



Department of State

EXCISE

TELEGRAM

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- 181127Z JAN 82
- IN AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
- TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4963
- NFO AMEMBASSY BEIJING
- AMEMBASSY CANBERRA
- AMEMBASSY GENEVA
- AMCONSUL HONG KONG
- AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
- AMEMBASSY JAKARTA
- AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR
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- SECDEF WASHDC
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REVIEWED by RAW DATE 11/3/88

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EXCISE DECLASSIFY in PART

DENY Non-responsive info

FOI, EO or PA exemptions (b)(1), (b)(4), (b)(6)

NS authority 105

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CDRAARADCOM FOR ORDAR-SEIC

EO 12065: RDS-2 01/18/02 (ROY, J.S.) OR-M
TAGS: PARM, SHUM, PORG, SREF, UK, LA, YH, UR
SUBJ: HMONG GIVE POISON GAS SAMPLE TO BRITISH EMBASSY
REFS: A. BANGKOK 2321 (NOTAL), B. STATE 008519 (NOTAL)
1. (C - ENTIRE TEXT.)

2. SUMMARY: A HMONG RESISTANCE LEADER CLAIMING
EXPOSURE TO A DECEMBER 12, 1981 POISON GAS ATTACK
IN LAOS ARRIVED IN THAILAND JANUARY 8 WITH A SAMPLE
OF RESIDUE COLLECTED IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE ATTACK.
ON RECEIVING WORD OF THE ARRIVAL OF A SAMPLE AND
IN ACCORDANCE WITH REF B WE INVITED A BRITISH
EMBASSY OFFICER TO ACCOMPANY US TO BAN VI NAY
CAMP JANUARY 16, TO COLLECT THE SAMPLE. THE
HMONG CHIEF AT BAN VI NAY AGREED THAT THE SAMPLE
SHOULD BE TURNED OVER TO THE BRITISH EMBOFF.
THE HMONG RESISTANCE LEADER AND A SUBORDINATE
WHO HELPED HIM COLLECT THE SAMPLE PROVIDED A
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BRIEF ACCOUNT OF THE ATTACK, THEIR ILLNESS
FOLLOWING COLLECTION OF THE SAMPLE AND THE EFFECT
OF THE ATTACK ON A NEARBY VILLAGE WHICH THE
SOURCE VISITED SHORTLY AFTER THE ATTACK.
VILLAGERS SUFFERED BLOODY VOMITING AND BLOODY
DIARRHEA. SOME REPORTEDLY DIED AS A RESULT OF
THE ATTACK. THE SAMPLE, APPARENTLY WEIGHING
SEVERAL GRAMS, IS IN A SMALL CONTAINER AND WRAPPED
IN PLASTIC. THE BRITISH EMBASSY IS SENDING THE
SAMPLE TO LONDON FOR ANALYSIS VIA DA 144.

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EVENING OF JANUARY 19. END SUMMARY.

3. BRITISH EMBASSY FIRST SECRETARY [] ACCOMPANIED EMOFF TO BAN VI KAY JANUARY 16 TO RETRIEVE A POISON GAS SAMPLE REPORTED REF A. THE HONG LEADERSHIP AGREED TO TURN THE SAMPLE OVER TO THE BRITISH. [] RETURNED DIRECTLY TO BANGKOK AFTER A BRIEF INTERVIEW WITH THE HONG WHO COLLECTED AND BROUGHT OUT THE SAMPLE. EMOFF REMAINED BEHIND FOR MORE EXTENSIVE DEBRIEF OF HONG LEADER AND A DEPUTY WHO ASSISTED IN COLLECTING THE SAMPLE.

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4. THE ATTACK:
HONG RESISTANCE LEADER [] SAID THAT ON DECEMBER 12, 1981, AT BETWEEN 1500-1600 HOURS, WHAT SOUNDED LIKE A JET CIRCLED A LARGE AREA, INCLUDING AN OPIUM/VEGETABLE FIELD (VIC TG3645) IN WHICH HE WAS WORKING. THE PLANE CIRCLED SLOWLY APPROXIMATELY THREE TIMES, THEN ACCELERATED AND DEPARTED THE AREA HEADING NORTH. THE SKY WAS PARTLY CLOUDY WITH LIGHT WIND. HE GUESSED THE TEMPERATURE WAS IN THE HIGH 60'S TO LOW 70'S FAHRENHEIT. SOURCE EMERGED FROM A SMALL SHELTER SOON AFTER THE PLANE LEFT THE AREA. HE SAID HE

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SAN ONE TO TWO FOOT DIAMETER SLOTS OF RICE-GRAIN SIZE YELLOW SUBSTANCE COVERING GROUND AND VEGETATION IN THE AREA. THE SUBSTANCE WAS STICKY AND FOR THE FIRST 30 MINUTES GAVE OFF AN ACRID SMELL LIKE BURNING GUNPOWDER.
5.

I COLLECTED SOME OF THE YELLOW SUBSTANCE USING ARM-LENGTH STICKS TO PLACE THE SUBSTANCE IN A SMALL CONTAINER.

