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## OPPOSITION SEEN TO GAS-WAR PACT

1925 Geneva Protocol May  
Face Impasse in Senate

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WASHINGTON, March 16—

The first significant signs of opposition began to appear today in the Senate Foreign Relations Committee to the Administration's request that the Senate approve the 1925 Geneva protocol banning gas and germ warfare.

As a result, it no longer appeared certain—as it did when President Nixon resubmitted the treaty last year—that after 45 years the Senate would consent to an arms-control measure that has been ratified by every major power but the United States.

The stumbling block that seemed to be developing in the Senate was whether the Geneva protocol, with its prohibitions on chemical and biological weapons, precluded the use of nonlethal tear gases and herbicides or defoliants.

To achieve unity within its own ranks, particularly with the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Nixon Administration struck a compromise on this question before deciding to resubmit the treaty to the Senate.

### An Informed Interpretation

The Administration, largely to meet military arguments, decided that the somewhat vaguely drafted protocol was not intended to cover tear gases and herbicides. But then to meet the arguments of the State Department and the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, it was decided that this would be an informal interpretation rather than a formal understanding or reservation attached to American ratification of the treaty.

But now, somewhat unexpectedly, this compromise is encountering a skeptical reaction in the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, which is holding hearings on the treaty.

Senator Frank Church, Democrat of Idaho, acting as chairman of a committee hearing, proposed today that the Senate send the treaty back to the White House for "clarification" of its views and that the Administration not resubmit the protocol until "our views accord with the majority of the civilized world."

By a vote of 80 to 3, the United Nations General Assembly in 1969 adopted a resolution contending that the protocol was intended to ban tear gases and chemical herbicides. The United States, which argued that the General Assembly was not the proper body to interpret the protocol, voted against the resolution, along with Australia and Portugal. Thirty-six other nations abstained, largely at the urging of the United States.

Protesting that the Administration was "waffling," Senator Church argued that it would "erode" the effectiveness of the treaty if the United States ratified it with the understanding that it would be free to use tear gases and herbicides.

### Tends to Be Barometer

Senator Church tends to be a barometer of majority sentiment on the Foreign Relations Committee, and the expectation within the committee was that several other members would go along with his objections. Significantly, Senator George D. Aiken of Vermont, the ranking Republican on the committee, entered no objection to the Church proposal.

In the opinion of committee members, the treaty now faces a possible impasse in the Senate.

Senator Church expressed doubt to reporters that the committee would report out the treaty so long as the Administration held to its informal interpretation. And Secretary of State William P. Rogers has warned that the Administration will probably not ratify the treaty in the unlikely event that the Senate attaches a reservation precluding future use of tear gases and herbicides.

### Sweden Submits Plan

GENEVA, March 16 (Reuters)—Sweden today presented to the Geneva disarmament conference a working paper under which agents for chemical and biological weapons would be graded according to their deadliness.

The Swedish spokesman, Axel Edelstam, said that he hoped the paper would serve as the basis for the main articles of a comprehensive agreement banning both types of weapons.

The paper, based on a speech at the conference last week by the Swedish delegate, Mrs. Alva Myrdal, contains a prohibition on the development, testing, production and stockpiling of all chemical and biological arms.