first such comprehensive review in 15 years.

He told reporters he could recall the days, when he sat on the National Security Council as Vice President, when it was considered "taboo" even to discuss chemical and biological warfare.

At interagency staff meetings that began last March, the discussion reportedly was free-wheeling, however. Initially, representatives of the Pentagon and the Joint Chiefs of Staff

spokesman for the Defense Department opposed any reduction in the American biological capability.

But by late summer the outline of Mr. Nixon's policy began to take form. Secretary of Defense Melvin R. Laird recommended a halt in manufacture of biological weapons, and, by the time the National Security Council brought the issue to a decisive point in a meeting last week, only the Joint Chiefs remained opposed.

Mr. Nixon then ordered Henry A. Kissinger, his National Security adviser, to put the decisions into writing.

The White House said there was no special significance in the timing of the President's announcement, although Mr. Nixon "hoped this demonstrates our interest in the control of arms," one source said.