

SECRET

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ACTION EUR-00

INFO LOG-00 COPY-01 ADS-00 INR-10 SS-00 OIC-02 CIAE-00  
EB-08 H-01 IO-17 NSAE-00 L-03 PM-10 EAP-00  
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P 101632Z APR 86  
FM AMEMBASSY LONDON  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4539  
INFO SECDEF WASHDC  
NATO COLLECTIVE  
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW  
AMEMBASSY BANGKOK  
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

*April 1, 1986*

REVIEW AUTHORITY: Oscar Olson, Senior Reviewer

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GENEVA FOR CD

E.O.12356: DECL: OADR  
TAGS: PARM, CW, UK  
SUBJECT: SOVIET CBW USE IN SOUTHEAST ASIA - UK FINDS  
- NO EVIDENCE OF TRICHOHECENES IN LATEST TESTS

1. S - ENTIRE TEXT

2. AMBASSADOR HAS JUST RECEIVED AN APRIL 7 LETTER FROM MOD MINISTER OF STATE JOHN STANLEY REGARDING POSSIBLE CHEMICAL WEAPONS USE IN SOUTHEAST ASIA. LETTER (TEXT BELOW) REPORTS THAT THE BRITISH CHEMICAL DEFENCE ESTABLISHMENT (CDE), AFTER CHECKING ITS METHODOLOGY WITH U.S. LABORATORIES, HAS RE-EXAMINED VEGETATION SAMPLES FROM THE AREAS, BUT ONCE AGAIN FAILED TO IDENTIFY THE PRESENCE OF TRICHOHECENES. STANLEY ADDS, HOWEVER, THAT THE UK FINDINGS ARE NOT NECESSARILY INCOMPATIBLE WITH U.S. FINDINGS DERIVED  
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FROM OTHER SAMPLES. MOREOVER, THE BRITISH DO BELIEVE CW ATTACKS DID TAKE PLACE IN SOUTHEAST ASIA, ALTHOUGH THEY CANNOT IDENTIFY THE AGENT(S) USED.

3. IN HIS LETTER, STANLEY NOTES THE POSSIBILITY OF PARLIAMENTARY AND MEDIA INQUIRIES ON THIS SUBJECT, AND ENCLOSES THE MOD'S CONTINGENCY PUBLIC AFFAIRS GUIDANCE, ALSO PROVIDED BELOW. HE ALSO MAKES CLEAR THAT THE CDE'S FINDINGS DID NOT CONFIRM THE MESELSON "BEE FECES" HYPOTHESIS, CONTRARY TO PRESS REPORTS LAST YEAR.

4. BEGIN TEXT OF LETTER TO AMBASSADOR PRICE:

I WROTE TO YOU ON 4 DECEMBER 1984 ON THE SUBJECT OF THE USE OF CHEMICAL WEAPONS (CW) IN SOUTH EAST ASIA, TO INFORM YOU THAT OUR CHEMICAL DEFENCE ESTABLISHMENT (CDE) HAD COMPLETED FURTHER ANALYSES OF VEGETATION SAMPLES FROM THE AREA AND THAT NO TRICHOHECENES HAD BEEN DETECTED. I SAID THAT, IN VIEW OF THESE FURTHER NEGATIVE RESULTS, OUR LABORATORIES AND YOURS NEEDED TO GET TOGETHER TO DETERMINE WHETHER THE APPARENT DIFFERENCES IN SOME OF THE RESULTS WERE ATTRIBUTABLE TO THE SAMPLES BEING ANALYZED OR TO THE TECHNIQUES BEING USED. THIS FURTHER WORK HAS NOW BEEN COMPLETED AND I AM WRITING TO YOU TO LET YOU KNOW OUR CONCLUSIONS.

THE FURTHER WORK HAS FALLEN INTO TWO PARTS. FIRST, CDE HAS HAD DISCUSSIONS WITH ITS U.S. COUNTERPARTS IN ORDER TO OBTAIN THE U.S. TOXICITY DATA FOR TRICHOHECENE T2 AND TO DETERMINE THE U.S. CONCLUSIONS ABOUT THE CONCENTRATIONS WHICH WOULD BE NECESSARY TO DELIVER SUFFICIENT T2 TO BE AN EFFECTIVE CW AGENT TO THE TARGET. WE HAVE ESTABLISHED THAT U.S. AND UK DATA ON  
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TOXICITY ARE ESSENTIALLY IN AGREEMENT, THOUGH THERE ARE SOME DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE U.S. AND UK EXPERTS IN REGARD TO DELIVERY CONCENTRATIONS. SECONDLY, CDE AND OUR ADMIRALTY RESEARCH ESTABLISHMENT LABORATORY AT HOLTON HEATH HAVE PARTICIPATED, ALONG WITH U.S. DOD AND OTHER LABORATORIES, IN TWO SETS OF CAREFULLY-CONTROLLED EXPERIMENTS IN WHICH SPIKED SAMPLES OF HUMAN BLOOD AND URINE WERE ANALYZED AS A MEANS OF DETERMINING THE CAPABILITIES OF THE PARTICIPANTS TO DETECT THE PRESENCE OF TRICHOHECENES. I AM TOLD THAT THE RESULTS OF THESE EXPERIMENTS HAVE DEMONSTRATED CLEARLY THAT BOTH CDE/ARE AND THE DOD LABORATORY (CRDC) HAVE TECHNIQUES AND FACILITIES OF SUFFICIENT SENSITIVITY TO DETECT ACCURATELY THE PRESENCE OF TRICHOHECENES.

