

U.S. Slow to Dismantle Germ-War Arsenal Despite

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WASHINGTON, Nov. 9—Al-
most a year ago, President
Nixon said that the United
States was renouncing germ
warfare.

Today, despite the Presi-
dent's proclamation and the
publicity that accompanied it
the United States has author-
ized as much money for bio-
logical research as was appro-
priated last year.

It has not destroyed the
stocks of biological warfare
agents—including 45,000 poi-
son bullets and darts—stored
at Pine Bluff Arsenal in Ar-
kansas nor has it dismantled
any of the Army's biological
research facilities at Pine Bluff
or at Fort Detrick, Md.

The Government still has not
done away with the anticrop
biological agents, stored at
Pine Bluff and elsewhere, that
produce such diseases as wheat
rust and rice blast.

Additionally, the Geneva
Protocol of 1925, which bans
the first use in war of chemical
and biological agents, has not
yet been approved.

Treaty in Senate

Nine months passed before
the Administration sent the
treaty to the Senate for ratifi-
cation. According to Govern-
ment sources, it took that long
because the White House was
undecided how to tell the Sen-
ate that it did not consider tear
gas and herbicides—which the
United States has used in great
quantities in Vietnam—to be
covered by the treaty.

Last December, the United
Nations General Assembly as-
serted, by a vote of 80 to 3,
that the protocol did ban tear
gas and herbicides.

The White House finally de-
cided to send the treaty to the
Senate Foreign Relations Com-
mittee with no explicit reser-
vations attached. Nevertheless,

when witnesses from the State
Department and the Pentagon
come to the committee to testi-
fy, they may be asked some
difficult questions.

In any case, the committee
doubts that it will manage to
hear all the executive branch's
witnesses this year; it may not
even start the hearings on the
protocol until January.

Advocates of ratification argue
that while germ warfare is a
marginal area in terms of na-
tional policy, the issue provides
an index to the seriousness of
the Administration's intentions.

Last Nov. 25 the President
announced that the United
States would not use any bio-
logical weapons, even to retali-
ate against an enemy attack,
and he ordered existing Amer-
ican germ weapons destroyed.
He also pledged that research
on biological agents would be
only defensive in nature.

While specific information on
biological agents is secret, Gov-
ernment visitors to Pine Bluff
Arsenal report the existence of
a 10-story tower where bio-
logical agents were produced
and 273 mounds, or igloos, visi-
ble from the air where the
germs or toxins—toxins are the
dead but poisonous products of
bacteria—are kept under re-
frigeration.

Four Agents Stockpiled

According to reliable sources,
four types of agents are stock-
piled at Pine Bluff. These agents
produce tularemia, Q fever, an-
thrax and Venezuelan equine
encephalitis.

Some Government officials
attributed the delay in destroy-
ing these stocks to the lethargy
of the bureaucracy; others con-
tend that the White House has
failed to take vigorous action to
make sure its decision is car-
ried out.

In any case, the Army will
probably spend almost the same
amount on germ warfare in this
fiscal year as it spent in the

last. Congress appropriated
\$21.9-million then; it authorized
\$21.1-million for this fiscal year.

What the army has done is
shift almost all the funds it
used to spend to buy germ
agents into "defensive equip-
ment," which a Pentagon
spokesman said included warn-
ing devices, protective equip-
ment and clothing and anti-
dotes.

Figure Is Unchanged

The figure for "biological re-
search"—which used to em-
brace offensive and defensive
research but is now supposed
to be limited to defensive re-
search—has not dropped. It re-
mains at \$7.6-million.

The President's decision gave
the Office of the Surgeon Gen-
eral in the Department of
Health, Education and Welfare
the right to pass on the Army's
plans for destroying the stocks
of germs. While the office has

been at this task for more than
six months, a spokesman for
the department would make no
comment on its progress except
to say that the matter was
being reviewed.

Government discussions of
a method of convincingly de-
stroying the stockpiles of germs
have included the suggestion of
having outside observers as
witnesses.

This is sensitive, however,
since the Army is reportedly
determined to have no outside
witnesses to the destruction of
the poison bullets and darts
because it is apparently unwill-
ing to have anyone know they
existed.

The bullets and darts re-
portedly contain botulinum, a
toxin that produces a swift
and fatal disease of the nervous
system. Knowledgeable sources
indicate that the weapons could
serve only one purpose: assas-

Nixon Stand

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sination. To kill an enemy
leader, it would be necessary
to do no more than nick him.