

## Pentagon Says Germ Disposal May Take as Long as a Year

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WASHINGTON, Nov. 26 — It may take as long as a year to dispose of the nation's existing stockpiles of bacteriological weapons in accordance with President Nixon's pledge yesterday that the United States would never engage in the use of germ warfare.

A Pentagon spokesman said today that this "first estimate" was made after an initial survey revealed that the deadly and contagious nature of the germs would require slow, careful handling during their destruction.

The amount of germ weapons possessed by this country is still shrouded in secrecy, with the Pentagon refusing to use the term "weapons" as the President did. The Pentagon prefers the term "agents."

Defense Department officials have told Congress that the Soviet Union maintains a much larger stockpile of chemical agents than does the United States. The data on Soviet biological capabilities are unclear, according to informed sources.

Representative Richard D.

McCarthy, Democrat of upstate New York, told a Congressional subcommittee last week that there were "no hard data" to indicate that the Russians produced and stockpiled agents in a sizable quantity.

Senator J. W. Fulbright, Democrat of Arkansas, said today "It is hoped that the Soviet Union might join with the United States in a destruction of similar agents in its possession. Mr. Fulbright is the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

American stockpiles of biological agents are said to be small, mainly enough for experimental and tactical use, but of extremely lethal and contagious capabilities.

Most of the bacteria are produced at Pine Bluff, Ark., and stored there in refrigerated structures.

The Defense Department is known to have tested, and in some cases stockpiled, organisms that would cause the plague, anthrax, tularemia, psittacosis, Q-fever, botulism, Rocky Mountain spotted fever, brucellosis, yellow fever and Venezuelan equine encephalitis.

The Pentagon said the Department of Health, Education and Welfare would assist in the correct disposal of the germ agents.

That procedure is not established yet, but one method would involve removing them from refrigeration and exposing them to heat and sunlight under closely supervised conditions.