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E.O. 12356: N/A

TAGS: PARM, MCAP, MARR

SUBJECT: GUIDANCE ON YELLOW RAIN

REF: BANGKOK 26617

1. THE WASHINGTON POST PUBLISHED MAY 29 AN ARTICLE ENTITLED, "US YELLOW RAIN REPORTS REBUTTED." THE ARTICLE DESCRIBES A CANADIAN SAMPLING EFFORT IN THAILAND IN 1984 WHICH INDICATES THAT TRICHOHECENE TOXINS--WHICH WE HAVE ALLEGED HAVE BEEN USED AS WEAPONS BY THE VIETNAMESE

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FORCES IN LAOS AND CAMBODIA--OCCUR NATURALLY IN SOUTHEAST ASIA. WE HAVE NOT YET SEEN THE CANADIAN DATA, BUT WILL OF COURSE EXAMINE ITS PREMISES AND CONCLUSIONS AND SEEK CLARIFICATIONS AS NECESSARY. WE HAVE SEEN NO EVIDENCE TO DATE WHICH CONTRADICTS OUR PREVIOUS FINDING THAT CHEMICAL AND TOXIN WEAPONS HAVE BEEN USED IN SOUTHEAST ASIA. YOU SHOULD USE GUIDANCE BELOW IN ANSWERING QUERIES.

BEGIN GUIDANCE.

CANADIAN STUDY ON CW

Q. DO YOU HAVE ANY COMMENT ON THE POST REPORT THAT A CANADIAN STUDY SHOWS THAT TOXINS THE US HAS CLAIMED HAVE BEEN USED IN CW OCCUR NATURALLY IN SE ASIA?

A: WE NOTE FROM THE WASHINGTON POST STORY THAT THE CANADIAN REPORT IS BASED ON WORK DONE IN 1984. OUR CONCLUSION THAT CW USE HAS OCCURRED IN SOUTHEAST ASIA IS BASED ON EVIDENCE COLLECTED SEVERAL YEARS PRIOR TO 1984.

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WE BELIEVE, THEREFORE, THAT THE RESULTS OF THE CANADIAN EFFORT AS REPORTED IN THE POST DO NOT POSE A CHALLENGE TO OUR EARLIER CONCLUSIONS.

CUR EVIDENCE THAT CW USE HAS OCCURRED IN SOUTHEAST ASIA WAS BASED ON EVIDENCE COLLECTED SEVERAL YEARS AGO. WE HAVE NO RECENT EVIDENCE TO CONFIRM THAT SUCH ATTACKS ARE STILL OCCURRING IN SOUTHEAST ASIA.

WE HAVE NOT SEEN THE CANADIAN MATERIAL AND ARE THEREFORE NOT IN A POSITION TO COMMENT ON IT. ONCE WE HAVE HAD A CHANCE TO EVALUATE THE DATA, WE WILL TAKE ITS CONCLUSIONS

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INTO ACCOUNT IN OUR OWN ASSESSMENT.

WE HAVE ENCOURAGED OTHER COUNTRIES TO CONDUCT THEIR OWN INVESTIGATIONS OF CW USE. WE APPRECIATE THAT CANADA AND THE UK ARE AMONG THE COUNTRIES WHICH HAVE TAKEN THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES SERIOUSLY.

BASED ON THE EVIDENCE AVAILABLE TO US, WE CONCLUDED SEVERAL YEARS AGO THAT TOXINS WERE BEING USED IN WARFARE IN SOUTHEAST ASIA.

WE WILL OF COURSE BE INTERESTED IN OBTAINING A COPY OF THE CANADIAN DATA, EXAMINING ITS PREMISES AND CONCLUSIONS AND SEEKING CLARIFICATIONS AS NECESSARY.

OUR JUDGMENT HAS BEEN THAT CHEMICAL AND TOXIN WEAPONS

HAVE BEEN USED IN SOUTHEAST ASIA AND AFGHANISTAN.

THE EVIDENCE SUPPORTING THIS CONCLUSION IS DOCUMENTED IN SEVERAL REPORTS ISSUED PREVIOUSLY BY THE UNITED STATES AS WELL AS OTHER INDEPENDENT RESEARCHERS AND NATIONS INCLUDING FRANCE AND THAILAND AS WELL AS THE REPORT OF THE INVESTIGATION CONDUCTED BY THE UNITED NATIONS IN 1982.

