

Kaplan

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To : Dr. T.A. Lambo, DDG

From : Dr. M.M. Kaplan, Consultant



Further to our talk I am enclosing some background material on allegations of use of chemical weapons made by the USA against Vietnam and the USSR, particularly with respect to Laos and Kampuchea. The enclosures are :

1. Conclusions of the UN Group of Experts after two visits to refugee camps in south-east Asia.
2. A review of the allegations as of February 1983 by Julian Perry Robinson who served with Professor Mathew Meselson (see next item) in preparing the WHO publication on chemical and bacteriological weapons in 1970. Robinson and Meselson are recognized today as the two foremost experts on this subject in the world.
3. A recent article on Prof. Meselson in Science about "yellow rain".
4. Recent article in Nature on allegations.

Briefly, there is considerable doubt about the validity of the USA allegations. One of the main refugee camps in question is Ban Vinai on the Cambodian border where H'Mong refugees from Cambodia have made the charges of agents used against them by Vietnamese forces. The symptoms mentioned in the allegations have puzzled most non-USA experts since they are so heterogeneous in nature and can be ascribed to a variety of endemic diseases and conditions, and not necessarily to chemical weapons agents.

The skin lesions and nervous symptoms reported are consistent with pellagera and it is quite possible that this is the real explanation of many illnesses described which disappears quickly after the nutritional deficiency is overcome with camp food.

It would be useful and important to have this matter looked into by competent medical authorities in order to clarify the situation because the continued allegations by the USA have poisoned international relations and have severely inhibited progress towards a chemical warfare treaty.

Perhaps the Thai neurophysiologist can assist in this matter.