

Nixon Gas War Stand Called 'Trade-Off'

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WASHINGTON, May 15—A Library of Congress study depicts as "a trade-off" President Nixon's decision to limit America's use of chemical and biological warfare but to continue to use tear gas and defoliants in war.

Last November, the President said he would send the Geneva Protocol of 1925, which prohibits the first use of chemical and germ weapons, to the Senate for approval. Many of the 84 countries that have ratified the protocol interpret it as a ban tear gas and defoliants, but the White House took pains to explain that it did not regard them as banned.

American forces in Southeast Asia have used large quantities of tear gas and defoliants. Tear gas is used in combat and defoliants are used to clear trails and camps and to deny the enemy food.

The study calls Mr. Nixon's decision "an attempt to reap the political advantages of the adoption of a new policy, which includes ratification of the Geneva Protocol, and, at the same time, retain for the United States a category of weapons which it considers to be militarily advantageous."

Not Yet Released

The study is called "The Use of Tear Gas in War: A Survey of International Negotiations and of U.S. Policy and Practice." It has not yet been released. It was prepared by the Legislative Reference Service of the Library of Congress for a report on chemical and biological warfare by the National Security Policy Subcommittee of the House Foreign Affairs Committee. The subcommittee will release its report Sunday.

"To some extent," the study says, "the course adopted by the American executive in seeking ratification of the Geneva Protocol, accompanied by a new statement of policy regarding the use of chemical and

biological weapons, is one of compromise.

"Certain sacrifices are made in terms of both political and military benefits, but, at the same time, the policy seeks to maximize other political and military benefits."

Among the questions that are still to be answered, the study says is "whether this mix of political and military advantage and disadvantage will be accepted or changed in some way by the U.S. Senate."

Used in Riot Control

The study also notes "evidence of an evolution" in the purposes that tear gas is used for. Initially, it says, former Secretary of State Dean Rusk and others described the operations in which tear gas would be used as "riot control types of problems."

"The current stage," the study says, "is one in which tear gas is considered a normal combat weapon, which is used primarily like other combat weapons to destroy the

enemy or to save American lives."

Army spokesmen have argued that the use of tear gas saves the lives of American troops in Vietnam. Critics have argued that the use of the gas in combat may lower long-standing barriers against chemical warfare.

The authors of the study are Charles R. Gellner and Leneice Wu, both of the Foreign Affairs Division of the Legislative Reference Service. The service performs research tasks for members of Congress.