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TAGS: SHUM, ECEM, PINS, LA, VM, UR

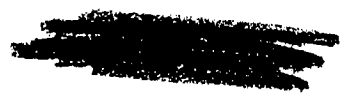
SUBJECT: ANALYSIS OF POSSIBLE POISON GAS RESIDUE OBTAINED
IN LAOS

1. THE FOLLOWING PROVIDES READOUT ON CONCLUSIONS REACHED
BY RESEARCH DIVISION, CHEMICAL SYSTEMS LABORATORY, EDGE-
WOOD ARSENAL MD

2. THE CHEMICAL SYSTEMS LABORATORY PERSONNEL HAVE REPORTED
THAT THE PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS WAS INCONCLUSIVE BECAUSE OF
THE FOLLOWING: BEGIN QUOTE:

A. THE SAMPLE SIZE WAS EXTREMELY SMALL. EACH ANALYTICAL
PROCEDURE, TO INCLUDE INFRARED (IR) AND ULTRAVIOLET (UV)
SPECTROSCOPIC ANALYSIS, WAS CARRIED OUT USING MATERIAL
TAKEN FROM A DIFFERENT SPOT, SUSPECTED OF BEING CHEMICAL
AGENT OR AGENT RESIDUE, ON THE VEGETATION WHICH MADE UP THE

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REVIEWED by Lwlook DATE 11/17/88

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TOTAL SAMPLE. IT IS POSSIBLE THAT CHEMICAL AGENT COULD HAVE BEEN PRESENT IN TOO SMALL AN AMOUNT TO BE DETECTED BY THE ANALYTIC METHODS USED.

8. THE AMOUNT OF TIME BETWEEN WHEN THE CHEMICAL AGENT WAS EMPLOYED AND THE ANALYSIS MAY HAVE RESULTED IN AGENT DE-

COMPOSITION AND/OR VAPORIZATION. IF THE AGENT EMPLOYED WAS A NONPERSISTENT AGENT, ITS VOLATILITY MAY PRECLUDE OBTAINING A SUFFICIENT SAMPLE SIZE FOR ANALYSIS IF SEVERAL DAYS LAPSE BETWEEN EMPLOYMENT AND SUBSEQUENT ANALYSIS OF CONTAMINATED MATERIAL.

3. THE CHEMICAL SYSTEM LABORATORY PERSONNEL RECOMMENDED THAT A LARGER SAMPLE OF THE SUSPECTED CHEMICAL AGENT BE OBTAINED, IF POSSIBLE, AND PROVIDED FOR ANALYSIS.

4. THE PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS OF SUBJECT MATERIAL HAS SHOWN THE FOLLOWING COMPOUNDS NOT REPEAT NOT BE PRESENT IN THE SUBJECT SAMPLE:

- A. STANDARD US RIOT CONTROL AGENTS (CN AND CS).
- B. ADAMSITE (DM VOMITING AGENT), AND ITS HYDROLYZED BY-PRODUCT.
- C. OTHER ARSENICALS (INCLUDES LEWISITE BLISTER AGENT AND THE ARSINE-FAMILY OF VOMITING AGENTS).
- D. ORGANO-PHOSPHATES (INCLUDES THE G-SERIES NERVE AGENTS).
- E. CHLORINE COMPOUND (BLISTER AGENTS AND PHOSGENE-DERIVATIVES).
- F. NITROGEN COMPOUNDS (NITROGEN MUSTARD BLISTER AGENT AND V-SERIES NERVE AGENTS).
- G. COLORED SMOKE DYES. END QUOTE.

5. THE INFORMATION ASSEMBLED IN EARLY JUNE THROUGH INTERVIEWS WITH 23 HMONG REFUGEES WHO PROVIDED EYEWITNESS ACCOUNTS OF CHEMICAL AGENT ATTACKS (DRAFTS POUCHED TO BANGKOK, UDORN AND VIENTIANE), COMBINED WITH CLASSIFIED REPORTING, INDICATES THAT CHEMICAL WARFARE (CW) AGENTS PROBABLY HAVE BEEN USED IN LAOS AGAINST DISSIDENT HMONG TRIBESMEN.

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6. WE ARE CONSIDERING PROVISION OF THE INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTS UNDER COVER OF A BACKGROUND PAPER, TO GROUPS SUCH AS THE ICRC AND AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL WITH REQUEST THAT THEY PURSUE THE ISSUE FURTHER. WE ARE ALSO CONSIDERING PROVISION OF THESE INTERVIEWS TO A NUMBER OF GOVERNMENTS WHICH HAVE BECOME AWARE OF AND EXPRESSED INTEREST IN THE DEPARTMENT'S EXAMINATION OF THE QUESTION OF USE OF CW IN LAOS.

7. BEFORE MOVING AHEAD WITH THIS APPROACH, WE WOULD APPRECIATE THOUGHTS OF ACTION ADDRESSEES ON BEST WAY TO PROCEED.

8. STANLEY KARNOV, WHO CONDUCTED INTERVIEWS WITH HMONG REFUGEES IN THAILAND IN JUNE,

WILL BE CALLING ON THE LAO DESK IN THE NEAR FUTURE. RICHARD NATIONS DISCUSSED THE HMONG PLIGHT ELSEWHERE IN THE DEPARTMENT RECENTLY. VANCE

END OF MESSAGE

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