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SUBJECT: REPORT ON CHEMICAL WEAPONS USE IN CAMBODIA

FOR INFORMATION OF ADDRESSEES. POST TRANSMITS FULL
TEXT OF INVESTIGATIVE ARTICLE IN MILAN'S CONSERVATIVE
"IL GIORNALE NUOVO" OF MARCH 19, IN WHICH CORRESPONDENT
LUCIO LAM¹ PRESENTS EVIDENCE OF USE OF SOVIET
CHEMICALS IN CAMBODIA. TEXT FOLLOWS.

BANNER: "OUR CORRESPONDENT'S LENGTHY INVESTIGATION
IN THE AREAS WHERE CHEMICAL WEAPONS WERE USED."
HEADLINE: "CAMBODIA: THEY REALLY ARE USING
POISONOUS GASSES." SUBHEAD: "DESPITE SAMPLES OF
POISONOUS SUBSTANCES, THE TESTIMONY OF SURVIVORS,
THE CONFESSION OF A PILOT WHO DROPPED POISONOUS
BOMBS, HANOI'S ADMISSIONS. IT IS STILL BEING CLAIMED
THAT NO PROOF EXISTS. THE PUZZLING U.N. INVESTIGATION
COMMISSION, CONSIDERED BY A RUSSIAN AND ASSIGNED
TO PEOPLE INCOMPETENT FOR THE TASK."

FROM OUR CORRESPONDENT -- BANGKOK, 18 MARCH --
"AND WHAT ABOUT THE GASSES? DO THEY USE POISON
GAS?" I ASK MY COLLEAGUE WHO HAS WORKED HERE FOR
YEARS. "WHO KNOWS", HE REPLIES, STRETCHING HIS
ARMS IN THE AIRCONDITIONED OFFICE. "THE GASSES ARE
LIKE THE LOCH NESS MONSTER. EVERYBODY TALKS
ABOUT IT AND NOBODY KNOWS ANYTHING ABOUT IT."

FORTY-EIGHT HOURS LATER, I PUT THE SAME QUESTION TO
 DR. KHOUANT, WHO GRADUATED IN PHARMACY IN PARIS
 AND NOW WORKS IN PHUM THWEY FIELD HOSPITAL IN
 CAMBODIAN TERRITORY WHICH IS CONTROLLED BY KHMER
 ROUGE. "CERTAINLY THEY USE GASSES, REGULARLY.
 LAST TIME THEY USED THEM NEAR HERE, 4 MONTH AGO.
 WE HAD TO TREAT A LOT OF VICTIMS. SOME HAD BEEN
 POISONED BY CARRYING THEIR DEAD. TWO OF THEM ARE
 STILL UNDER OBSERVATION."

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I ASK IF I CAN SEE THEM. THE FIRST IS DOUBLED UP IN HIS BED. HE DOES NOT LOOK CAPABLE OF CONVERSATION. THE SECOND IS SITTING UP AND SEEMS IN MODERATELY GOOD SHAPE. HIS NAME IS RETH. HE IS TWENTY YEARS OLD. HERE IS WHAT HE HAS TO SAY: "IT HAPPENED AT TUHL CHEREY ON FEBRUARY 13 TOWARDS EVENING. THEY BEGAN FIRING ARTILLERY (SHELLS). THERE WERE ABOUT TWENTY OF THEM, BUT TWO OF THE LAST ONES WERE CARRYING SOMETHING POISONOUS. WE COULD TELL THAT IMMEDIATELY BY THE SWEETISH SMELL THAT SPREAD THROUGH THE AIR. A LOT OF US FELT DIZZY RIGHT AWAY, THEN WE GOT A FEELING OF SUFFOCATING IN OUR CHESTS, FOLLOWED BY VOMITING. A LOT OF US VOMITED BLOOD. THERE WAS BURNING FEELING FROM MY MOUTH TO MY STOMACH."

- WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS?

"MY COLLEAGUES USE LARGE AMOUNTS OF GLUCOSE SOLUTION, WHEN IT IS AVAILABLE. THEY DO A SORT OF BLOOD-WASHING," SAYS DR. KHOVANI.

WHAT IS ONE TO MAKE OF SUCH TESTIMONY?

