

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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OFFICE OF THE WHITE HOUSE PRESS SECRETARY

THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT
UPON SIGNING THE
INSTRUMENTS OF RATIFICATION
OF THE GENEVA PROTOCOL OF 1925
AND THE BIOLOGICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION

THE EAST ROOM

12:39 P.M. EST

Members of the Congress, Mr. Secretary, distinguished guests:

This is a very auspicious occasion. I am signing today the Instruments of Ratification of two important treaties that limit arms and contribute to lessening the horror of war.

The first, the Geneva Protocol, prohibits the use in war of lethal and incapacitating chemical and bacteriological weapons. Its ratification completes the process, I should say, which began nearly 50 years ago in 1925, when the United States proposed and signed the protocol.

The United States, I am glad to say, has always observed the principles and objectives of the protocol. The ratification today marks our formal commitment

Although it is our position that the protocol does not cover riot control agents and chemical herbicides, I have decided that the United States shall renounce their use in war as a matter of national policy, except in a certain, very, very limited number of defense situations where lives can be saved.

This policy is detailed in the Executive Order that is being issued today.

The second treaty that I am signing is the Biological Weapons Convention, which prohibits the development, production and stockpiling of bacteriological weapons.

It is the first international agreement since World War II to provide for the actual elimination of an entire class of weapons; namely, biological agents and toxicants.

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As evidence of our deep commitment to the objectives of the Biological Weapons Convention, we have already destroyed our entire stockpile of biological toxicant agents and weapons. Our biological warfare facilities have been converted to peaceful uses.

The final act in the process of ratifying this convention requires the deposit of the Instrument of Ratification in Washington, London and Moscow, which will be done when the United Kingdom and the USSR complete their respective ratification procedures.

Finally, I believe that these acts of ratification demonstrate the desire of our Nation to create and to contribute to a more peaceful world, and I pledge to you that I will continue in the search for new measures to promote that cause.

I congratulate the Members of the Senate, the Members of the House and the American people for backing and supporting action of this kind. So, I will sign both.

END (AT 12:46 P.M. EST)