

Germ Warfare Rated Top Secret But Korean Episode Is Silly

WASHINGTON, March 23 (UP)—American military strategists apparently rate germ warfare second only to the atomic bomb as a potential killer, and some seem none too sure it belongs behind the A-bomb.

No one in a position to know will say how far along the United States is in its quest for a weapon which might wipe out populations of entire cities without levelling a single building. There has been a strict information blackout on germ warfare since 1947.

AWESOME IDEA

Some dribbles of information have been made public. They add up to the awesome possibility that military researchers have within reach relatively simple and inexpensive weapons capable of mass destruction of human life, crops and livestock.

The entire issue of germ warfare has been revived by Russian charges — stoutly denied by the United States—that United Nations forces are guilty of widespread use of germ warfare against the Chinese Communists and North Koreans.

SHEER PROPAGANDA

American diplomats regard the Soviet charges as sheer propaganda, they contend this is reflected

in Russia's insistence on pressing the issue before the U.N. instead of permitting an impartial Red Cross team to investigate epidemic conditions in China and North Korea.

While military officials are maintaining a studied silence on the Red charges, one non-military expert said it almost would be a waste of time and effort to use germ warfare in China or Korea.

ALREADY DISEASED

"Both nations already are saturated with disease and sickness," he said. "Using germ warfare would be like carrying coals to Newcastle."

Military officials won't say they know about Russia's progress in germ warfare. But the Soviets unquestionably have been pressing research along these lines with the help of German scientists who were active in the field in World War II. Many of them wound up in Red hands.

If germ warfare ever should come, it might be aimed against the civilian population, livestock or against the nation's food crops.

Some experts believe that latter possibility would be even more costly than direct attacks on civilians because it also would strike indirectly at fighting men in the field by depriving them of supplies.

Info blackout on germ warfare since 1947



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