

Pentagon Bares Cost Of Germ War Study

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Because a Congressman's wife was upset after watching a television program, the Army disclosed today that the Pentagon was spending \$350-million annually to develop and produce chemical and biological warfare weapons.

At a private briefing for a group of Senators and Representatives, the Army said that the United States effort in this field was outmatched by that of the Soviet Union. According to Army estimates, the Russians have seven to eight times the capability of the entire non-Communist world for waging chemical and biological war-

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KARROO. Look THAT up
in your Funk & Wagnalls
Standard College Dictionary. (Advt.)

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fare.

The briefing also brought out that the Army was regularly shipping by rail, to and from test centers, 300-gallon canisters, of a nerve gas known as G-B, a few drops of which are sufficient to kill a person.

The private briefing, attended by two dozen Senators and Representatives, was arranged by Representative Richard D. McCarthy, Democrat of Buffalo.

After watching a recent National Broadcasting Company show on chemical and biological warfare, Mr. McCarthy's wife asked him what he knew about the subject. Mr. McCarthy replied, "Nothing," and proceeded to arrange for the briefing by Brig. Gen. James A. Hebbeler, director of chemical-biological-radiological and nuclear operations of the Army.

The briefing, partly confidential, brought out information that the Army has preferred to keep secret about its chemical-biological warfare program, even from members of Congress.

For the last four years, for example, with the cooperation of senior member of the Appropriations and Armed Services committees, the Army has managed to keep secret how much the Pentagon was spending on chemical-biological warfare research and production.

The money was scattered throughout the defense budget in such a manner that it was virtually impossible for the individual member of Congress to determine how much was being spent, and references to the over-all total were customarily censored out of the testimony given the committees.

Pressed for Estimate

Pressed at the briefing for a budget estimate, General Hebbeler said that the military services were spending around \$350-million annually on chemical-biological warfare, but he added the injunction that this information was "confidential" and could not be made public.

After the briefing, Mr. McCarthy managed to get around the injunction by refusing to disclose the general's estimate but quoting approvingly from a recent Library of Congress study concluding that the Pentagon was spending between \$300-million and \$350-million annually on chemical-biological warfare.

About half this amount is believed to be for research and development, the rest for production of chemical and biological warfare agents.

In secret terms, the general also discussed the size and nature of the Soviet chemical-biological warfare program. A senior member of the House Appropriations Committee, Representative Robert L. F. Sikes, Democrat of Florida, proceeded to discuss the Soviet program with reporters as he left the briefing.

Capability Assessed

Declaring that the United States was spending a "comparatively small amount" on research Mr. Sikes said the Soviet Union had "seven to eight times the capability of the free world" to wage chemical-biological warfare and had enough chemical or biological agents "to kill most of the people of the free world."

Mr. Sikes, a member of the Military Appropriations subcommittee attended the briefing at the suggestion of General Hebbeler. The purport of Mr. Sikes's comments to reporters was that the United States capability "should be expanded."

Representative John Brademas, Democrat of Indiana, interpreted the Army presentation as "a not very thinly disguised argument for more support" of chemical-biological warfare. Interpolated throughout the general's presentation were remarks interpreted by some members of Congress as suggesting that the United States should modify its reservations about using chemical or biological agents in warfare.

McCarthy Concerned

The general for example was reported to have observed that the United Arab Republic had used mustard gas against Yemeni royalist forces in the Yemen civil war. After the hearing Mr. McCarthy expressed concern that the "bars are gradually being lowered." against the use of chemical-biological warfare.

The reaction of some members, such as Mr. McCarthy and Mr. Brademas, to the briefing was that the United States was spending too much on chemical-biological warfare and should seek some arms control agreement with the Soviet Union to stop the production of chemical or biological agents.

Mr. McCarthy also expressed concern about the "safety precautions" being taken by the Army in shipping the G-B gas. He said that there had been an "alarming increase" recently in rail accidents and that such rail shipments "pose a most serious problem."

The nature of the rail shipments was classified as secret by the Army, but presumably the shipments are between the Army's various arsenals and testing sites. In recent months, there has been an increase in the rail shipments as the Army began shipping canisters of the G-B gas from its Rocky Mountain Arsenal, 10 miles northeast of Denver, because of local protests against storing such lethal gas near populated areas.