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Cabinet Room, Hotel Willard, Pennsylvania Ave. and Fourteenth St., Washington, D.C.

PRESS RELEASE

U.S. SCIENTISTS ASK REVIEW OF CHEMICAL AND BIOLOGICAL WEAPONS  
POLICY

More than five thousand American scientists, including seventeen Nobel Prize winners and one hundred twenty-nine members of the U.S. National Academy of Sciences have sent a petition to President Johnson recommending a review of U.S. policy toward chemical and biological weapons. The petition, initiated in September and delivered to the White House today, urges a clear-cut U.S. policy of not starting the use of gas or biological weapons and requests a high-level study aimed at finding ways to maintain and reinforce world-wide restraints against chemical and biological warfare. Cautioning that the combat use of any chemical or biological weapon seriously weakens the barriers to the use of others, the scientists believe that a dangerous precedent is being set by the current large-scale use of riot gas and anti-crop chemicals by U.S. forces in Viet Nam.

In a covering letter to the President, the scientists who originated the petition cite a recent resolution of the United Nations General Assembly calling upon all nations to observe the 1925 Geneva Protocol prohibiting gas and bacteriological warfare. The scientists commend the United States for supporting the United Nations resolution and recommend that the U.S. now move to ratify the Geneva Protocol. In their letter to the President, the scientists note that the United States, almost alone among the nations of the world, has not yet acceded to the Geneva Protocol.