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Current Handling: NODIS

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RELEASED IN PART  
B3, CIA, DIANRO

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SECRET

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ORIGIN NODS-00

INFO OCT-00 ADS-00 /000 R

DRAFTED BY PM/TMP:BMURRAY:PAM  
APPROVED BY PM:RBURT  
EA:DO'DONOHUE  
OSD/ISP:WBODE  
OSDRE:TDASHIELL  
CIA [redacted] -  
DIA/DT-1: [redacted]  
EUR:CTHOMAS  
JCS:JHOGAN(INFO)  
S/S-O:RWERDMAN

B3

-----303327 040308Z /61

O 040244Z SEP 81 ZFF6  
FM SECSTATE WASHDC  
TO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK IMMEDIATE  
AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE  
AMEMBASSY PARIS IMMEDIATE  
AMEMBASSY BONN IMMEDIATE  
AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON IMMEDIATE  
AMEMBASSY CANBERRA IMMEDIATE  
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA IMMEDIATE  
INFO AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T STATE 237147

NODIS  
E.O. 12065: GDS 9/3/87 (BURT, RICHARD)

TAGS: PARM, TH

SUBJECT: CW USE -- NEW INTELLIGENCE

1. SECRET - ENTIRE TEXT.

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2. SINCE LATE 1979, THE US HAS BEEN ACTIVELY  
COLLECTING EVIDENCE PERTAINING TO REPORTS

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DECAPTIONED

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
REVIEW AUTHORITY: HOWARD H LANGE  
DATE/CASE ID: 29 MAR 2010 200801865

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THAT LETHAL AND INCAPACITANT CHEMICAL WEAPONS (CW) ARE BEING USED IN LAOS, KAMPUCHEA AND AFGHANISTAN. AS A RESULT OF RECENT ANALYSIS OF A LEAF AND STEM SAMPLE FROM KAMPUCHEA, WE NOW BELIEVE WE MAY HAVE MADE A SIGNIFICANT BREAKTHROUGH IN IDENTIFYING THE AGENT BEING USED. SPECIFICALLY, WE BELIEVE WE HAVE GOOD, PRELIMINARY EVIDENCE THAT, RATHER THAN A KNOWN CW AGENT, THREE POTENT MYCOTOXINS OF THE TRICHOHECENE GROUP HAVE BEEN USED. (MYCOTOXINS ARE POISONOUS SUBSTANCES TYPICALLY PRODUCED IN NATURE BY LIVING ORGANISMS.).

3. THE BOOK, "YELLOW RAIN", BY STERLING SEAGRAVE, (IN WHICH THE AUTHOR HYPOTHESIZES THAT A TOXIN IS BEING USED) WAS REVIEWED IN THE FAR EAST ECONOMIC REVIEW AND WILL SOON BE RELEASED HERE. ITS RELEASE WILL LIKELY RESULT IN CONSIDERABLE ADDITIONAL INTERNATIONAL ATTENTION. MOREOVER, WE UNDERSTAND THAT TIME MAGAZINE MAY BE RUNNING AN ARTICLE ON THE SUBJECT IN ITS NEXT EDITION -- INCLUDING SPECULATION THAT THE USG HAS EVIDENCE TO CONFIRM THE TOXIN HYPOTHESIS. WE ARE THEREFORE INITIATING STEPS TO ENSURE THAT THAILAND AND CERTAIN OTHER ALLIES ARE APPROPRIATELY INFORMED ON THIS MATTER.

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4. FOR BANGKOK: YOU SHOULD INFORM SENIOR RTG OFFICIALS (WE LEAVE TO YOU APPROPRIATE CHANNEL THROUGH WHICH TO PASS THIS TO RTG.) THAT WE HAVE MADE WHAT MAY BE A BREAKTHROUGH IN IDENTIFYING THE AGENT AS BEING TRICHOHECENE TOXINS. YOU SHOULD MAKE CLEAR THAT THE LEAF AND STEM SAMPLE WAS ONE OF THE SAMPLES THE THAIS HANDED OVER TO US IN WHICH THEY HAD FOUND TRACES OF CYANIDE. EXPRESS OUR APPRECIATION TO RTG FOR THEIR ASSISTANCE IN COLLECTING EVIDENCE AND ASSURE THEM THAT WE WILL MAKE ADDITIONAL RESULTS AVAILABLE TO THEM.

