

Nerve Gas Has Gravel, Miller Very Worried

Senator Mike Gravel said he has learned the Defense Department is considering transporting a large quantity of lethal nerve gas from its storage depot at Okinawa to Kodiak, Alaska.

The Senator said he is moving to thwart any such action by co-sponsoring legislation with Senator Warren Magnuson of Washington to prohibit shipping the gas either to Alaska, Hawaii or the continental United States, by withholding all funds to be used for this purpose.

He said he also has wired Alaska's Governor Keith Miller and contacted Senator Stevens and Congressman Pollock to urge their support in opposing the the proposed shipment.

Originally the gas was to be shipped to Bangor, Washington, and then transported by rail to Umatilla, Oregon.

Protests from Oregon and Washington, however, reportedly have caused the Defense Department to consider sending the gas to Kodiak for storage at the Naval Base there.

Part of the shipment would be in bulk and the remainder in the form of munitions.

Senator Gravel called the proposal "dangerous and totally un-

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acceptable to the people of Alaska.”

Pointing out that the gas is so deadly a mere one-tenth of one drop on the back of a person's hand would kill him within ten seconds, he said “one can readily imagine the horrendous toll that would be taken in human life were there to be an accident releasing even a small quantity of this lethal substance.”

The Senator urged that the gas “either remain in Okinawa or be detoxified and destroyed. “Under no conditions,” he said, “should it be shipped to Alaska or anywhere else.”

Here in Alaska Gov. Keith Miller expressed firm opposition to Defense Department plans for transporting a quantity of nerve gas.

“Under no circumstances will I condone this action,” Miller said. “I will oppose the plans with every means at my disposal.”

Miller said he did not want the federal government to use Kodiak as a “dumping ground” for the nerve gas just because plans to store it in Umatilla, Oregon have met with still opposition.

“The opposition will be just as stiff in Alaska,” he said.

In his telegram to Defense Secretary Melvin Laird, Miller said, “The proposed shipment poses potential danger to the residents of Kodiak, Alaska's largest commercial fishing port and the second largest in the nation. Urge you to consider detoxifying and destroying the gas, rather than moving it to another location.”