HE SAID THAT HE COLLECTED THE SAMPLE SO THAT HE COULD SHOW IT TO HIS COMMANDER. HE KNEW IT WAS POISON BECAUSE HE HAD BEEN IN THE AREA OF SUCH ATTACKS BEFORE AND SEEN THE EFFECT OF THE SUBSTANCE ON PEOPLE. AFTER ONE TO TWO HOURS OF COLLECTING THE SUBSTANCE, THE FIVE HONG, INCLUDING [REDACTED] BECAME ILL. IN

SEPARATE INTERVIEWS, [REDACTED] DESCRIBED NEARLY IDENTICAL SYMPTOMS: [REDACTED] IN ROUGH ORDER OF APPEARANCE OF THE SYMPTOMS THEY
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FELT THAT THEIR EYES WERE BULGING OR PROTRUDING; THEIR EYES ALSO TEARED; BOTH DEVELOPED DIARRHEA AND VOMITING. [REDACTED] SAID THAT HIS DIARRHEA HAD TRACES OF DARK BLOOD. BOTH EXPERIENCED DIFFICULTY BREATHING AND DEVELOPED DRY COUGHS. [REDACTED] COMPLAINED OF A RUNNY NOSE. BOTH SPOKE OF A SEVERE ITCHING OVER THEIR ENTIRE BODY WHICH CONTINUED FOR MANY DAYS FOLLOWING THE ATTACK. [REDACTED] APPEARS TO HAVE FAINT SMALL SKIN DISCOLORATIONS ON HIS BODY, WHICH THE BRITISH ENBOFF PHOTOGRAPHED. BY THE NEXT MORNING THE SYMPTOMS HAD ABATED

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SOMWHAT AND THE FIVE MEN HEADED TO THEIR COMMANDER'S VILLAGE AT NA DREANG (APPROXIMATELY TG4737), CARRYING THE SAMPLE.

6. AFTER APPROXIMATELY NINETY MINUTES WALKING, THE FIVE REACHED THE VILLAGE OF BAN PHADENG (TG3328). BAN PHADENG IS A CHAO FA RESISTANCE VILLAGE WITH A POPULATION OF 300-400. HONG RESISTANCE SOLDIERS LIVE IN THE VILLAGE. LAO AND VIETNAMESE INFANTRY HAVE UNSUCCESSFULLY ATTACKED THIS VILLAGE IN THE PAST. [] SAID THE VILLAGE HAD A HEAVIER CONCENTRATION OF THE YELLOW RESIDUE COVERING IT THAN HE HAD SEEN AT HIS OPIUM/VEGETABLE FIELD. VILLAGERS' ACCOUNTS TIMED THE ATTACK AT APPROXIMATELY THE SAME TIME AS THE ATTACK ON [] OPIUM/VEGETABLE FIELD.

[] SAW MANY VILLAGERS SITTING OR LEANING. SOME OF THOSE LYING AS IF ASLEEP WERE TREMBLING AS IF SUFFERING FROM A HIGH FEVER. VILLAGERS SAID THAT THE VICTIMS HAD FALLEN ILL IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE AIR-DROPPED YELLOW SUBSTANCE FELL ON THE VILLAGE. THEY DESCRIBED TO SYMPTOMS OF THOSE WHO WERE ILL AS BLOODY

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DIARRHEA AND VOMITING, DIZZINESS, SKIN BLISTERS AND COUGHING. ACCORDING TO THE VILLAGERS, THOSE WHO CAME IN PHYSICAL CONTACT WITH THE SUBSTANCE BECAME ILL MORE QUICKLY. TWENTY TO THIRTY VILLAGERS INCLUDING TWO CHILDREN ALLEGEDLY HAD ALREADY DIED, BUT DID NOT SEE THE BODIES. THE SKIN OF THE DECEASED ALLEGEDLY BLACKENED MUCH MORE QUICKLY THAN WAS NORMAL AND "BROKE OPEN" OR SPLIT. NEITHER WERE TOLD OF ANY UNUSUAL SMELLING OF THE CORPSES. 7. AFTER ABOUT 2 HOURS, AND HIS TEAM LEFT PHADENG AND HEADED FOR NA DREANG. REACHING IT BY EVENING OF DECEMBER 13. COMMANDER, NIA TONG, GAVE PERMISSION FOR AND 14 OF HIS MEN TO CARRY THE SAMPLE TO THAILAND. ENBOFF TALKED WITH ALL 14 ONLY HAD CONTACT WITH THE DECEMBER 12 GASSING INCIDENT THOUGH THREE OTHERS REPORTED PREVIOUS EPISODES IN WHICH THEY SAID THEY WERE MADE ILL.

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8. COMMENT: THIS GASSING INCIDENT IS TYPICAL OF OTHER ACCOUNTS REPORTED FROM LAOS. DETAILS ON THE ACTUAL ATTACK ARE SPARSE. WE HAVE SHARED THIS REPORT WITH THE BRITISH HERE.

END COMMENT.

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