

Army still planning germ warfare

ELAINE ELINSON
and
MARTIN GELLEN

SAN FRANCISCO (PHS[LNS]) — On July 28, in a simple ceremony, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers broke ground for construction of the Western Institute of Medical Research — a \$27 million military research facility. The entire project, to be completed in five years, will consist of three or four interconnected buildings in San Francisco's Presidio Army base. Floor plans for the project show a striking similarity to the research laboratory at Ft. Detrick, Maryland, center for Army biological weapons research — complete with extensive biological seals, sterilizers, air locks, ultra-violet barriers, and decontamination chambers.

The Army, however, insists that no CBW research will be going on at the Presidio complex. A spokesman for General Taylor, director of the Army Research and Development Command, said that the work "will be primarily in tropical diseases and how these diseases affect the troops in the field, so that very little of the work will be classified."

This all goes along with President Nixon's pious announcement on November 25, 1969, that "The U.S. shall renounce the use of ... all methods of biological warfare and will confine its biological research to defensive measures."

However, the interpretation of the Nixon policy statement seems to be in question. The day following the President's announcement, Colonel Lucine Winegar, Deputy Commanding Officer at Ft. Detrick, stated "... it would be fair to assume that Detrick will continue to produce dangerous organisms that could be used offensively, since any defense against biological weapons involves the production of harmful agents that are potentially available to the enemy."

In addition, last April, the Defense Marketing Survey (DMS), a publication of a private marketing firm considered reliable by insiders in the defense industry, pointed out in a notice to military contractors: "Despite public announcements to the contrary, the military agencies are not discontinuing chemical and biological warfare research. Work in these areas is continuing at funding levels equal to or exceeding those prior to the 'public relations' announcements of cessation of these efforts. CBW research is merely being conducted in a different environment, and wherever possible with less public attention."

DMS reports that upcoming contracts will include the manufacture of nerve gasses, incapacitating agents, riot control gasses, harassing agents, defoliants, herbicides, and biological agents, including anthrax, plague, Rocky Mountain spotted fever, and tularemia.

Military activity seems to confirm the DMS report. The Army has announced the "deactivation" of huge stockpiles of biological weapons at the Pine Bluff Arsenal in Arkansas, but in fact, the large part of the destruction is of obsolete nerve gasses. The Arsenal will continue to study "toxic effects" of chemicals, including components for the M36E2 Cluster, an incendiary antipersonnel weapon.

One physicist who worked for two years at the Edgewood Arsenal, a major CBW base and testing center near Baltimore, and is presently investigating the dimensions of military CBW research, has said that the U.S. military is currently developing "ethnic weaponry," a newer and more selective type of CB warfare.

"Ethnic weapons are chemical and biological agents which can selectively attack different races of people. These weapons, which are based on well-known medical facts about enzymatic variations among peoples of different races, can do everything from immobilize to destroy a group of people selected by its racial characteristics."

"... it is common knowledge that extensive open research has been done on such diseases as sickle-cell anemia, which infects only members of the Negroid race."

As Swedish scientist Carl Larsen put it in the November, 1970 *Military Review*, "These forthcoming chemical agents with selective man-stopping power will put into the hands of an assailant a weapon with which he cannot be attacked ..."

Many groups in San Francisco, especially from the Asian community, have come together in a coalition to express their concern and outrage that the Institute at the Presidio may be one of these ethnic weapons laboratories.

At the Presidio, Captain Pat McGuire, Public Information officer, would only state that, "Here, scientists will be investigating exotic diseases from out-of-the-way places all over the world, wherever American troops might be stationed."