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E.O. 12958: GDS 4/12/88 (DEAN, JOHN GUNTHER) OR-M
TAGS: PARM, IO, UR, SOPH, PEPR
SUBJ: CW USE BRIEFING TEAM: THAILAND VISIT: REPORT NO. 4

ON THE LATEST DEVELOPMENTS IN THE USG'S INVESTIGATION OF CBW IN SOUTHEAST ASIA AND AFGHANISTAN TO A WIDE RANGE OF THAI GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS, TO THE LOCAL AND FOREIGN PRESS CORPS AND TO MEDICAL PROFESSIONALS WORKING IN REFUGEE CAMPS ALONG THE LAO AND KHMER BORDERS. THE TEAM ALSO MET WITH THE AMBASSADOR AND US MISSION OFFICERS, WITH MILITARY ATTACHES AND DIPLOMATS OF FRIENDLY EMBASSIES AND WITH LAO AND KHMER NATIONALIST LEADERS. FOUR TEAM MEMBERS VISITED BAN VI MAY (HMONG) REFUGEE CAMP WHERE TECHNICAL MEMBERS BRIEFED CAMP MEDICAL OFFICERS WHOM THEY FOUND RECEPTIVE AND ANXIOUS TO ASSIST. THE TEAM ALSO ASSISTED IN MOVEMENT OF AN ALLEGED HMONG CBW VICTIM TO A BANGKOK HOSPITAL FOR EXAMINATION AND TREATMENT. THE TEAM VISITED THE THAI-KHMER BORDER WHERE SOME MEDICAL PROFESSIONALS REMAIN SKEPTICAL ABOUT CBW USE IN SOUTHEAST ASIA. MEDIA COVERAGE OF THE TEAM'S VISIT WAS RELATIVELY HEAVY AND POSITIVE IN TONE ALTHOUGH ONE BRIEFING SESSION WITH THE FOREIGN PRESS CORPS INCLUDED CRITICISM OF THE ADEQUACY OF USG INVESTIGATION EFFORTS. END SUMMARY.

3. EMBASSY BRIEFING:
UPON ARRIVAL, TEAM MET WITH AMBASSADOR DEAN AND DCM ROY FOR OVER AN HOUR. AMBASSADOR ADVISED TEAM THAT HE HAD BEEN DEFERRING LOCAL INQUIRIES ON CW ISSUES TO AWAIT TEAM'S ARRIVAL AND THAT WE COULD EXPECT CONSIDERABLE INTEREST. (FYI: LOCAL MEDIA PUBLISHED ON CW ISSUES ALMOST EVERY DAY OF OUR STAY.)

4. DINNER/BRIEFING FOR MILITARY ATTACHES AND THAI MILITARY:
TEAM BRIEFED FOREIGN MILITARY ATTACHES AND SENIOR THAI

MILITARY OFFICERS AT DINNER HOSTED BY LTC LANE. FRUITFUL DISCUSSIONS WITH ATTENDEES REVEALED HIGH LOCAL INTEREST AND SUPPORT FOR SAMPLE COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS PROGRAM. THEY STRESSED NEED FOR TRAINING THEIR PERSONNEL IN ALL DEFENSIVE ASPECTS OF CW. PARTICULAR INTEREST WAS EXPRESSED IN BT

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2. SUMMARY: THIS MESSAGE CONVEYS THE INTERAGENCY CBW BRIEFING TEAM'S REPORT ON ITS VISIT TO THAILAND APRIL 6-11, DURING WHICH IT PROVIDED INFORMATION

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BY *N* NARA, DATE *5/28/99*

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DEVELOPING INDIGENOUS CAPABILITY TO DETECT AND
ANALYZE CW MATERIAL. DR. GREEN WAS CONTACTED BY FRENCH
MILITARY AND ASKED TO RECEIVE SOME VERY
SENSITIVE INFORMATION CONCERNING A RECENT ATTACK IN
KAMPUCHEA INVESTIGATED BY FRENCH MEDICAL PERSONNEL.
DETAILS TO BE SENT SEPTEL.

S. PUBLIC AFFAIRS:
-- THAI MEDIA: TEAM MEMBERS CELEC AND KIEHL
PROVIDED BACKGROUND BRIEFING FOR THAI MEDIA WHILE
REMAINDER OF TEAM VISITED BAN VI NAY CAMP.