5. YOU MAY DRAW UPON FOLLOWING DETAILED BACKGROUND

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POINTSAS YOU DEEM APPROPRIATE IN BRIEFING THE THAIS:

-- AFTER OVER A YEAR OF UNSUCCESSFUL ATTEMPTS TO OBTAIN PHYSICAL EVIDENCE OF CW USE, WE BELIEVE WE HAVE UNCOVERED SIGNIFICANT -- THOUGH PRELIMINARY -- INFORMATION TO DEMONSTRATE CLEARLY THAT OUR CONCERNS WERE ENTIRELY JUSTIFIED. SPECIFICALLY, WE BELIEVE WE HAVE OBTAINED GOOD EVIDENCE THAT RATHER THAN A LETHAL CHEMICAL AGENT, THREE POTENT MYCOTOXINS OF THE TRICHOHECENE GROUP HAVE BEEN USED. (A MYCOTOXIN IS A POISON TYPICALLY PRODUCED IN NATURE BY LIVING ORGANISMS.)

-- ANALYSIS OF A LEAF AND STEM SAMPLE FROM KAMPUCHEA OBTAINED THROUGH THE THAIS HAS REVEALED HIGH LEVELS OF THREE POTENT MYCOTOXINS OF THE TRICHOHECENE GROUP. THE LEVELS DETECTED WERE UP TO TWENTY TIMES GREATER THAN THAT REPORTED TO OCCUR WHEN VEGETATION IS NATURALLY CONTAMINATED BY TRICHOHECENE TOXINS. THE LEVELS FOUND ARE  
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CONSIDERED TO BE VERY ABNORMAL, AND IT IS HIGHLY UNLIKELY THAT SUCH LEVELS COULD HAVE OCCURRED IN A NATURAL INTOXICATION. SYMPTOMS ASSOCIATED WITH THESE THREE TOXINS SPECIFICALLY INCLUDE RAPID ONSET OF VOMITING, MULTIPLE HEMORRHAGES OF MUCUS MEMBRANES, BLOODY DIARRHEA, AND SEVERE ITCHING AND TINGLING OF SKIN WITH FORMATION OF MULTIPLE SMALL BLISTERS.

-- TRICHOHECENE TOXINS ARE PRODUCED BY FUSARIUM FUNGI WHICH ARE TOXIC TO MAN AND ANIMALS. TRICHOHECENES ARE CHEMICALLY QUITE STABLE AND CAN EASILY BE PRODUCED IN LARGE QUANTITIES. HISTORY HAS RECORDED SEVERAL NATURAL OUTBREAKS OF TOXIN-RELATED DISEASES WHICH HAVE RESULTED IN THOUSANDS OF DEATHS. THE OUTBREAK OF ST. VITAS DANCE IN THE MIDDLE AGES, FOR EXAMPLE, HAS BEEN ATTRIBUTED TO A TOXIN. IN 1944, THIRTY PERCENT OF THE POPULATION OF ORENBURG,

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NEAR SIBERIA IN THE SOVIET UNION, BECAME  
SERIOUSLY ILL FROM A NATURAL INFESTATION

OF TRICHOHECENE TOXIN, AND OVER TEN PERCENT  
OF THE ENTIRE POPULATION OF THE ORENBURG  
DISTRICT ACTUALLY DIED. OTHER OUTBREAKS  
ATTRIBUTED TO RED MOLD TOXICOSIS HAVE  
BROKEN OUT IN JAPAN, EUROPE AND THE UNITED  
STATES.