THE NEXT DAY I GO TO THE BATTLE ZONE. BEHIND THE LINES I MEET A PATROL WHICH HAS COLLECTED VARIOUS WEAPONS CAPTURED FROM THE VIETNAMESE. ONE OF THE THINGS THEY HAVE IS A GAS-MASK OF A TYPE I HAVE NEVER SEEN BEFORE. IT IS MADE OF THICK, GREYISH-WHITE RUBBER, IS VERY LIGHTWEIGHT AND FITS PERFECTLY AROUND THE CONTOURS OF THE FACE WHEN IT IS PUT ON. WHERE ITALIAN GAS MASKS HAVE A FILTER BOX, THIS ONE HAS A ROUND EXHALATION VALVE. THE AIR INTAKE IS BESIDE THE EARS WHICH MAKES THE WEARER LOOK LIKE SOMETHING OUT OF A SCIENCE FICTION MOVIE. NOTEWORTHY FEATURES OF THIS DEVICE ARE THE FACT THAT THE WEARER CAN SPEAK WHILE HE HAS IT ON, AND THE EXCELLENT VISION PROVIDED BY ITS TWO LARGE TRIANGULAR EYEPieces, WITH THEIR ROUNDED EDGES.

"WHERE DID THIS COME FROM?" I ASK. "A VIET WAS WEARING IT," THEY TELL ME. "A VIET FROM THE CHEMICAL DIVISION."

DO THE VIETNAMESE HAVE CHEMICAL DIVISIONS? AND IS THERE PROOF OF THIS?

"THERE'S NO NEED FOR PROOF", DR. KHOVANI TELLS ME.

"THEY ADMIT IT THEMSELVES. ON APRIL 18 LAST YEAR, RADIO HANOI ANNOUNCED THAT THE VIETNAMESE GOVERNMENT WAS AWARDED ITS HO CHI MINH MEDAL TO THE CHEMICAL ATTACK DIVISIONS. GENERAL LE TRONG TAN READ THE CITATION: "... BECAUSE, WITH THEIR CHEMICAL WEAPONS, THESE DIVISIONS CONTRIBUTED TO THE GREAT VICTORY OF THE ANTI-AMERICAN RESISTANCE AND ARE CONTINUING THEIR CONTRIBUTION AS WE FACE THE NEW SITUATION OF TODAY." WE TAPED THE BROADCAST AND SO DID THE THAIANDESE. YOU CAN CONFIRM THIS AT BANGKOK." (I DID.)

WHAT SYMPTOMS DO THE VICTIMS EXPERIENCE?

"THE SYMPTOMS VARY DEPENDING ON THE TYPE OF GAS USED. SOME CAUSE VOMITING AND BLOOD TO BE SECRETED IN THE URINE. (THE GASSES CONTAIN ANTI-COAGULANTS). SOME CAUSE ASPHYXIA AND A RAPID DROP IN BLOOD PRESSURE. STILL OTHERS ATTACK THE EYES AND CAUSE SKIN ERUPTIONS."

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SO DIFFERENT PRODUCTS ARE USED?

"YES. AND I BELIEVE THEY SOMETIMES EVEN MIX THEM. THIS IS BEING STUDIED IN THE CHEMICAL SECTOR OF THE THAILOANSE ARMY, IN BANGKOK AS WELL."

SO I LEARN THAT THE ROYAL CAMBODIAN ARMY HAS A CHEMICAL DEPARTMENT. IT IS RUN BY CAPTAIN CHALERMSUK YUGALA, WHO GRADUATED IN CHEMISTRY AND BIOLOGY. HE AGREES TO SEE ME ON THE UNDERSTANDING THAT I DO NOT GET HIM INTO TROUBLE WITH THE ARMY. "EITHER YOU DON'T QUOTE ME, OR YOU DON'T ASK ME IF THE VIETNAMESE ARE USING CHEMICAL WEAPONS," HE WARNS ME. I OPT FOR THE LATTER ALTERNATIVE.

"CAPTAIN, I AM NOT GOING TO ASK YOU WHAT YOU THINK OF THE VIETNAMESE USING CHEMICAL WEAPONS. I ONLY WANT TO ASK YOU IF ANYONE HAS TALKED TO YOU ABOUT IT."

