

EXCISE

(8-0051)

(E) B6

EXDIS REVIEW

Cat. A - Caption removed; transferred to O/FADRC

Cat. B - Transferred to O/FADRC with additional access controlled by S/S

Cat. C - Caption and custody retained by S/S

Reviewed by: Elijah Kelly Jr.

Date: 10/24/88

51/09

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FRP: . . . .  
STATE

[REDACTED]

ALL b3

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PP RUEAIB

ZNY CCCCC ZOC STATE ZZH

TPP RUFHGV RUMJFS RUMTBK

DE RUEHC #4515-0300240

ZNY CCCCC ZZH

P P 300342Z JAN 79

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO RUFHGV/USMISSION GENEVA PRIORITY 2415

INFO RUMJFS/AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE 9904

RUMTBK/AMEMBASSY BANGKOK 2698

BT

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 024515

[REDACTED]

EXDIS, BANGKOK PLEASE PASS UDORN

[REDACTED]

E.D. 112065 XGDS (FRANK A. SIEVERTS)

TAGS: SHUM, MMOL, SREF, LA

SUBJECT: REPORTED USE OF POISON GAS AGAINST HMONG IN LAOS

REF: STATE 020526

1. IN ADDITION TO SUGGESTION REFTEL, IT STRIKES US THAT IT MIGHT BE USEFUL FOR GENEVA IN CONFIDENCE TO EXPLORE WITH ICRC POSSIBILITY OF ICRC ON ITS OWN INITIATIVE INVESTIGATING THE REPORTED USE OF POISON GAS AGAINST THE HMONG IN LAOS.

B-6

2. WE RECALL THAT ICRC PLAYED A KEY ROLE AROUND 1966 IN PUBLICLY EXPOSING USE OF POISON GAS IN THE YEMEN, ALLEGEDLY BY EGYPTIAN FORCES. ICRC DELEGATE ROCHAT ACCOMPANIED BY A RED CROSS MEDICAL TEAM PERSONALLY ENTERED YEMENI VILLAGES WHERE GAS HAD BEEN USED AND OBTAINED THE BASIC FORENSIC DATA DOCUMENTING THE USE OF POISON GAS. CONSISTENT WITH ITS TRADITIONAL POLICY, ICRC DID NOT RELEASE THE REPORT, BUT NEWS OF IT RAPIDLY BECAME PUBLIC, AND IT WAS PROMINENTLY

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[REDACTED]

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MB

REVIEWED by L. Wood DATE 1/17/88

( ) RELEASE (  ) DECLASSIFY

(  ) EXCISE (  ) DECLASSIFY in PART

( ) DENY ( ) Non-responsive info.

FOI, EO or PA exemptions (b)(6)

CIA 1.3 (b)(3) TS authority to:

( ) CLASSIFY as Confidential, OADR

( ) DOWNGRADE TS to ( ) S or ( ) C, OADR



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REPORTED FIRST IN THE TIMES OF INDIA, THEN ELSEWHERE. OUR RECOLLECTION IS THAT THERE WAS NO FURTHER USE OF POISON GAS ONCE THE ICRC INVESTIGATED AND VERIFIED ITS USE.

3. INVESTIGATION IN LAOS PRESENTS OBVIOUS PROBLEMS OF ACCESS AND POLITICAL SENSITIVITY OF WHICH ICRC WILL BE AWARE. AT THE TIME, WE BELIEVE THIS ALLEGED VIOLATION OF ACCEPTED HUMANITARIAN AND LEGAL STANDARDS IS SO SERIOUS THAT WE HOPE ICRC WILL CONSIDER MAKING THE ATTEMPT. YOU COULD ASSURE ICRC WE WILL BE GLAD TO SHARE ANY INFORMATION WE DEVELOP WITH THEM, IN GENEVA, OR POSSIBLY MORE USEFULLY, IN BANGKOK OR VIENTIANE. ICRC IS UNDOUBTEDLY AWARE OF REPEATED MEDIA REPORTS ALLEGING USE OF POISON GAS AGAINST THE HMONG.

4. ICRC'S TRADITIONAL FOLLOW-UP ACTION IS TO SUBMIT ITS REPORTS TO THE PARTIES DIRECTLY CONCERNED, WHICH IN THIS CASE WOULD PROBABLY BE THE GOVERNMENT OF LAOS. SUCH A SUBMISSION OF ITSELF COULD BE AN IMPORTANT ELEMENT IN BRINGING PRESSURE TO END THE PRACTICE. VANCE

END OF MESSAGE

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