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The Geneva Protocol of 1925 is again before the Senate for ratification. It aims at the simple and universally accepted goal of controlling chemical and biological warfare.

When we look a little deeper, we discover the intricacies of the means by which we hope to achieve such a goal. The problems include the subtleties of legal draftsmanship, complexities of technical distinction of chemical from lethal weapons, uncertainties how to verify and respond to apparent violations, controversies over the nature of international law and confusions about what is meant by a "national interest."

The only evident hindrance to U.S. ratification is the conflict over the definition of a chemical weapon prohibited by the protocol. The text condemns "the use in war of asphyxiating, poisonous or other gases... and of all analogous liquids, materials or de-

Chemical warfare can be focused to mobilize the power of the Defense Department. This may be an illusion of victory, such tools have encouraged an increasing use of poisons in war; then result in collapse of a country's police. The only evident hindrance to U.S. ratification of the Geneva Protocol and the control of chemical warfare.

Should teargas and herbicides also be banned?

of the debate must cover a number of arguments.

1. Technology race

(Pro): We must restrain a technological race that will proliferate the use of chemicals in war.

(Con): But this may even have humanistic merit. Why not look for nonlethal weapons as a "technological fix" to create the death and suffering which have always been associated with war?

(Pro): It would be fine if other weapons could be replaced by nonlethal chemicals. In the real world, tear gas and other chemicals will be used to augment firepower. It would be increasingly difficult to maintain a sharp boundary line between forbidden poisons and permitted tear gases if the latter were used on any large scale. A stubborn defense of the use of tear gas in war would then result in collapse of the whole structure of restraints on chemical weapons.

(Con): This risk could be lessened if the use of certain specified components, like CN tear gas, were ex-cepted under international agreement that they would make war less brutal. Some such understanding is probably needed to justify the difference between civilian use of tear gas for riot control (where it is clearly an alternative to firepower) and use in war—

4. Why bolster the protocol anyway?

(Con): It merely disavows the use of chemical weapons (this discussion puts biologicals aside), but the threat of their use remains. Adhering countries have stockpiles of lethal gases as the capacity to make more. The United States may be placed at a disadvantage since the protocol generates more effective pressure against us to close out our chemical warfare capability than will operate in closed societies.

(Pro): But democracies always face this kind of limitation as compared to totalitarian regimes, and it may not be so crucial while we retain an effective nuclear deterrent. How ever, that the protocol is an imperfect fix to alleviate the death and suffering which everybody condemns. We will have a clear firebreak that will deter everybody from using any chemical weapon of any kind.

(Con): The United States was at the origin of the idea, and the reservations already attached to the protocol by France and others presumably un-leash its adherents against any country that violates any provision of it.

5. Technology race.

(Pro): Chemical weaponry illustrates the exhibition of technology in support of U.S. military power. Tear gas, herbicides, helicopters and electronic sensors have facilitated intervention in Southeast Asia.

(Con): But we still have the nuclear shield, if we have nothing else, I suppose.

3. Marking off a firebreak

(Pro): Incorporating tear gas into the protocol links it to poison gas, which everybody condemns. We will then have a clear firebreak that will deter everybody from using any chemical weapon of any kind.

(Con): The protocol is a mutual con-tract that is automatically abhorred if a party violates it. So if any chemical is used in violation of the protocol, it will tear down the whole structure of a firebreak. One trouble with a firebreak is that if a spark does fly across one, there may be no defenses on the other side. So any firebreak had better be as wide and clear as it is, say, with nuclear weapons.

This is especially important in a crisis, when communication between oppo-

8. Technology race.

(Con): The abuse of power.

(Pro): U.S. power is not the only source of evil in the world and, wisely used, may be indispensable for world order. It will improve our political machinery to control the Defense Department, not abstract its technical capacity. Relying on technical treaty obligations to direct our foreign policy leaves us in a vacuously intelective position in responding to technological surprise.

(Pro): But we still have the nuclear shield.

(Con): And if we have nothing else, we will have to rely on nuclear weapons to protect ourselves.

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(Pro): Chemical weaponry illustrates the exhibition of technology in support of U.S. military power. Tear gas, herbicides, helicopters and electronic sensors have facilitated intervention in Southeast Asia. For example, tear gas might have saved many lives in the World War II. This history, then, has little to do with war?

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