ATTENDING BACKGROUNDER AT ICA FACILITY WERE:
PICHAI VASANASONG, INFLUENTIAL RADIO COMMENTATOR;
KASEM ATACHASAI, ASSISTANT EDITOR AND FOREIGN
NEWS EDITOR OF THE MOST RESPECTED THAI LANGUAGE
NEWSPAPER, "SIAM RATH", (SIAM RATH PLANS TO
SERIALIZE SEAGRAVE'S "YELLOW RAIN" SOON); JAMNIAH
HEMARAT OF ADVANCE MEDIA AND A REGULAR CONTRIBUTOR
TO "SIAM RATH"; ATTAVIBOON SRISUVARAHAND,
FOREIGN NEWS EDITOR OF THE NEWSPAPER "MATUPOOM";
PUMAREE SUMONDIS, REPORTER FOR THE PRO-GOVERNMENT
"BANGKOK POST" -- THE LARGEST CIRCULATION
ENGLISH LANGUAGE NEWSPAPER -- AND ALAN DAWSON,
INFLUENTIAL "BANGKOK POST" COLUMNIST; PAUL
JASVINDER OF THE INDEPENDENT "NATION REVIEW";
AMPOR SAHOSOARN OF RADIO THAILAND; ANUVAT
AMUNUAYPOLITNAK, THAI NEWS AGENCY; SANGOB
CHANTACHOTE AND PUNNEE RATANACHAIRIT OF THE MASS
CIRCULATION NEWSPAPER "BAN MUANG". QUESTIONING
REFLECTED DEEP THAI PRESS INTEREST AND
FAMILIARITY REGARDING CW USE IN LAOS AND KAMPUCHEA
AS WELL AS MOTIVATIONS FOR CW USE IN SOUTHEAST ASIA.
MEDIA APPEARS INFORMED AND LARGELY SYMPATHETIC
TO EVIDENCE BUT SOME SKEPTICISM WAS DISPLAYED REGARDING
US MOTIVATIONS FOR PRESENTING THE ISSUE. LOCAL MEDIA
ALSO SEEMED PUZZLED BY LACK OF WORLD-WIDE INTEREST
IN THE ISSUE.
-- FOREIGN CORRESPONDENTS CLUB OF THAILAND (FCCT):
TEAM MEMBERS CROCKER, CELEC, STETTNER AND KIEHL HELD AN
HOUR-LONG ON-THE-RECORD PRESS CONFERENCE FOLLOWED BY
AN OFF-THE-RECORD LUNCH WITH MEMBERS OF THE FCCT.
ATTENDEES AT SESSIONS INCLUDED MOST OF THE MAJOR
INTERNATIONAL AND REGIONAL MEDIA REPRESENTED IN
BANGKOK. THE FORTY-PLUS JOURNALISTS INCLUDED
REPRESENTATIVES FROM: AP, REUTER, AFP, NGNA (KIN-HUA),
MALAYSIAN NEWS AGENCY, NEW YORK TIMES, LONDON
TIMES, MANCHESTER GUARDIAN, L.A. TIMES, INTERNATIONAL
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SINGAPORE STRAITS-TIMES, SIDNEY MORNING HERALD,
CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR, FAR EASTERN ECONOMIC
REVIEW, SOLDIER OF FORTUNE MAGAZINE, NBC, ABC,
AUSTRALIAN BROADCASTING COMPANY, VOA AND WILLIAM
SHAWCROSS (AUTHOR OF "SIDESHOW"). MAJORITY OF THE
MEDIA DISPLAYED LITTLE OR NO SKEPTICISM OF
EVIDENCE CONTAINED IN MARCH 22 STATE DEPARTMENT
REPORT AND ASKED QUESTIONS CLARIFYING POINTS
IN REPORT, ON FUTURE STEPS BY US, U.N. EXPERTS
GROUPS OR OTHERS TO COLLECT ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE OF CB USE,