"WELL, THERE'S THE STORY OF THE LAOTIAN PILOT... A LITTLE WHILE BACK A LAOTIAN MILITARY PILOT CAME TO US, A CAREER OFFICER WHO HAD BEEN IN THE SERVICE SINCE BEFORE THE PATHET LAO TOOK OVER, AND HAD STAYED ON IN HIS POST EVEN AFTER THE PURGE. HE SAID HE WAS ON VACATION WITH HIS FAMILY AND WANTED TO TAKE THE OPPORTUNITY TO FLEE HIS COUNTRY. HE SAID HE WANTED TO GO TO NEW ZEALAND, WHERE, IN FACT, HE NOW IS, AND SAID THAT IF WE WOULD HELP HIM, HE WOULD GIVE US SOME VERY INTERESTING INFORMATION. WHEN HE HAD HIS PAPERS AND AIRPLANE TICKET SAFELY IN HAND, HE TOLD US THAT HE WAS FLEEING BECAUSE HE DID NOT WANT TO GAS HIS COMPATRIOTS. HE SAID THAT HE HAD FLOWN SOME 'CHEMICAL' MISSIONS AGAINST THE HMONG, THE LAOTIAN TRIBE WHICH HAS ALWAYS BEEN ANTI-COMMUNIST, WHICH FOUGHT FOR THE AMERICANS IN THE VIETNAM WAR.

"U.S. L-19-TYPE PLANES WERE USED FOR THE MISSION. THEIR PAYLOAD WAS FOUR BOMBS: TWO ORDINARY EXPLOSIVE BOMBS AND TWO WHICH CONTAINED A SECRET PRODUCT. ON THESE MISSIONS HE HAD A POLITICAL COMMISSAR ON BOARD AND HE WAS GIVEN THE COORDINATES AT WHICH THE BOMBS WERE TO BE RELEASED ONLY AFTER TAKE-OFF. THE SECOND TWO BOMBS HAD TO BE RELEASED AT LOW ALTITUDES, AND THE PLANE THEN HAD TO GO INTO A STEEP ASCENT. THE BOMBS EXPLODED IN THE AIR AND RELEASED AN ENORMOUS YELLOW CLOUD. HE WAS GIVEN A SPECIAL ALLOWANCE FOR FLYING THESE MISSIONS AND WAS GIVEN IDEOLOGICAL INDOCTRINATION LECTURES BY A VIETNAMESE OFFICER BEFORE TAKE OFF. THAT PILOT LEFT THAILAND LAST YEAR, TEN DAYS BEFORE THE U.S. COMMISSION ARRIVED."

"DID YOU TELL THIS TO THE COMMISSION?"

"YES, BUT IT WAS A STRANGE COMMISSION. THEY WERE PICKED AT RANDOM AND ABSOLUTELY UNPREPARED. I WAS ASSIGNED AS THEIR OFFICIAL ESCORT. I TOOK THEM OUT TO THE FIELDS TO QUESTION THE HMONG AND IT WAS A DISASTER. THE TRIBESMEN ARE INTELLIGENT, BUT THEY HAVE KEPT THEIR OWN PRIMITIVE CULTURE, A BIT LIKE THE RED INDIANS IN THE UNITED STATES."

- CENDOCIDE

"THE HEAD OF THE COMMISSION ASKED ONE OF THEM, A MILITARY OFFICER, 'HOW LONG DID THE BOMB TAKE TO FALL TO THE GROUND?' AND HE REPLIED, 'THE TIME IT

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TOOK FOR US NOT TO BE ABLE TO HEAR THE AIRPLANE ANY MORE. 'OVER HOW LARGE AN AREA DID THE RAIN FALL?' 'THE DISTANCE THAT THE SOUND OF A DOG'S BARK WILL CARRY'. THE COMMISSION HEAD SAID THEY WERE SAVAGES AND HE DID NOT UNDERSTAND WHAT THEY WERE TALKING ABOUT. THOUGH, ACTUALLY IT WOULD HAVE BEEN A GOOD IDEA TO GATHER ALL THE EVIDENCE THAT THE TRIBE HAS TO GIVE, AS AN AMERICAN DOCTOR HAS DONE."

