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## EIR Charges Upheld

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# Massive Soviet biological warfare buildup exposed by the Pentagon

by Warren J. Hamerman

*The author is the director of the Biological Holocaust Task Force.*

On Aug. 8, Douglas J. Feith, the deputy assistant secretary of defense for negotiations policy, delivered dramatic testimony before Congress presenting a detailed exposure of massive Soviet research into, and production of, *offensive* biological warfare (BW) and bacteriological weapons.

Six months earlier, the 1972 Kissinger treaty, negotiated as part of his sell-out package that included the ABM and SALT treaties, had been targeted in the same way by *EIR* in a 150-page special report titled "An Emergency War Plan to Fight AIDS and Other Pandemics." In fact, the widely circulated *EIR Special Report*, which was released on Feb. 15, 1986, printed the entire text of the 1972 "Kissinger Protocols," and called for the U.S. to publicly expose the massive Soviet violations of the treaty and not renew the Kissinger agreements. At the time, *EIR* also launched an international campaign for the U.S. to commence a crash Biological Strategic Defense Initiative (BSDI), utilizing the most modern laser and other optical biophysics technologies to restore America's basic biodefense system.

Feith's report six months later came only weeks before the scheduled September review in Geneva, Switzerland of the 1972 U.S.-Soviet Biological Warfare Protocols which had been negotiated by Henry A. Kissinger.

In Feith's testimony, the Pentagon asserted that the 1972 Kissinger Biological and Toxins Weapons Convention (BWC) was "critically deficient and unfixable."

The Aug. 18 issues of the papers *Le Figaro* in France and *Süddeutsche Zeitung* in West Germany, reported on the release of Feith's report, which documents how massively the Soviets have violated the conventions forbidding the development of BW weapons, which were signed by 100 nations in 1972. According to the Feith report, "The configuration of biological and chemical weapons has been radically changed by recent scientific progress. . . . It is from here on possible to synthesize bacteriological products for military uses."

Douglas Feith's closing remarks on the need to build a "defense" against the Soviet biological "offense" are most to the point.

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## Documentation

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*Excerpts from the Testimony on Biological and Toxin Weapons Before the Subcommittee on Oversight and Evaluation of the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence by Douglas J. Feith, deputy assistant secretary of defense for negotiations policy, Aug. 8:*

I appreciate the opportunity to address this Subcommittee on the military problem of biological and toxin weapons. Biological agents (i.e., live organisms) and toxins (i.e., toxic chemicals produced by live organisms) are similar in essential respects and I shall refer to them collectively as "BW."

The stunning advances over the last five to ten years in the field of biotechnology—the advances that have brought into common parlance such terms as genetic engineering, recombinant DNA techniques, monoclonal antibodies, and Nutrasweet—mean more than new foods, pharmaceuticals, and fertilizers. They mean new and better biological weapons for any country willing to violate what the U.S. Government still insists is an international norm against the possession of such weapons. New technology has exploded the standard idea about BW that prevailed ten or more years ago.

Those old ideas can easily be summarized: BW was thought to be a small problem solved. It was thought small because BW was judged militarily insignificant or, at most, of highly restricted utility. Agents best suited for military use—those, for example, like snail or shellfish toxins, which disseminate well in effective concentrations and work quickly and somewhat controllably—could not be produced affordably in large quantities. Those that could efficiently be produced worked in general less quickly and spread infectious disease, with large attending risk to the attacker as well as the target. BW was deemed a strategic weapon and, from a military point of view, far inferior to other—that is, nuclear—strategic weapons. . . .

The BW picture has been radically altered by recent scientific developments. It is now possible to synthesize BW agents tailored to military specifications. The technology that makes possible so-called "designer drugs" also makes pos-

sible designer BW. States unconstrained by their treaty obligations can now produce BW agents of varying effects—different types of fast-acting incapacitants as well as lethal substances. Agents can be developed for various climatic conditions. They can be mixed to complicate identification and their chemical structure can easily be altered to circumvent immunogens or antigens that the other side is suspected to possess.

The BW field favors offense over defense. It is a technologically simple matter to produce new agents but a problem to develop antidotes. New agents can be produced in hours; antidotes may take years. To gauge the magnitude of the antidote problem, consider the many years and millions of dollars that have thus far been invested, as yet without success, in developing a means of countering a single biological agent outside the BW field—the AIDS virus. Such an investment far surpasses the resources available for BW defense work. . . .

The Soviet Union evidently appreciates the military opportunities created by the biotechnological revolution of recent years. Though U.S. policy remains what it was in 1969 after President Nixon's unilateral renunciation of BW (and there is no thought within the administration to change the policy), the Soviet Union has built a large organization devoted to the development and production of offensive BW. At the very time when Soviet officials were negotiating and signing the BWC [Biological Weapons Convention], a high-ranking Soviet defector has reported, the Politburo decided to intensify the Soviet BW program.

The Soviets retain stockpiles of BW agents produced in pre-recombinant-DNA days. At known biological warfare facilities in the Soviet Union, they maintain highly secret weapons storage facilities under military control. They have, as alluded to above, transferred BW to their clients in Southeast Asia. They have themselves used toxins against their enemies in the Afghanistan war. And they are developing new means of biological warfare based on current bio-engineering technologies. In other words, the Soviet Union has not only violated the BWC, but every major prohibition in it.

