

Scientists Decry Chemicals' Use To Destroy Crops of Vietcong

CAMBRIDGE, Mass., Jan. 16 (AP) — Twenty-nine scientists, 16 of them from Harvard University, joined today in condemning United States forces' use of chemicals to destroy crops in Vietnam.

Biologists, chemists and physicians signed a statement saying, "The fact that we are now resorting to such methods shows a shocking deterioration in our moral standards."

The signers called on President Johnson to forbid the use of chemical weapons by U.S. forces and to publicly oppose their use by South Vietnamese allies.

"Even if it can be shown the chemicals are not toxic to man, such tactics are barbarous because they are indiscriminate," the statement said.

It said their use is an attack on the entire population since "combatants and non-combatants" both suffer from it.

A spokesman for the signers, John Edsall, Harvard professor of biochemistry, said he read in a newspaper article the chemicals were used to destroy crops that might feed Vietcong guerrilla troops hiding in the countryside.

Edsall said in an interview that article indicated a chemical used as a weed killer in the United States was employed.

"It's probably nontoxic, but it hasn't been proved that it's not harmful to man," Edsall said.

Edsall said the scientists were concerned that more poisonous compounds with arsenic and cyanide might be in use. He said his group is also alarmed about reports that crippling gases are being used by the United States.

The scientists said the Government resisted use of chemical or biological warfare in World War II when "the direct threat to our country was far greater than any rising in Vietnam today."

"Such attacks serve, moreover, as a precedent for the use of similar but even more

dangerous chemical agents against our allies and ourselves. Chemical warfare is cheap. Small countries can practice it effectively against us and will probably do so if we lead the way."

Among the signers was Nobel laureate Albert Szent-Gyorgy, director of the Institute for Muscle Research, Woods Hole, Mass.

Also signing were 13 Harvard Medical School faculty members, among them Dr. Bernard D. Davis, Chairman of the Bacteriology and Immunology Department; Steven Kuffler, Director of the Neurophysiology Department, and Dr. Victor W. Widel, Director of the Department of Preventive at Massachusetts General Hospital, Harvard Medical School.

Three Massachusetts Institute of Technology scientists, two from Brandeis and one each from Amherst, Dartmouth Medical School, Tufts University Medical School and Worcester Institute for Experimental Biology also joined in the statement.

Lynd Suggests Hanoi Heeds Peace Drive

NEW YORK, Jan. 16 (UPI) — The Yale University professor who visited North Vietnam on an unauthorized peace mission suggested today that Hanoi may already have reacted favorably to President Johnson's "peace offensive" by withdrawing North Vietnamese troops from South Vietnam.

Staughton Lynd, a 36-year-old history professor, said he was led to speculate on this possibility by recent press reports that certain regiments of North Vietnam's regular army apparently had withdrawn from South Vietnam border areas.

Lynd said the reported withdrawal seems to be a "possible indication" that North Vietnam was responding to Mr. Johnson's peace moves.

Lynd and his two companions on the self-styled peace mission, which was made despite a State Department ban prohibiting Americans' visiting North Vietnam, reported on their findings Sunday in a mass meeting at Manhattan Center. The two others who made the trip were Thomas Hayden, founder of the Students for a Democratic Society, and Herbert Aptheker, an avowed Communist.

Vietcong Opens Mail Address for POWs

NEW YORK, Jan. 16 (AP) — The Vietcong has set up a postal address in Algiers through which American families of Vietcong prisoners can send mail and packages, an official of the National Committee for a Sane Nuclear Policy said tonight.

Sanford Gottlieb, Sane's political action director, said the National Liberation Front (Vietcong) authorized Sane to inform Americans of what he called the "new channel of communication" between American prisoners and their families.

The address is 18 Rue Langevin, Quarter la Redoute, Algiers, Algeria, Gottlieb said.

Mail will be processed through that address from both the prisoners in Vietnam and their families here, he said.

Gottlieb disclosed the address at a news conference prior to Sane's eighth anniversary dinner at the Waldorf-Astoria.

Earlier, Gottlieb said he believed a continuing American peace offensive is beginning to break down Hanoi's suspicions about the sincerity of American intentions. Gottlieb said the North Vietnamese officials with whom he talked in Paris last week were "clearly less suspicious of our intentions now than when I saw them last in Paris in July."