

To guard against this plutonium going into weapons, the International Atomic Energy Agency has the right, under already-existing treaties, to "follow" the plutonium produced in 24 countries to insure that it goes toward peaceful uses. And the U.S. in recent months has taken steps to strengthen IAEA safeguards.

This system could be included as well in the final non-proliferation treaty, expected to be the subject of long discussion and many changes of language in Geneva.

The global treaty will have to have language specifically allowing its signatories to keep up with atomic technology apart from bombs. European nations already, right or wrong, fear they are falling behind the United States in technology and that this threatens their future economies and status in the world.

Britain, for example, uses the "technology gap" as a reason for pressing for acceptance into the Common Market—she says she can help close the gap. France's President Charles de Gaulle promotes the gap as another reason to increase France's independent course in world affairs. Some Germans brandish it in an effort to increase space and military spending. Italy sees it as a tool to repair the tattered fabric of Atlantic unity.

Regardless of how overblown the fear of the gap may be, the Europeans believe it is there, and they are not going to sign anything that might widen it.

The Latin American treaty, four years in the making, was hailed by the State Department as a "milestone" on the road to disarmament. It sets up the first nuclear-free zone in an inhabited area. (Antarctica and space have already been so designated by treaties.) The key change from early language, in the U.S. view, was in Article III. As drawn, it defined a nuclear weapon as "any uncontrolled nuclear fission intended to be used for war." The final, and more comprehensive language became "any fission device of uncontrolled form with characteristics appropriate for weapons of war."

The distinction is empty at the moment; if any nation declares that it has developed a nuclear explosive that for some now-unforeseen reason could not be used as a weapon, the State Department said, the question would have to be rethought.

But by stating that the signatory nations could not build their own nuclear devices for peaceful explosions, the Latin treaty avoids conflict with the pending global treaty, and makes its eventual signing by many nations more likely.

Euratom Threatened

Political difficulties between the six European Common Market countries threaten a large-scale technical breakdown in the European Atomic Energy Community—Euratom—European officials fear.

Community research networks which could be affected have involved expenditure of about \$300 million. National research programs could be threatened as a result.

Research contracts in the Community, which expired at the end of 1966, including one for an association with France on fast reactors, have not been renewed. The Euratom Commission says that, failing a quick decision to extend the contracts, the association will have to be wound up.

Under the association the Community, that is all member states, owns part of the plant and all knowledge acquired in it. Halting cooperation could, it is feared, create a crisis of confidence between member countries.

Abandoning research into them could

undermine Community research as a whole.

A further difficulty is that a decision is overdue on Euratom's third five-year research and development program. The second five-year program ends this year.

The Commission has laid down guidelines for far-reaching changes in the character of joint research. But member countries have not yet considered them.

Euratom officials, many of whom blame the French, say that doubt whether a third five-year program is to be adopted has jeopardized projects like the Belgian materials testing reactor at Mol, on which work is already slowing. Belgium could not operate Mol fully on her own.

Finally, political and other differences among the six have meant delay in voting the Euratom research budget for 1967. It is having to find money to keep research going by a system of credits voted on a monthly basis.

DRUG REGULATION

FDA Gets Miltown Ruling

Miltown and Equanil, two of the most frequently prescribed tranquilizers in the United States, moved a step closer to Government control when a Federal hearing examiner ruled that they have a potential for abuse.

On the basis of evidence accumulated during a two and a half month public hearing, William E. Brennan concluded that any drug containing meprobamate, used to relieve tension and anxiety, has a potential for abuse because of its depressant effect on the central nervous system. Brennan sent his recommendation to Food and Drug Commissioner James L. Goddard who will make the final decision as to whether or not meprobamate tranquilizers come under the Drug Abuse Control Amendments of 1965.

The Amendments require manufacturers and druggists to keep strict records of the production and sale of drugs and put a six-month time limit on the validity of doctors' prescriptions for them.

If Dr. Goddard goes along with Brennan's ruling, as he is expected to, Wallace Laboratories which holds exclusive rights to manufacture meprobamates in the U.S. plans to take its case to court. Wallace sells its product under the trade name of Miltown, and licenses other companies, mainly Wyeth

Laboratories which sells Equanil.

During the lengthy hearings, both the Government and Wallace presented testimony from qualified physicians. Some reported that meprobamate is being indiscriminately used without medical supervision and that it can be linked to suicide and other forms of irrational behavior. Others claim meprobamate is not being abused any more than aspirin, hooks only addiction-prone individuals and is practically never associated with misuse.

If the Amendments are extended to cover meprobamates in addition to barbiturates and amphetamines already included, patients are likely to get more regular medical attention because they will have to have their prescriptions rewritten every six months.

Although restrictions of the Amendments are not expected to result in a significant reduction in sales, some loss as well as anticipated sales gains by other companies whose tranquilizers are not subject to this kind of FDA control are likely to have some bearing on the drug companies' margin of profit.

Serax, a non-meprobamate medication for the relief of tension, anxiety and depression, is one such competing product. Its manufacturer, Wyeth, has not joined Wallace in its fight against limitations on the sale of Miltown.