IT IS STILL THE CASE THAT THE ENVIRONMENTAL AND BIOMEDICAL SAMPLES WHICH WE HAVE ANALYZED HAVE NOT PRODUCED ANY POSITIVE RESULTS. THIS DOES NOT MEAN, OF COURSE, THAT THE SMALL NUMBER OF POSITIVES REPORTED ELSEWHERE ARE NECESSARILY IN ERROR. CDE'S ANALYSES HAVE COVERED 52 ENVIRONMENTAL AND 19 BIOMEDICAL SAMPLES, WHICH REPRESENTS A REASONABLE THOUGH RELATIVELY SMALL NUMBER OF SAMPLES. THE ABSENCE OF POSITIVE RESULTS IS NOT, THEREFORE, NECESSARILY INCOMPATIBLE WITH POSITIVE FINDINGS ELSEWHERE FROM DIFFERENT SAMPLES. I SHOULD ALSO SAY THAT, WHILE OUR ANALYTICAL WORK AT CDE HAS PROVIDED NO EVIDENCE THAT

TRICHOHECENES HAVE BEEN USED IN SOUTH EAST ASIA, EPIDEMIOLOGICAL STUDIES OF AVAILABLE REPORTS FROM THE AREA DOES LEAD US TO BELIEVE THAT CW ATTACKS PROBABLY DID TAKE PLACE THERE. WE ARE, HOWEVER, UNABLE TO IDENTIFY THE AGENT (OR AGENTS) USED.

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TAGS: PARM, CW, UK  
SUBJECT: SOVIET CBW USE IN SOUTHEAST ASIA - UK FINDS  
IN VIEW OF SOME PARLIAMENTARY AND MEDIA INTEREST IN  
THIS MATTER IT MAY BECOME NECESSARY FOR US TO MAKE SOME  
PUBLIC STATEMENT ABOUT THE CONCLUSIONS REACHED AS A  
RESULT OF THE ANALYTICAL WORK AT CDE. I ATTACH A COPY  
OF THE LINE THAT WE PROPOSE TO TAKE SHOULD WE NEED TO  
RESPOND TO QUESTIONS ABOUT OUR CONCLUSIONS AND WOULD OF  
COURSE BE GLAD TO RECEIVE ANY COMMENTS THAT YOU HAVE.

YOU WILL NOTE THAT WE SHALL NOT BE LENDING SUPPORT TO THE THEORY, PUT ABOUT BY PROFESSOR MESELSON AND OTHERS, THAT "YELLOW RAIN" IS BEE FECES. YOU MAY HAVE SEEN THAT PROFESSOR MESELSON TOLD THE NEW SCIENTIST DURING THE SUMMER THAT CDE'S WORK CONFIRMED HIS HYPOTHESIS, BUT WE HAVE NOT, IN FACT, TOLD PROFESSOR MESELSON ABOUT THE RESULTS OF OUR ANALYSES.

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FINALLY MAY I SAY HOW MUCH WE APPRECIATE YOUR COOPERATION WITH US IN THIS MATTER AND THE CLOSE RELATIONSHIP THAT HAS BEEN BUILT UP BETWEEN CDE AND THE US DOD LABORATORIES WHICH WE WISH TO CONTINUE..

- YOURS SINCERELY,
- /S/
- JOHN STANLEY

END TEXT

5. BEGIN TEXT OF MOD PUBLIC AFFAIRS GUIDANCE:

- THE RESULTS OF THE CHEMICAL RESEARCH
- ESTABLISHMENT'S INVESTIGATION INTO THE USE OF
- CHEMICAL WARFARE AGENTS IN SOUTH EAST ASIA
- .....
- OUR CHEMICAL DEFENCE ESTABLISHMENT (CDE) AT
- PORTON DOWN HAS ANALYZED A NUMBER OF ENVIRON-
- MENTAL AND BIOMEDICAL SAMPLES FROM ALLEGED
- CHEMICAL WARFARE ATTACKS IN SOUTH EAST ASIA TO
- SEE WHETHER TRACES OF TRICHOTHECENE MYCOTOXINS
- COULD BE DETECTED. THESE HAVE YIELDED NEGATIVE
- RESULTS.
- THE ABSENCE OF POSITIVE RESULTS IS NOT NECESSARILY
- INCOMPATIBLE WITH POSITIVE FINDINGS ELSEWHERE FROM
- DIFFERENT SAMPLES. WE ARE, HOWEVER, CONFIDENT THAT
- OUR ANALYTICAL TECHNIQUES WOULD HAVE DETECTED
- TRICHOTHECENES HAD THEY BEEN PRESENT IN THE ALLEGED
- CW SAMPLES ANALYZED AT CDE.

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- WHILST OUR INVESTIGATION INTO TRICHOTHECENE
- MYCOTOXINS HAS PROVED NEGATIVE, IT IS OUR VIEW ON
- THE BASIS OF EPIDEMIOLOGICAL EVIDENCE THAT

- CHEMICAL WARFARE ATTACKS PROBABLY DID TAKE PLACE
  - IN SOUTH EAST ASIA. WE ARE, HOWEVER, UNABLE TO
  - IDENTIFY THE AGENT (OR AGENTS) USED.
- END TEXT.  
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