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ACTION EA-12

INFO	OCT-00	ADS-00	INR-10	EUR-12	SS-10	CIAE-00	DODE-00
	H-01	IO-15	NSCE-00	NSAE-00	SSO-00	HA-06	L-03
	PM-09	AIT-02	PA-01	SVC-00	INRE-00	ACDA-12	ICAE-00
	SP-02	SPRS-02	/097 W				

-----033674 170756Z /13

O 170733Z DEC 81
 FM AMEMBASSY BEIJING
 TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8235
 INFO AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE PRIORITY
 AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
 AMCONSUL GUANGZHOU BY POUCH)
 AMCONSUL HONG KONG
 AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
 AMCONSUL SHANGHAI
 AIT TAIPEI

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3.O. 12065: N/A
 TAGS: PINS, LA, CH, PINT, PEPR, MILI, VM
 SUBJECT: DEFECTING LAO OFFICIAL'S BEIJING PRESS
 - CONFERENCE

1. SUMMARY AND COMMENT: THE PEOPLE'S DAILY (PD)
 DECEMBER 16 REPORTS THE BEIJING PRESS CONFERENCE
 DECEMBER 15 OF KHAMSENGKEO SENGSTHITH, LAO HEALTH
 MINISTRY BUREAU DIRECTOR WHO RECENTLY DEFECTED.
 KHAMSENGKEO SAID THAT THE VIETNAMESE INDEED ARE
 USING CHEMICAL WEAPONS IN LAOS, HAVE INCREASED
 THEIR TROOP STRENGTH THERE TO A POSSIBLE 50,000
 AND ARE TAKING TOUGH ECONOMIC AND ADMINISTRATIVE
 MEASURES TO REDUCE LAOS TO A MERE COLONY W/ THE
 INDOCHINA FEDERATION. WE DEFER TO VIENTIANE AND
 OTHERS TO MORE ACCURATELY (#)
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SURE THE VERACITY
 OF KHAMSENGKEO'S STATEMENTS. NONETHELESS, THE

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DEFECTION PROBABLY WILL BE VIEWED SIN BEIJING AS SERVING TO VALIDATE CHINA'S OWN VIEWS OF WHAT AN INDOCHINA UNDER DOMINANT VIETNAMESE INFLUENCE IS AND WOULD BE. HIS TESTIMONY COULD ALSO BE USEFUL IN BACKING UP CHARGES OF VIETNAMESE CHEMICAL WARFARE IN INDOCHINA. END SUMMARY AND COMMENT.

2. KHAMSENGKEO SENGSTHITH, FORMER BUREAU DIRECTOR OF THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH, LPDK, AND SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE LAOTIAN COMMITTEE FOR AFRO-ASIAN PEOPLE'S SOLIDARITY, GAVE A PRESS CONFERENCE IN BEIJING DECEMBER 15. THE DECEMBER 16 PEOPLE'S DAILY COVERED THE PRESS CONFERENCE, WHICH WAS ATTENDED BY BOTH DOMESTIC AND FOREIGN CORRESPONDENTS.

3. WE ASSUME DEPARTMENT AND OTHERS WILL HAVE READ WIRE SERVICE AND OTHER REPORTS ON THE PRESS CONFERENCE. NOTEWORTHY POINTS WERE AS FOLLOWS:

-- VIETNAM HAS USED CHEMICAL WEAPONS "IN THE AIR AND ON THE GROUND" IN LAOS, KILLING "THOUSANDS." THE VIETNAMESE ALONE USE THE WEAPONS AND HAVE KEPT THE AFFAIR SECRET FROM THE LAOTIANS.

-- THERE ARE 3,000 SOVIET ADVISORS IN LAOS, AND THE SOVIETS "HAVE TAKEN CONTROL" OF THE LAO AIR FORCE.

-- HANOI IS REDUCING LAOS TO COLONY STATUS WITHIN THE INDOCHINA FEDERATION BY PLUNDERING THE ECONOMIC RESOURCES OF THE COUNTRY AND EXERCISING DIRECT CONTROL OVER THE LAOTIAN COMMUNIST PARTY AND GOVERNMENT

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MINISTRIES. VIETNAMESE TROOP STRENGTH HAS STEADILY INCREASED TO 40,000 TO 50,000. HANOI HAS SYSTEMATICALLY PURGED RECALCITRANT LAO CADRE AND SUBJECTED OTHERS TO RIGOROUS INDOCTRINATION IN HANOI AND VIENTIANE.
HUMMEL

NOTE BY OC/T: OMISSION. CORRECTION TO FOLLOW.

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