HE IS REFERRING TO JANE HAMILTON MERRITT, WHO HAS WRITTEN A CAREFUL REPORT, GATHERING ALL THE EVIDENCE OF THE HMONG, OR RATHER OF THE SURVIVING HMONG, BECAUSE IT SEEMS THAT THEY WERE VICTIMS OF A THOROUGH-GOING GENOCIDE. THIS REPORT PRESENTS ITS TESTIMONY IN OUTLINE FORM, SUCH AS: "FIRST ATTACK WITH GAS, OCTOBER 25 AT HONIE SKAT, TWO ROCKETS LAUNCHED FROM A CESSNA, SEVENTY SIX DEAD AND 800 POISONED. ANOTHER ATTACK: MARCH 77, TWO HELICOPTERS SPRAY A VILLAGE WITH CHEMICAL SUBSTANCES. RESULTS: DEATH AND ILLNESS (DIARRHEA WITH BLOOD).

"5 MAY, 1980, TWO HELICOPTERS DROP YELLOW POWDER ON THE VILLAGE AT COORDINATES TF93-74. A FEW DEATHS, MANY CASES OF POISONING.

"REPEAT OF THE ABOVE ACTION ON 20 MAY, 1980, 2 APRIL, 1981, 9 AUGUST, 1981, 27 OCTOBER 1981, THREE DAYS PRIOR TO THE ARRIVAL OF THE U.N. COMMISSION."

I ASK CAPTAIN YUGALA, "LET'S SUPPOSE -- ONLY SUPPOSE -- THAT THE VIETNAMESE USE RUSSIAN POISON GASSES. WHAT DOES YOUR DEPARTMENT KNOW OF THESE WEAPONS?"

"WE KNOW A LOT. TWO SUBSTANCES ARE USED: TOXINS SECRETED FROM LIVING ORGANISMS, SUCH AS CERTAIN VARIETIES OF FISH, WHICH ARE LETHAL WHEN THEY ENTER THE HUMAN BLOODSTREAM EITHER BY INHALATION OR BY INJECTION."

- IN THE COLD COUNTRIES

"THEN THERE ARE THE MYCOTOXINS, WHICH ARE TAKEN FROM VEGETABLE SOURCES. FORTY TYPES EXIST IN NATURE. THE ONE MOST FAMILIAR TO EXPERTS IN CHEMICAL WARFARE IS TRICHOThECENE, THE FUNGUS DERIVED FROM THE OXYDIZATION OF GRAIN. IT IS FOUND ESPECIALLY IN COLD COUNTRIES: RUSSIA, JAPAN AND CANADA. A SUDDEN FROST CAN PRODUCE THIS FUNGUS ON CROPS, AND THE ANIMALS WHICH EAT THEM DIE. THE RUSSIANS STUDIED THIS PHENOMENON FORTY YEARS AGO. SOME OF THEIR CIVILIAN PUBLICATIONS SPEAK OF IT. THEN THERE ARE THE SECRET MILITARY PUBLICATIONS ON HOW TO OBTAIN THE SAME RESULTS IN THE LABORATORY BY THE USE OF SUDDEN FREEZING. THE GENE WHICH IS PRODUCED IS CALLED 'FUSARIUM' AND IT IS HARMFUL TO HUMANS. IT SOMETIMES PRODUCES VOMITING AND SOMETIMES VIOLENT SKIN ERUPTIONS. I THINK THEY HAVE MANAGED TO MAKE IT EFFECTIVE BY INHALATION, WITH TERRIBLE EFFECTS: LOWERING OF THE WHITE BLOOD COUNT, ENLARGEMENT OF THE LYMPH NODES, ATTACK ON BONE MARROW, DISINTEGRATION OF THE CELLS OF THE INTERNAL ORGANS."

IF WE ACCEPT THE STATEMENTS MADE BY THE REFUGEES AS TRUE, WHAT CAN WE CONCLUDE IS BEING USED?

"IN LAOS, TRICHOThECENE. IN CAMBODIA, OTHER SUBSTANCES. OBVIOUSLY IT IS DIFFICULT TO GATHER

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'SAMPLES' BECAUSE THE FUNGUS QUICKLY PASSES FROM THE HUMAN BODY. IT IS RIDICULOUS TO SEND SAMPLES OFF AROUND THE WORLD, GIVEN THE PACE OUR BUREAUCRACIES MOVE AT. DR. TOWNSEND KNOWS SOMETHING ABOUT IT."