AND ON IMPLICATIONS FOR ARMS CONTROL. OTHER
QUESTIONERS WANTED TO KNOW WHY THE US HAD PRESENTED
NO "HARD EVIDENCE" IN THE FORM OF ORDINANCE OR
CORPSES OF VICTIMS (NBC); WHY, IF THIS ISSUE IS
SO IMPORTANT IN TERMS OF ARMS CONTROL IMPLICATIONS,
THE US IS NOT MAKING MORE OF AN EFFORT ON THE
CW USE ISSUE AND DEVOTING MORE USG RESOURCES TO
COLLECTION (N.Y. TIMES). IN OFF-THE-RECORD
CONVERSATIONS, MEDIA ADMITTED THEY ARE PERSONALLY
CONVINCED OF CW USE BUT BELIEVE US CASE WOULD
BE MORE PERSUASIVE TO "HONEST SKEPTICS" IF PHYSICAL
EVIDENCE WERE PRODUCED AND GREATER US RESOURCE
COMMITMENT WERE UNDERTAKEN.
TWO POINTS RAISED DURING THE PRESS CONFERENCE WHICH
SEEMED OF GREATEST INTEREST TO THE MEDIA WERE THE
TEAM'S REPORT OF SEVENTY NEW VICTIMS AT BAN VINAI
AND US DISAPPOINTMENT WITH SOVIET NATIONAL UN
UNDERSECRETARY USTINOV'S ROLE IN THE U.N. INVESTIGATION.
-- ICA BANGKOK: ICA BANGKOK WILL REPORT ON LOCAL
MEDIA PLAY OF ABOVE EVENTS THROUGH NORMAL MEDIA
REACTION CHANNELS WITH INFO TO CW USE BRIEFING
TEAM ENROUTE. REQUEST ALL OTHER ADDRESSEES INFO
CW USE TEAM ON YOUR MEDIA REACTION REPORTING FROM
THESE BANGKOK EVENTS.

6. BRIEFING FOR ALLIED DIPLOMATS:
ON APRIL 7, TEAM MEMBERS CELEC, KIEHL AND MCDONALD
MET WITH MEMBERS OF ALLIED EMBASSIES HERE. PRESENT
WERE HARALD NEPLE, NORWAY; MICHEL LUMMAUX, FRANCE;
KEN GRAHAM, NEW ZEALAND; J.E. BUCKLEY, AUSTRALIA;
AND DAVID KORTH, CANADA. AMEMBASSY POLITICAL OFFICERS
EDMUND MCWILLIAMS AND EMILY HODGES ALSO ATTENDED.

7. BRIEFINGS AT MFA, SUPREME COMMAND AND NATIONAL
SECURITY COUNCIL:
FORMAL BRIEFINGS WERE HELD AT THE THAI MFA, NATIONAL
SECURITY COUNCIL (NSC) AND SUPREME COMMAND. THE
MFA BRIEFING, ALTHOUGH FOCUSED ON ISSUES, INVOLVED
A SURPRISING NUMBER OF TECHNICAL QUESTIONS FROM
THE STAFF. ALL APPEARED TOTALLY PERSUADED BY US
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CASE. SEVERAL SUBSEQUENT TECHNICAL DISCUSSIONS
WERE HELD IN THE FOLLOWING DAYS BETWEEN INDIVIDUAL
TEAM MEMBERS AND STAFF. SUPREME COMMANDER GENERAL
SAIYUD KOEDPHOL WAS MOST CONCERNED ABOUT WHAT
STEPS CAN BE TAKEN BY THAILAND AND OTHER THIRD
WORLD COUNTRIES TO BRING CW ISSUES TO HIGHER
INTERNATIONAL CONCERN. WE WOULD EXPECT THAT THE
SPECIAL SESSION ON DISARMAMENT (SSOD) II WILL SEE
THE CW ISSUE RAISED AS SEVERAL PERSONNEL QUERIED
STETTNER ON US AGENDA FOR SSOD. DISCUSSIONS
FOLLOWING THE BRIEFING AT SUPREME COMMAND FOCUSED

