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Germ War Center Will Be Converted Into a Cancer Lab

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WASHINGTON, Oct. 14—President Nixon, who has made the fight against cancer a major point in his domestic program, will go to Fort Detrick, Md., Monday to announce the conversion of the Army biological warfare research center there to a cancer research center.

A White House spokesman confirmed Thursday the President's plans to go to Fort Detrick but refused to disclose the purpose of the visit. Other Administration officials, however, acknowledged that the center, considered one of the nation's facilities for virus studies, was to be converted to cancer research.

Research to link viruses to human cancer is regarded by the scientific community as

among the most significant in recent years in the fight against disease.

The Nixon Administration announced in 1969 that it was ending research and development of weapons for bacteriological warfare. The work of the Fort Detrick center thereafter was described as "defensive," but the White House said today that even that description was "obsolete."

Maryland's Senators, Charles McC. Mathias Jr. and J. Glenn Beall Jr., both Republicans, have been urging the Administration to assign a peacetime use to the center rather than abandon it.

The Administration's special announcement Monday would represent a rare victory for Senator Mathias, whose relationships with the White House have often been troubled and who has voted against the Administration on some key issues.

Scientists concerned with cancer research said tonight that the conversion of the Fort Detrick facility was "most logical".