AMDS TOWNSEND IS AN AMERICAN DOCTOR WHO HAS FOR A LONG TIME GIVEN HIS SERVICES IN THE FIELD OF NON CHAN. HE WAS AN OFFICER IN THE AIRFORCE, AND FROM 1927 (SIC) ON WORKED AT WEST POINT IN THE DIVISION OF DEFENSE AGAINST CHEMICAL WEAPONS. HE SAYS: "THE SYMPTOMS THE HMONG HAVE MANIFESTED ARE VERY VARIED BECAUSE DIFFERENT PRODUCTS HAVE BEEN USED. IT'S NOT THAT EASY TO SERVE UP EFFECTIVE EVIDENCE ON A SILVER PLATTER. THERE'S A SIX-HOUR

MARCH BETWEEN THE PLACES WHERE THE TOXIC WEAPONS ARE USED AND THE ASSEMBLY POINTS FOR THE WOUNDED. BUT THERE'S NO QUESTION THAT THESE SUBSTANCES ARE BEING USED. IN 1961 THERE WAS A DEADLY ATTACK SOUTH OF ARANYAPRATHET. WHEN I ARRIVED ON THE FIELD, THE DEAD HAD ALREADY BEEN BURIED. ON THAT OCCASION, I COULD NOT EXHUME THEM BECAUSE THE GRAVES WERE ON THE LINE OF FIRE, BUT A LITTLE WHILE LATER I WAS ABLE TO DO SO WITH OTHER CORPSES. I HAVE EXAMINED NINE OF THEM. THEY ALL HAD A VERY LOW WHITE BLOOD COUNT AND TRACES OF MICOTOXIN. I DID THIS EXAMINATION IN THE KHAMER ROUGE ZONE SOUTH OF ARANYAPRATHET. I GOT THERE ON ELEPHANT-BACK. THESE ARE VERY SOPHISTICATED PRODUCTS. THE RUSSIANS ARE THIRTY YEARS AHEAD OF US IN CHEMICAL WARFARE. THE POTENTIAL OF THIS CHEMICAL WEAPON PUTS THE NEUTRON BOMB IN THE SHADE."

DID YOU SPEAK WITH THE MEMBERS OF THE U.N. COMMISSION?

"I WAS UNCERTAIN AS TO WHETHER TO DO SO, BECAUSE I KNEW THEIR OFFICE WAS HEADED BY A RUSSIAN, USTINOV. BUT ON NOVEMBER 7 I MADE A REPORT AND I GAVE THEM THE SAMPLES OF YELLOW POWDER COLLECTED IN LAOS AND CAMBODIA. I SAID, 'IF YOU DON'T WANT THEM, LEAVE THEM HERE. I'LL SEND THEM TO THE U.S.' THEIR HEAD REPLIED, 'WE'RE NOT REALLY VERY INTERESTED, TO TELL THE TRUTH, BUT IF WE LEAVE THEM HERE THE PRESS WILL CREATE A FUSS.' SO THEY TOOK THEM AND I NEVER HEARD ANY MORE ABOUT THEM."

THE STORY OF THIS COMMISSION IS WORTH TELLING. ON DECEMBER 12, 1980, THE U.N. GENERAL ASSEMBLY VOTED (78 IN FAVOR, 17 AGAINST) TO ESTABLISH AN INVESTIGATORY COMMISSION ON THE USE OF CHEMICAL WEAPONS. AMONG THOSE VOTING AGAINST THE ESTABLISHING OF THE COMMISSION WERE THE USSR, VIETNAM, LAOS, AFGHANISTAN AND CUBA. THE U.N. OFFICE WHICH WAS GIVEN THE JOB OF PUTTING TOGETHER A TEAM OF SPECIALISTS TOOK EXACTLY A YEAR TO DO SO. AND, IN FACT, THE TEAM DID NOT ARRIVE IN THAILAND UNTIL NOVEMBER, 1981. IT CONSISTED OF FOUR OFFICIAL MEMBERS AND FOUR ASSISTANTS. THE OFFICIAL MEMBERS WERE EGYPTIAN GENERAL, ESMAT-EDD, PHARMACIST, THE HEAD OF THE COMMISSION; LIEUTANT COLONEL NESTOR CASTILLO FROM THE CHEMICAL SERVICE OF THE PHILIPPINE ARMED FORCES; DR. EDWARD AMBER, A KENYAN ORTHOPEDIST (WAY ON EARTH WOULD AN ORTHOPEDIST BE INCLUDED); AND DR. UMBERTO GUERRA FROM PERU, PROFESSOR OF TROPICAL MEDICINE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF LIMA. (THE IDEA THAT THE CAT VICTIMS ARE ACTUALLY SUFFERING FROM MALARIA IS A FAVORITE AMONG THOSE

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WHO DO NOT BELIEVE THAT CHEMICAL WEAPONS ARE BEING USED.)