The scale and seriousness of the Soviet BW program are formidable. There are at least seven biological warfare centers in the U.S.S.R. under military control, all with unusually rigorous security. One such facility constitutes a veritable city with a large number of residents who work and live there full time, isolated from the rest of society. These residents must possess extraordinary security clearances, a requirement that excludes individuals or ethnic groups considered disloyal. The level of effort committed to research on various natural poisons—such as snake venoms—is far in excess of what could be justified to deal with such substances for purely medical or public health purposes.

All of this, of course, has implications for both the military and the arms control aspects of the BW problem. The prevailing judgment of years ago, that BW is not a militarily significant weapon, is now quite unsustainable. BW can be

designed to be effective across the spectrum of combat, including special operations and engagements at the tactical level. No field equipment has yet been developed that can detect BW agents, let alone identify them. There are no antidotes now available against many possible agents. And it is not certain that our troops' protective gear would be effective against all such agents.

### **The limits of arms control**

As for the arms control implications, these divide into two categories. The first can be labeled "crime and non-punishment," and the second "technology overtakes the treaty." The systematic violations of the BWC by the Soviet Union and its clients undermine the treaty and the anti-BW norm it symbolizes. At least equally grave, however, is the international community's unwillingness to take a collective interest in the evidence of those violations. A treaty may survive breaches by some parties. But can it long survive general indifference as to whether it is violated?

What is unwholesome, I wish to emphasize, is not the failure of many BWC parties to endorse the U.S. government's conclusions about Soviet violations, but their refusal even to inquire into them or urge formal investigation. Some states explain their inaction by asserting that the U.S. government's case is not conclusive. Reasoning like Lewis Carroll's Queen of Hearts, they contend in effect that treaty parties have no responsibility to investigate charges of violations until the allegations are proved.

Many states, after dismissing violation controversies as mere politics between the "superpowers," feel justified in exhorting the U.S. government to conclude new arms control agreements with the Soviet Union. They claim standing on the grounds that they, as members of the international community, are affected by the quality of relations between the powers. They do not in general take this stand cynically, wryly acknowledging its irony. On the contrary, they earnestly assert their responsibility for promoting new arms control treaties and equally earnestly assert, once a treaty has been signed, the propriety of their not heeding Soviet violations. Their earnestness notwithstanding, however, they have dimmed severely the prospects for arms control agreements ever contributing to international security.

The major arms control implication of the new biotechnology is that the BWC must be recognized as critically deficient and unfixable. A state contemptuous of international law and unconstrained by anti-BW public or parliamentary opinion could now maintain an offensive BW capability without violating any of the specific prohibitions of the BWC. (Maintaining such a capability would necessarily violate the BWC's general prohibition; the treaty's purpose, after all, is to ban BW. But if a state refrains from stockpiling large quantities of agent, it would as a practical matter be impossible to prove any such violation.)

Given the ability to produce militarily significant quantities of BW from seed stock within a month or so, it is not

necessary to stockpile agent. Such a state need only maintain in a freezer a few hundred test tubes full of seed stock and a production facility which in the normal course of things makes agricultural or medical products. In the unlikely event the freezer were discovered, a closed society would have little difficulty characterizing it as part of a research effort for BW defense. In fact, because seed stock can be synthesized in a matter of days, one could get by even without the freezer.

As for the rest of the infrastructure required for a BW capability—such as munitions-filling equipment, aerosolization and dissemination testing, and training—it could be maintained openly. It is essentially identical to the infrastructure entailed in a chemical weapons capability.

While it in no way excuses or belittles the importance of the Soviet Union's BWC violations, the fact is that their compliance with the treaty's specific prohibitions would not obviate concern about their BW capabilities. Because new technology makes possible a massive and rapid break-out, the treaty constitutes an insignificant impediment at best. Its principal failing, therefore, is no longer the absence of verification provisions or lack of effective complaint mechanisms, the commonly acknowledged shortcomings, but its inability to accomplish its purpose—to ensure that even states respecting its specific terms pose no BW threat.

### **A problem with no apparent solution**

What therefore is to be done and not done? First of all, the administration is not interested in altering the longstanding U.S. policy against possession or development of an offensive BW capability.

Secondly, the United States will remain a party to the BWC and will remain in full compliance with it. Though the treaty has been overtaken by technology as well as systematically violated, the administration continues to support the idea behind it—prohibiting BW.

Third, aware that the BWC serves as a false advertisement to the world that the BW problem has been solved, the administration will make an effort—especially at the second BWC Review Conference, which will convene in Geneva in September 1986—to highlight the nature of the problem and the critical defects of the BWC. The danger of not publicizing these matters is that friends and allies will continue to neglect BW defense work aimed at developing detection and medical capabilities and protective gear.

It is not a pleasant task to deliver so dismal a report to the Congress. The material's distressing nature probably accounts in large part for why it is so little treated in the public debate on national security issues. It is axiomatic that the only successful politics in a democracy is the politics of hope. But can one responsibly inflate hope for an escape from the military problems posed by the Soviet BW program? There can be no *Deus ex Arms Control* in this arena. In answer to those who crave a constructive suggestion under even the least promising circumstances, one can only recommend: Defense.

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