

EXCISE

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 FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
 TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6039
 INFO RUMJIA/AMCONSUL CHIANG MAI 6711
 RUEHDT/USMISSION USUN NE YCRK 5035
 RUMTBKU/AMCONSUL UDORN 6679
 RUMJFS/AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE 4261
 RUEHPH/CDC ATLANTA GA
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C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 52624 COMBINED SECTION

DIA FOR DC-4B
 CSA FOR DAMI-ISH
 CDRAARADCON FIR DRDAR-SEIC

EO 12065: RDS-2 11/12/01 (ROY, J. STAPLETON) UR-M
 TAGS: PARM, MOPS, SHUM, PURG, LA, VM, UR
 SUBJ: 1980 MEDICAL NOTES ON HMONG "GAS" VICTIMS
 -- AT BAN VI NAY

1. (C) SUMMARY: A MEDICAL CONTACT IN BAN VI NAY
 CAMP HAS PROVIDED US WITH NOTES COMPILED IN
 1980 BY A VOLAG DOCTOR BASED ON INTERVIEWS AND
 EXAMINATION OF 14 HMONG WHO CLAIMED TO HAVE

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR

REVIEWED by fu.love DATE 11/17/88

() UNCLASSIFIED () DECLASSIFY
 () UNCLASSIFIED () DECLASSIFY to PART
 () DENY () Non-responsive info.

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

21A 1.3 (b)(3) TS authority to:

() CLASSIFY as _____, OADR

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

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SUFFERED "POISON GAS" ATTACKS IN JANUARY - MAY OF THAT YEAR. THE NOTES DESCRIBE ILLNESSES SUCH AS DIZZINESS, BLOODY VOMITING, CHEST PAINS AND COUGHING OF BLOODY SPUTUM. THEY ALSO REPORT ADDITIONAL SYMPTOMS NOT REGULARLY FOUND, INCLUDING IMPOTENCE, MISCARRIAGES AND NUMBNESS OF LIMBS. THE HMONG INVOLVED WERE SAID TO HAVE ASSERTED THAT REGULAR USE OF GAS IN THEIR AREA BEGAN ONLY IN 1978, AND THAT BOTH PRO-VIETNAMESE AND "PRO-U.S." HMONG WERE "GASSED". WE ARE POUCHING THE NOTES TO EA/VLK. ALTHOUGH NOT SIGNED BY THE DOCTOR WHO COMPILED THEM, WE HAVE NO REASON TO DOUBT THEIR AUTHENTICITY. END SUMMARY.

2. (C) A NURSE/MIDWIFE WHO HAS BEEN WORKING WITH IN BAN VI NAY CAMP FOR TWO YEARS HAS SHARED WITH US NOTES COMPILED IN MID-1980 BY/ MEDICAL DOCTOR (PATHOLOGIST) BASED ON HIS EXAMINATION/ INTERVIEW OF 14 HMONG WHO CLAIMED TO HAVE SUFFERED A "POISON GAS" ATTACK IN THE PERIOD 15-20 MAY, 1980. B6
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3. (U) THE ALLEGED ATTACK TARGETED A VILLAGE AREA (CLUSTER OF VILLAGES 7) WHICH HAD A POPULATION OF 4,000, 30 OF WHOM ALLEGEDLY DIED IN THE ATTACK. THE VILLAGE AREA REPORTEDLY WAS HIT BY GAS SEVERAL TIMES IN THE PERIOD JANUARY-MAY 1980. ACCORDING TO THE NOTES, BOTH PRO-U.S. AND PRO-VIETNAMESE HMONG SETTLEMENTS IN THE AREA WERE "GASSED" IN EARLY 1980. PRO-VIETNAMESE HMONG REPORTEDLY TOOK SAMPLES OF THE YELLOW POWDER DRIPPED IN THE ATTACKS TO VIENTIANE TO SEEK AN EXPLANATION. LAO AUTHORITIES REPORTEDLY TOLD THEM IT WAS THE U.S. THAT WAS "USING THE GAS ON THE HMONG PEOPLE." AFTER MAY, 1980, THE SOURCES REPORT, POISON GAS WAS USED ON PEOPLE AND NOT ON CROPS.

4. (U) BRIEFLY RECOUNTING THE HISTORY OF "POISON GAS" EPISODES ACCORDING TO THE HMONG INTERVIEWEES.

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THE NOTES RECORD THAT UP UNTIL 1976 ATTACKS AGAINST THE HMONG FROM THE AIR CONSISTED OF BOMBS WHICH "EXPLODED SENDING OUT TINY NEEDLES." AFTER 1976, THE HMONG FACED "GAS-LIKE RAIN, YELLOW AND RED." THE "GAS" KILLED PLANTS BUT DID NOT DEFOLIATE TREES ENABLING THE HMONG TO CONTINUE TO HIDE IN THE JUNGLE. SYMPTOMS PRODUCED BY THE "GAS" USED SINCE 1978 INCLUDED: DIARRHEA WITH BLOOD, FEVER, COUGHING AND VOMITING WITH BLOOD. PREGNANT WOMEN LOST BABIES 4-5 MONTHS AFTER EXPOSURE TO THE "GAS."

