

U.S. and Soviet Act to Ban Germ War

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GENEVA, Aug. 5 — The United States and the Soviet Union presented today a jointly drafted text of an international convention they said was designed to make impossible "for the sake of all mankind" the waging of war with biological weapons.

This aim was set forth in the preamble of the 14-article draft treaty, which the two big powers presented before the 25-nation Disarmament Conference here.

Both James F. Leonard, the United States delegate, and the Soviet representative, Alekssei A. Roshchin, said they expected that the conference would complete work on the draft in time to have it adopted by the United Nations General Assembly this year.

The proposed treaty would bind nations "not to develop, produce, stockpile or otherwise acquire or retain 'microbial or other biological agents or toxins except for peaceful purposes. The same commitment would apply to all weapons and related equipment designed to make possible the use of biological agents in warfare."

Another article in the convention provides for the destruction, of all the banned biological weapons "as soon as possible" or their conversion to peaceful use. A maximum delay is to be written into the treaty after further study of the time needed to dispose of these weapons without endangering lives or the environment.

Use Denounced by Nixon

The United States has fixed a timetable of 14 months for completion of the destruction it began last month of its arsenal of biological weapons. President Nixon renounced their use in a statement made on Nov. 25, 1969.

Looking pleased with the result of their work, the United States and Soviet negotiators emphasized at separate news conferences what they saw as the exceptional significance of the convention.

Unlike past agreements negotiated at the conference, he said, the projected treaty was a "real" step toward disarmament because it provided for the destruction of existing weapons. Earlier accords banned the spread of weapons from one country to another or

otherwise controlled them without calling for their elimination.

The joint text does not contain a provision specifically banning the use of biological weapons. The Soviet Union 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.

With this argument, the Soviet Union is attempting to uphold the view that the 1925 protocol lays down a universal law binding on all nations whether they have ratified it or not.

The United States has never ratified the Geneva Protocol, although President Nixon now has a request before the Senate that this action be authorized.

Mr. Leonard took great pains today in the conference room to praise what he termed the "constructive and thoughtful approach" the British had taken to the biological arms problem. The compromise draft ban on biological weapons "owes much of its inspiration to an original of the elimination of chemical



PACT ON GERM WARFARE OFFERED: James Leonard, left, U.S. delegate to the Geneva conference on disarmament, and Alekssei A. Roshchin, his Soviet counterpart, after presenting a joint-draft treaty that included provisions for destroying biological weapons.

Associated Press

Both Mr. Leonard and the Soviet delegate stressed that the ban on biological weapons was a step toward the wider goal of the elimination of chemical

weapons as well. An undertaking to "conduct negotiations in good faith" to achieve a ban on these weapons is written into the draft accord presented today.

Mr. Roshchin and Mr. Leonard both stressed today that they

were open to all suggestions for improving their drafts. Attempts to accommodate suggestions are expected to be made in a final revision that the chairmen indicated they would prepare before the conference adjourns.