



Associated Press

TO TRANSFORM WARFARE CENTER: President Nixon addressing scientists, servicemen and others yesterday at Fort Detrick, Md. He said seven buildings, formerly devoted to germ warfare, would be used for cancer study.

Nixon Counting on Conversion of Military Facilities

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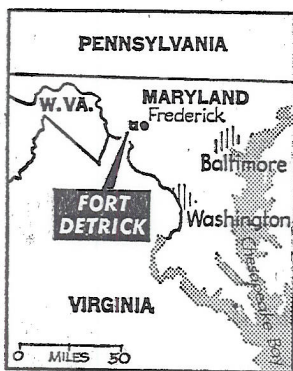
FORT DETRICK, Md., Oct. 18—President Nixon expressed the hope today that as the nation moved from a wartime to a peacetime era it could convert many of its military facilities “to meet pressing domestic challenges.”

The President said that “cut-backs in certain defense needs have provided a considerable supply of expertise and equipment which can now be used for nondefense purposes.”

He did not specify how defense-related facilities could easily be converted to civilian projects, but he expressed the hope that “we can help advance important public goals even as we alleviate the economic burdens which threaten idled workers and their families.”

Mr. Nixon’s comments came during ceremonies here at which he formally announced that the germ warfare center at Fort Detrick, one of the nation’s largest research and development facilities for biological weapons, would be converted into a major center for cancer research.

In informal remarks to a crowd of servicemen, their wives and scientists and Government officials gathered at this western Maryland Army base, Mr. Nixon said that scientists who worked at Fort Detrick could henceforth devote themselves “toward saving life, rather than destroying life.”



The conversion of the base to peacetime medical research had been urged on the President by Senator Charles McC Mathias Jr., Maryland Republican beginning in late 1969. That was when Mr. Nixon announced that offensive chemical and biological warfare research would be ended by the United States and its stockpiles of germ weaponry destroyed.

Mr. Mathias, joined by Maryland’s other Republican Senator, J. Glenn Beall, intensified his efforts in January when the President announced a concerted effort to find a cure for cancer and asked Congress for an additional \$100-million to finance the search.

In Seven Buildings

Under the transfer, seven buildings on the 1,230-acre base, filled with millions of dollars’ worth of sophisticated equipment for biological research, will be converted to

anticancer research. The White House estimated today that the facilities would employ more than 600 persons when the program is operating at full capacity, and would cost \$15-million, to \$20-million annually to operate.

The management of the actual research will be subcontracted to a private concern, but officials made it clear that the facilities would be designed to serve as a focal point for cancer research now being conducted across the country by private scientists, Government personnel and university researchers.

Mr. Nixon also took occasion to lobby for legislation designed to establish a cancer-cure program reporting directly to the President himself.

Approved by Senate

The legislation was sent to Congress in May, shortly after Congress approved Mr. Nixon’s request for an extra \$100-million for cancer research, and received Senate approval on July 7.

However, a House subcommittee approved a bill last Thursday that would preserve the existing National Cancer Institute within the National Institutes of Health, rather than creating a new agency as requested by the President.

“The action of the Congress in approving my \$100-million request for the cancer-cure program was an important step in the campaign against cancer,” Mr. Nixon said.

“So was the vote of the Senate approving the conquest of cancer act—which provides for an independently budgeted program with the director, who is responsible directly to the President. I again urge the House of Representatives to act promptly on this matter so that we can get on with this important work.”