Q: DO TRICHOHECENES OCCUR NATURALLY IN SOUTHEAST ASIA?

A: AS WE HAVE STATED BEFORE, TRICHOHECENE TOXINS HAVE BEEN IDENTIFIED PREVIOUSLY IN ENVIRONMENTAL SAMPLES TAKEN FROM CHEMICAL ATTACK SITES IN LAOS AND CAMBODIA. THE PARTICULAR TOXINS THAT HAVE BEEN IDENTIFIED IN ENVIRONMENTAL SAMPLES ARE NOT KNOWN TO OCCUR NATURALLY IN THE COMBINATIONS FOUND AND AT THE LEVELS DETECTED IN SOUTHEAST ASIA.

WE AND OTHERS HAVE DEVOTED CONSIDERABLE EFFORT TO LOOKING

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FOR NATURALLY-OCCURRING TRICHOHECENE TOXINS IN SOUTHEAST ASIA, BUT HAVE NOT FOUND THEM IN HUMAN SAMPLES OR IN THE ENVIRONMENT.

WE HAVE NOT YET SEEN THE CANADIAN MATERIAL, AND WE ARE NOT IN A POSITION TO COMMENT ON IT.

OUR CONCLUSION ABOUT THE USE OF TOXINS AS WEAPONS IN SOUTHEAST ASIA IS BASED ON A WIDE RANGE OF EVIDENCE, INCLUDING SAMPLE DATA, DIRECT INTERVIEWS WITH ATTACK

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VICTIMS, AND EYEWITNESS ACCOUNTS, AS DOCUMENTED IN BOTH THE SECRETARY'S REPORT TO CONGRESS ON CHEMICAL WARFARE IN SOUTHEAST ASIA AND AFGHANISTAN IN MARCH, 1982, AND THE UPDATE REPORT IN NOVEMBER, 1982.

UK STUDY

Q. WHAT ABOUT THE UK REPORT ALSO CITED IN THE POST?

A: THE RECENT SAMPLE ANALYSIS EFFORT BY THE BRITISH CHEMICAL DEFENSE RESEARCH ESTABLISHMENT ON CHEMICAL

WEAPONS USE IN SOUTHEAST ASIA HAS YIELDED NEGATIVE RESULTS. HOWEVER, THIS HAS NOT ALTERED OUR EARLIER CONCLUSION THAT CHEMICAL AND TOXIN WEAPONS HAVE BEEN USED IN SOUTHEAST ASIA AND AFGHANISTAN.

THE EVIDENCE SUPPORTING THIS CONCLUSION IS DOCUMENTED IN SEVERAL REPORTS ISSUED PREVIOUSLY BY THE UNITED STATES AS WELL AS OTHER INDEPENDENT RESEARCHERS AND NATIONS INCLUDING FRANCE AND THAILAND, AS WELL AS THE REPORT OF THE INVESTIGATION CONDUCTED BY THE UNITED NATIONS IN 1982. WE NOTE THAT WHILE THE MINISTRY OF DEFENSE HAS REPORTED

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THE CDRE SAMPLE ANALYSIS WAS NEGATIVE FOR MYCOTOXINS, THE MOD BELIEVES CHEMICAL WARFARE ATTACKS PROBABLY DID TAKE PLACE IN SOUTHEAST ASIA, BASED ON EXISTING EPIDEMIOLOGICAL EVIDENCE.

WE FURTHER NOTE THE TOTAL BODY OF EVIDENCE INCLUDES EYEWITNESS ACCOUNTS OF ATTACKS BY VICTIMS AND FURTHER TESTIMONY BY MEDICAL AND RELIEF WORKERS, JOURNALISTS, DEFECTORS, PRIVATE US AND FOREIGN CITIZENS AND GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS. DATA FROM OTHER SAMPLES--HUMAN BLOOD AND URINE, AND TISSUES ANALYZED FOLLOWING THE AUTOPSY OF VICTIMS--HAVE CONFIRMED THE PRESENCE OF VARIOUS TRICOTHECENE MYCOTOXINS. END GUIDANCE. SHULTZ

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