-- IN ADDITION TO THE TEST RESULTS MENTIONED  
ABOVE, THE US HAS OBTAINED ADDITIONAL FIRST  
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HAND INFORMATION ABOUT REPORTS OF USE. AS THE  
RTG IS AWARE, ONE MONTH AGO DR. CHRISTOPHER  
GREEN, A US MEDICAL DOCTOR WORKING ON THIS  
PROBLEM WENT TO THAILAND. HE VISITED THE  
BORDERS, INTERVIEWED AND EXAMINED NUMEROUS  
REFUGEES IN CAMPS THERE, REVIEWED MEDICAL  
RECORDS, INCLUDING AUTOPSY REPORTS AND PUBLIC  
HEALTH DATA WHICH WAS AVAILABLE AND SPOKE  
DIRECTLY WITH MANY EYEWITNESSES TO ATTACKS IN  
BOTH LAOS AND KAMPUCHEA.

-- DETAILED ANALYSIS OF THIS AND OTHER INFOR-  
MATION LED HIM TO CONCLUDE THAT MYCOTOXINS --  
NOT CONVENTIONAL CHEMICAL WARFARE AGENTS --  
PRODUCED THE BIZZARE EFFECTS WHICH CAUSED  
IN RAPID SEQUENCE, DIZZINESS; SEVERE ITCHING  
OR TINGLING OF SKIN, WITH FORMATION OF SMALL  
BLISTERS; NAUSEA; COUGHING OF BLOOD-TINGED  
MATERIAL; CHOKING; VOMITING OF MASSIVE AMOUNTS  
OF BLOOD; SHOCK; AND DEATH IN THOSE VICTIMS  
DIRECTLY UNDER THE SPRAYS. FOR THOSE ON THE  
PERIPHERY OF THE ATTACKS OR WHO ATE OR DRANK  
CONTAMINATED FOOD OR WATER, SYMPTOMS TOOK  
LONGER TO DEVELOP (DAYS RATHER THAN MINUTES TO  
HOURS) AND USUALLY LED TO DEATH WITHIN TWO  
WEEKS IF NO TREATMENT WERE GIVEN.

-- THE SIMILARITIES BETWEEN THE SEQUENCE AND  
TYPE OF MEDICAL EFFECTS OF THE TOXINS DESCRIBED  
ABOVE ARE STRIKING WHEN COMPARED WITH THOSE  
ILLCITED BY THE PHYSICIAN FROM WITNESSES  
AND VICTIMS.

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-- THE TEST RESULTS WE HAVE RECENTLY OBTAINED TOGETHER WITH THE INFORMATION PROVIDED BY THE PHYSICIAN WHO VISITED THAILAND REPRESENTS STRONG SECRET

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AND COMPELLING, BUT NONETHELESS PRELIMINARY, EVIDENCE THAT THE LETHAL AGENT(S) USED ARE TRICHOCECENE TOXINS. WE ARE THEREFORE, NOW

IN THE PROCESS OF ANALYZING ADDITIONAL SAMPLES FROM LAOS AND KAMPUCHEA IN AN EFFORT TO OBTAIN CORROBORATIVE EVIDENCE. AS SOON AS THE TEST RESULTS ARE AVAILABLE ON THESE SAMPLES (IN THREE TO FIVE WEEKS), WE SHALL PROVIDE THEM TO YOU.

-- THE US INTENDS IN THE NEAR FUTURE TO SHARE THIS INFORMATION WITH ITS ALLIES AND WITH THE UN GROUP OF EXPERTS INVESTIGATING CW USE. FOR THE MOMENT, HOWEVER, WHILE WE ANALYZE THE FURTHER SAMPLES AVAILABLE, WE ARE HOLDING THIS INFORMATION CLOSELY.

6. FOR BONN, CANBERRA, LONDON, OTTAWA, PARIS, AND WELLINGTON: WASHINGTON EMBASSIES WERE BRIEFED ON ABOVE SEPTEMBER 3. POSTS NEED NOT TAKE ANY ACTION ON ABOVE AT THIS TIME. HAIG

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