THEN THERE WERE THE ASSISTANTS: ALL OBVIOUSLY INCOMPETENT, BUT CHOSEN FROM AMONG THE HUSTLERS OF THE SENIOR POLITICAL AFFAIRS OFFICE (WHICH IS PRACTICALLY RUN BY USTINOV.) THEY ARE MR. SOHRAT KHERODI FROM KHOMEINI'S IRAN; WLAZIMIERZ WIEPCZAREK, AN ORTHODOX POLE; MISS MARGARET HEADLEY, WHO HAS THE PUZZLING ASSIGNMENT OF BEING THE IRANIAN'S SECRETARY; AND PROFESSOR HERBERT MARCHOCIC, FROM THE PASTEUR INSTITUTE, PRESENT AS A CONSULTANT.

THE COMMISSION IS COMPOSED OF COMPLETE UNKNOWNNS AND, ACCORDING TO COLONEL YUGALA, "SHOWS RIGHT OFF THAT IT KNOWS NOTHING ABOUT THE PLACES OR THE POLITICAL-MILITARY SITUATION IT IS SUPPOSED TO BE INVESTIGATING." THE COMMISSION REFUSED TO INSPECT THE AREAS THAT HAD BEEN ATTACKED BY CHEMICAL WEAPONS. IT MERELY VISITED THE REFUGEE CAMPS AND QUESTIONED THE SURVIVORS AS WAS DESCRIBED ABOVE. IT ACCEPTED DR. TOWNSEND'S SAMPLES AFTER ITS ARM HAD BEEN TWISTED, AND LEFT ON NOVEMBER 10. SINCE THEN NOTHING HAS BEEN HEARD OF THEM.

ON 23 NOVEMBER, 1981, 13 DAYS AFTER THE COMMISSION'S DEPARTURE, TWO HELICOPTERS SCATTERED CHEMICAL PRODUCTS ON THE VILLAGE OF HMONG.
- A KIND OF ROCKET

IN NEW YORK, MEANWHILE, THE GROWING AMOUNT OF EVIDENCE FROM TOWNSEND AND OTHER RESEARCHERS IS BEING EXAMINED. RICHARD BURT, DIRECTOR OF MILITARY AFFAIRS AT THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, SAYS THAT THE

SAMPLES REVEAL LARGE QUANTITIES OF MYCOTOXIN TRICHOHECENE. AT THE SAME TIME, THE KHMER CAPTURED A VIETNAMESE DESERTER WHO SERVED IN THE CHEMICAL DIVISIONS. HIS NAME IS DO-HUNG-SON AND HE TELLS EVERYTHING. HE EXPLAINS HOW BOMBS USED IN CHEMICAL WARFARE ARE CONSTRUCTED AND PROVIDES A CAREFUL DRAWING OF THE TYPE THAT WAS USED IN THE PHNOM MALAI AREA IN CAMBODIA. IT IS A KIND OF ROCKET WITH DIRECTIONAL FINS AND AN OBLONG BODY, SEPARATED FROM THE TAIL WHICH CONTAINS THE PROPELLENT. THE LITTLE ROCKET IS CALLED A OH-10. IT IS LAUNCHED FROM A LARGE SQUAT BAZOOKA. THIS OCCURRED WITHIN THE LAST FEW DAYS.

TODAY THE "BANGKOK POST" REPORTS THAT THE GROUP OF 31 INDEPENDENT SCIENTISTS, INCLUDING SOME FROM EASTERN COUNTRIES, DECLARED AT GENEVA THAT THE UNITED STATES WAS UNABLE TO DEMONSTRATE WITH EVIDENCE THAT POISONOUS SUBSTANCES WERE USED IN LAOS, CAMBODIA AND AFGHANISTAN. END TEXT.
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