

Abrams, Bunker Ask Herbicide Ban

Saigon

U.S. Ambassador Ellsworth Bunker and General Creighton Abrams have jointly recommended an immediate halt to all chemical crop destruction in South Vietnam, it was learned yesterday.

Sources said that Bunker and Abrams, the civilian and military chiefs of the American mission here, urgently requested the Nixon Administration to halt the procurement and importation of the chemical warfare agents code named "white" and "blue."

They recommended that

existing stocks of the two chemicals now in Vietnam be used only for the deforestation of uninhabited jungle areas.

At the current rate of use, the supply of chemicals would be exhausted in May, the cable said. After that, Bunker and Abrams recommended, the two agents should not be used for any purpose in South Vietnam.

Both "white" and "blue" are now prohibited for use in the United States. A third crop defoliant, code named "orange," was banned by the Defense Department last April.

However, the military command here announced in October — after inquiries were made by reporters about the use of the chemical — that "orange" was used by American troops in the northern provinces of Quang Ngai and Quang Tin for several months after the ban was declared.

"Orange," formally called orange 2,4,5 trichlorophenoxyacetic acid, was ordered suspended after the Department of Health, Education and Welfare and Agriculture reported that it may cause birth defects in humans.

Defoliants have been used

for various purposes in South Vietnam, from the hand spraying of perimeter areas around military bases to keep weeds down, to the deliberate destruction of rice crops from the air to reduce food supplies available to Communist forces.

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