5. (U) THE FOLLOWING SUMMARIZES NOTES ON SYMPTOMS/ CONDITIONS OF 14 HMONG INTERVIEWED AND EXAMINED IN MID-1980:

-- DIZZINESS: ALL 14 COMPLAINED OF FEELING DIZZY- DRUNK AND FAINTING IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE ATTACK; 3 SAID THE CONDITION CONTINUED UP TO TIME OF INTERVIEW.

-- NAUSEA-VOMITING: SEVEN COMPLAINED OF INITIAL NAUSEA (ONE CHRONIC); TWO REPORTED VOMITING OF FOOD, WHILE FIVE REPORTED VOMITING OF BLOOD. ONE VICTIM CONTINUED TO VOMIT SPUTUM AT TIME OF INTERVIEW. ONE VICTIM COMPLAINED OF CHRONIC DYSPERSIA.

-- IMPOTENCE: 10 REPORTED CHRONIC.

-- CHEST: 11 REPORTED INITIAL CHEST PAIN WHILE 9 REPORTED CHRONIC COUGH SINCE THE ATTACK. FIVE COMPLAINED OF BLOODY SPUTUM; ONE OF BLACK

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SPUTUM (CHRONIC) AND 6 OF FCS SPUTUM (ALL CHRONIC). ONE COMPLAINED OF TIGHTNESS IN THE CHEST (CHRONIC); 3 COMPLAINED OF DIFFICULTY BREATHING (TWO CHRONIC).

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- EYES: 3 REPORTED BURNING EYES (ONE CHRONIC); TWO REPORTED BLURRED VISION.
 - NERVES: FOUR COMPLAINED OF CHRONIC NUMBNESS, ONE EACH MENTIONING INCREASING NUMBNESS IN HIPS AND LEGS; ONE REPORTED CHRONIC TREMOR WHILE FIVE REPORTED GENERAL WEAKNESS (ALL CHRONIC).
 - APPETITE: NINE REPORTED THEY ATE POORLY AFTER THE ATTACK (FIVE CHRONIC). THE DOCTOR DESCRIBED THREE AS ANEXURIC.
 - ONE SUFFERED CHRONIC HYPOTENSION.
 - ONE COMPLAINED OF CHRONIC ABDOMINAL PAINS.
 - ONE COMPLAINED OF CHRONIC GENERAL BODY PAINS.
 - ONE COMPLAINED OF FEVER INTERMITTENT SINCE THE ATTACK.
 - ONE CLAIMED HIS URINE HAD CHANGED COLOR (RFI).
 - THE DOCTOR NOTED ONE PATIENT HAD AN ENLARGED SPLEEN.
 - ONE PATIENT WHO DRANK CONTAMINATED WATER SUFFERED VOMITING, BLOODY DIARRHEA, COUGHED BLOOD, SLEPT ON AND OFF FOR FOUR DAYS, AND CONTINUED TO EAT POORLY, FELT WEAK AND WAS IMPOTENT AT TIME OF INTERVIEW.
6. (C) OUR BAN VI NAY CONTACT TELL US THAT THE DOCTOR WHO COMPILED THE NOTES, [REDACTED] WAS SAID TO HAVE HAD DIFFICULTIES WITH HIS SPONSORING ORGANIZATION [REDACTED] BECAUSE OF HIS INSISTENCE ON PURSUING REPORTS OF "POISON GASSING" IN LAOS. [REDACTED]

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7. (C) COMMENT: WE HAVE NO CONFIRMATION OF, OR FURTHER
INFORMATION ON THE ALLEGED PROBLEMS BETWEEN
THE HIS NOTES ARE SKETCHY
BUT SUGGEST SEVERAL SYMPTOMS NOT NOTED
REGULARLY IN PREVIOUS REPORTING (IMPOTENCE,
MISCARRIAGES, LIMB NUMBNESS) AS WELL AS
REPEATING MOST SYMPTOMS COMMON TO THE PATTERN
PREVIOUSLY REPORTED. WE HAVE NO REASON TO
DOUBT THE AUTHENTICITY OF THE NOTES, THOUGH
THE PORTION WE HAVE WHICH RELATE TO GAS ARE
NOT SIGNED. WE MUST BE AWARE THAT
REFUGEE POPULATION IS SUFFERING FROM HIGH
INCIDENCE OF CHRONIC WASTING DISEASES SUCH
AS MALNUTRITION, ANEMIA, MALARIA, PARASITES
AND TUBERCULOSIS. ONE SUSPECTS THAT IF A
NON-GAS EXPOSED GROUP OF THIS POPULATION
IS ASKED ABOUT SYMPTOMS OF DISEASE, MANY OF
THE COMPLAINTS COLLECTED WOULD ALSO BE
VOLUNTEERED. END COMMENT.
DEAN

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END OF MESSAGE

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