

ARTICLE APPEARED  
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21 February 1984**JACK ANDERSON****Soviets Plotting  
Biotech War,  
President Told**

The National Security Council has delivered a report to President Reagan warning of a frightening new development in biological warfare. The secret alert is based on CIA assessments that the Soviets have developed gene-splicing techniques as ominous as the atom-splitting discoveries that led to the nuclear bomb.

The startling evidence is contained in CIA reports, classified "Secret," which declare flatly that the Soviets could use their new biotechnology to incapacitate or destroy entire populations in a future conflict.

In stark language, the documents warn that the United States is dangerously far behind in developing biotech weapons. One CIA report estimates that the Soviets will be able to deploy these horror weapons in three to five years. Other scientists contend that biotech warfare is more than a decade away.

Of course, the production of harmful biological agents for use against people, animals or crops is strictly prohibited under the 1972 Biological Weapons Convention, which the Soviets signed. But this

has not deterred the Soviets from rushing ahead with biotech research. Declares a secret CIA report: "The evidence points strongly to illegal production or storage of biological agents and weapons."

The technical name for this research is "recombinant DNA technology." It is also referred to as "gene-splicing," "genetic engineering," "biotechnology" and "synthetic biology." It has to do with DNA, or deoxyribonucleic acid, which is the basic genetic ingredient.

The Soviets have developed a process for removing segments of DNA from the cell of one species and attaching them to that of another, thereby creating a new organism.

The military application is awesome. CIA sources told my associate Dale Van Atta that the Soviets will be able to reproduce mysterious human substances and produce super-viruses more deadly than any known to man today.

For example, the Soviets could reproduce such human substances as growth hormones, which have never been duplicated. One U.S. expert thinks the Soviets may be able to reproduce brain chemicals, which send command signals to various parts of the body. The fear is that the Soviets will be able to produce them in quantity and load them into spray weapons. This bio-gas would disorient and destroy the human brain.

Even more disturbing, the Soviets could use biotechnology to combine the most infectious, most virulent and most indestructible characteristics of disease-causing organisms to form super-viruses.

If it seems hard to believe that the Soviets would experiment with such civilization-destroying technology, consider this grim excerpt from a secret CIA report:

"Since World War II, sporadic reports and allegations have been received concerning Soviet involvement in offensive biological weapons development. Sources of the allegations have ranged from low-level defectors to high-level Soviet academicians. High-level political and military leaders have also alluded to possession of biological weapons."

The document describes other developments, which have been "closely observed by the intelligence community." For example, the Soviets have "acquired significant technology and equipment, built large-scale biological fermentation facilities and made progress in other areas considered useful should Moscow decide to pursue production of biological weapons."

At Sverdlovsk, the Soviets operate a biological warfare institute where an accident, involving a lethal strain of anthrax, reportedly caused hundreds of deaths in April, 1979.