

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 18, 1965

Office of the White House Press Secretary

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THE WHITE HOUSE

President Johnson announced today that he has instructed the U.S. Delegation at the World Health Assembly, now in progress in Geneva, to pledge American support for an international program to eradicate smallpox completely from the earth within the next decade.

Although smallpox has been eliminated in the United States and other technologically advanced countries, it is still prevalent in Asia, Africa and parts of Latin America, killing one out of every four victims.

The President pointed out that "as long as smallpox exists anywhere in the world, no country is safe from it. This dread disease spreads so rapidly, that even a single case creates the threat of epidemic. It is clear that every nation of the world, whether or not it has experienced smallpox in recent years, has a major stake in a world-wide eradication program."

The President's call for a world-wide war on smallpox was the second he has made recently on world health matters in connection with the U. S. observance of International Cooperation Year. The first announcement on April 21 urged the establishment of an International Adverse Drug Reaction Center.

At the present rate of inoculation against smallpox, the eradication of this disease is not in sight.

Yet experience has shown that with concerted international effort smallpox could be effectively wiped from the face of the earth. A highly efficient vaccine is available, and the recent development of jet injection equipment makes it possible to vaccinate entire communities with relative ease.

The technical problems of a world-wide vaccination campaign against smallpox are minimal. The administrative problems -- including the assurance of an ample supply of vaccine, the personnel to administer the injections, and the coordinating mechanism -- can be solved through international cooperation.

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The President's announcement today followed a report by the Director-General of the World Health Organization to the World Health Assembly. The report stressed that the eradication of smallpox, though hampered since 1958 by insufficient resources, is an attainable goal by 1974 -- if greater resources are made available for an intensified attack upon it. This is the goal which the U. S. Delegation to the World Health Assembly has been instructed to support.

In making today's announcement the President stated:

"On June 10 last year I said that we now have the knowledge to reduce the toll from many diseases and to avert millions of separate tragedies of needless death and suffering. I noted that the United Nations had designated 1965 International Cooperation Year, and at that time I said that I proposed to dedicate 1965 to finding new techniques to serve man's welfare. Today I am pleased to announce that our search for new ways of improving the world's health have brought to light another opportunity through international cooperation to keep people from dying."

MORE



To help in the world-wide eradication of smallpox, the President's program of action includes:

Full support for the adoption by the World Health Organization of a smallpox eradication program with a goal for completion within a decade.

Contribution of technical personnel and other necessary resources to the Pan American Health Organization, the regional agency of the WHO, to step up the war against smallpox in Latin America.

Assisting in the establishment of laboratory facilities in the developing countries to help meet requirements of vaccine for the intensified program.

The President added: "This government is ready to work with other interested countries to see to it that smallpox is a thing of the past by 1975."

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NARA APPROVED

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EXECUTIVE

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

Monday, May 17, 1965

12:45 p. m.

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FO  
00278

FG105

FG105

FK18.3

TO: THE PRESIDENT  
FROM: Douglass Cater

Here is concrete action you can announce to show your interest in international cooperation. It has been cleared by State Department. It needs to be put out today or tomorrow so that the delegation in Geneva can proceed with this proposal.

Attachment

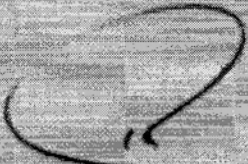


DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
ASSISTANT SECRETARY

May 15, 1965 (3:30)

MEMORANDUM FOR: MR. DOUGLASS CATER,  
THE WHITE HOUSE

I tried to phone you this afternoon but you had already left. The attached new page 4 should be substituted for the one included in the draft statement I sent over last evening. It is now a cleared paper with all the people concerned.



Harlan Cleveland



Contribution of technical personnel and other necessary resources to the Pan American Health Organization, the regional agency of the WHO, to step up the war against smallpox in Latin America.

Assistance in the establishment of modern production laboratories in Africa to help meet world requirements for vaccine for the intensified program.

The President added: "This government is ready to work with other interested countries to see to it that smallpox is a thing of the past by 1975."

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Department of State  
Bureau of International Organization Affairs



ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE

WASHINGTON

May 14, 1965

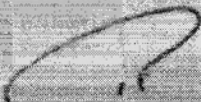
MEMORANDUM FOR: The Honorable  
Douglass Cater,  
Special Assistant to the President,  
The White House

SUBJECT: Draft Statement on Smallpox  
Eradication

Here is a draft statement on the project to eradicate smallpox which we are going to support at the World Health Assembly when it comes up in the early part of this next week.

If this is to be used, it should be released this weekend or not later than Tuesday, May 18th.

If you want to use it after that, could you please check back with us, so that we can coordinate with our delegation in Geneva?

  
Harlan Cleveland



## DRAFT WHITE HOUSE STATEMENT

### THE WORLD-WIDE ERADICATION OF SMALLPOX

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Cooperation



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Contribution



- . Contribution of technical personnel and other necessary resources to the Pan American Health Organization, the regional agency of the WHO, to step up the war against smallpox in Latin America.
- . Assisting in the establishment of laboratory facilities in the developing countries to help meet requirements of vaccine for the intensified program.

The President added: "This government is ready to work with other interested countries to see to it that smallpox is a thing of the past by 1975."

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Department of State  
Bureau of International Organization Affairs



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NARA APPROVED

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