

A STRONGER PACT SET ON GERM WAR

Approval in Geneva Seen—
U.N. to Get Convention
—~~SEP 29~~ 1971

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GENEVA, Sept. 28—A revised draft convention aimed at outlawing biological warfare was submitted to the Geneva disarmament conference today by the United States and the Soviet Union, with their respective Atlantic and Warsaw Pact allies joining as co-sponsors.

Today's version, which strengthens the language of the United States-Soviet draft put forward on Aug. 5, thus is backed formally by 12 of the 25 members of the conference. It is expected to be formally submitted by the entire conference to the United Nations General Assembly, with a recommendation that it be adopted as a resolution, before the conference ends on Friday.

The general expectation is that the Assembly will give it overwhelming support. The proposal would then go to individual governments.

Because it requires states possessing biological-warfare agents and toxins to destroy

Continued on Page 8, Column 1

8

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Continued From Page 1, Col. 1

them or divert them to peaceful uses, the sponsors said it would be the first actual disarmament measure since the defeat of the Axis powers in World War II. None of the previous disarmament agreements, such as the prohibition of nuclear weapons in space, have involved the destruction of weapons, it was noted.

The 12 nonaligned nations at the conference and Japan declined an invitation to make the co-sponsorship unanimous, although they won many changes in the draft. In general, they insisted on a ban on chemical weapons as well, and they were not satisfied by the numerous drafting changes made by the United States and the Soviet Union aimed at showing that the two countries intended to continue negotiations for such a ban.

Representatives of some non-aligned countries said they felt that the draft convention should have promised that the savings accruing from the prohibition of biological weapons would be turned over to developing countries.

Jorge Casteneda of Mexico complained because the United States and the Soviet Union had not accepted a Mexican proposal for a moratorium on the production of chemical weapons pending agreement on how to check on violations on an absolute prohibition.

Despite their complaints and their refusal to join as co-sponsors, a majority of the non-aligned countries and Japan will, according to reliable sources, go along with the draft introduced today because they are eager to have a convention aimed at prohibiting biological warfare.

Joining as co-sponsors were four United States allies—Britain, Canada, Italy and the Netherlands—and six Soviet allies. These are Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Mongolia, Poland and Rumania.

The draft convention would commit parties to it "never in any circumstances to develop, produce, stockpile or otherwise acquire or retain microbial agents or toxins" or the weapons or means of delivery designed for their use in armed conflict.

Definition Is Strengthened

The definition of toxins was strengthened, on the insistence of nonaligned countries, by the addition of the words "whatever their origin or method of production, of types and in quantities that have no justification for prophylactic, protective or other peaceful purposes."

The draft, however, does not contain a specific ban on the use of biological weapons. This was rejected by the Soviet Union, which considered it unnecessary because the use of these weapons as well as poison and other gases are outlawed in an international pact, known as the Geneva Protocol, concluded in 1925. Some Western delegates speculated that the Russians also wanted to be able to continue to make propaganda over the failure of the United States to ratify the Geneva Protocol.

Ninety countries are parties to this protocol, but 35 of them, including Britain, the Soviet Union and France, restricted their prohibition to "first use." This means that they agreed not to use the weapons first but reserved the right to employ them in reprisal.

James F. Leonard, the American delegate, told newsmen today that he expected Senate ratification of the protocol, which the United States has signed.

Henry C. Hainworth, the British representative, who had campaigned for a specific ban on the use of biological weapons, said the destruction of stockpiles would reduce the danger of the use of such weapons to "negligible proportions."

Speaking on this subject for the United States, which has renounced the use of biological weapons and is now destroying its stockpiles at Pine Bluff, Ark., Mr. Leonard said the conference would be notified when the destruction was completed.

Although Moscow has never disclosed whether it possesses biological weapons, Aleksei A. Roshchin, the Soviet representative, said today that "the Soviet side will be ready to make such notifications on the understanding that other states parties to the convention will do the same."

This was interpreted by some delegates as an indirect admission that Moscow also possesses such weapons. A Soviet spokesman, however, did not make clear whether the notification would merely say that the Soviet Union had no such weapons, or would disclose the destruction of stockpiles.