ENTIRELY ON MATTERS OF MILITARY MEDICINE AND THE
NEED FOR MULTIPLE THAI-US COOPERATIVE VENTURES IN
THE COMING YEAR. AN ACCURATE SUMMARY OF THE
MEETING FROM THE THAI POINT OF VIEW APPEARED IN
BANGKOK PRESS THE FOLLOWING DAY IN THE FORM OF AN
INTERVIEW WITH GENERAL SAIYUD. THE BRIEFING FOR
NSC SECCEN PRASONG SUNSIRI AND STAFF DEALT MAINLY
WITH QUESTIONS ABOUT WAYS TO CONVINCE THE INTERNATIONAL
COMMUNITY OF THE REALITY AND IMPORTANCE OF CW
ATTACKS. NEAR THAI TERRITORY. Q AND A PERIOD ALSO
INCLUDED NUMEROUS REFERENCES TO MEDICAL AND
COLLECTIVE PROTECTION MEASURES WITH EMPHASIS ON THE
NEED FOR INCREASED COLLECTION OF EVIDENCE AND
SHARING OF DATA WITH THE USG.

8. APRIL 7 LUNCH:

TEAM MEMBER CELEC JOINED MAJOR GENERAL WOO OF THE
PRC FOR LUNCH. BY THE NATURE OF GEN. WOO'S QUESTIONS,
HE WAS MOST CONCERNED ABOUT WHAT CW AGENTS WERE IN
USE AND WHAT PROTECTIVE MEASURES COULD BE TAKEN.
SEVERAL TIMES IN THE COURSE OF THE DISCUSSION, WOO
RETURNED TO THE SUBJECT OF PROTECTING THE
CIVILIAN POPULATION. HE WAS OBVIOUSLY LOOKING
FOR AN INEXPENSIVE (I.E. ANTIDOTE) PROTECTIVE
DEVICE THAT COULD BE USED FOR A LARGE CIVILIAN
POPULATION RATHER THAN THE MORE CONVENTIONAL MASK,
GLOVES, OVERGARMENT AND BOOTS. GEN. WOO CONFIRMED
THAT VISAS FOR THE PRC HAD BEEN APPROVED AND
WOULD BE GRANTED IN BANGKOK.

9. TRIP TO BAN VI MAY REFUGEE CAMP:

-- TEAM MEMBERS CROCKER, GREEN AND STETTNER ACCOMPANIED
LT. COL. LANE AND DR. TOWNSEND TO THE BAN VI MAY
HONG REFUGEE CAMP. A COURTESY CALL WAS PAID ON
THE GOVERNOR OF THE PROVINCE. A FORMAL
MEETING WAS HELD WITH COL. VANG NENG, GENERAL VANG PAO'S
PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVE IN THE CAMP. HE APPEARED
PLEASED THAT THE US GOVERNMENT WAS RELAYING THEIR
STORY TO THE WORLD. HE ARRANGED FOR THE TEAM
TO INTERVIEW A NUMBER OF CW VICTIMS. COL. VANG NENG
WAS WORKED IN THE CAMP FOR FIVE YEARS AND HAS PROVIDED
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VALUABLE ASSISTANCE TO THE US EMBASSY. WE RECOMMEND
THAT CONSIDERATION BE GIVEN TO BRINGING HIM TO
THE US, WHERE HE COULD ALSO TESTIFY BEFORE CONGRESS
AND HOLD PRESS CONFERENCES.

-- DR. GREEN BRIEFED THE WORLD VISION FOUNDATION
STAFF AT THE CAMP, WHICH IS HEADED BY NEW ZEALAND'S
DR. BURKE AND WHICH INCLUDES DEREK BIRD, A UK DOCTOR,
AND MEDICAL PERSONNEL FROM THE US AND OTHER COUNTRIES.
THE STAFF WENT OUT OF THEIR WAY TO SET UP MEDICAL
INTERVIEWS IN THE SHORT TIME AVAILABLE. BURKE AND
BIRD ARE BOTH CONVINCED THAT LETHAL CW AGENTS HAVE

BEEN USED. BURKE ASKED THAT HIS MESSAGE BE PASSED
TO WELLINGTON. BIRD SAID THAT HE HAD NEVER
RECEIVED A RESPONSE FROM THE UK EMBASSY IN BANGKOK
REGARDING HIS CONCERN ABOUT CW USE. A FINNISH
HEALTH WORKER REPORTED THAT SEVENTY GAS VICTIMS
HAD JUST ARRIVED FROM LAOS, BUT THAT THEY WERE
TOO UNDERSTAFFED TO CONDUCT INTERVIEWS WITH ALL OF THEM.
DR. GREEN EXAMINED THREE PATIENTS WITH SIGNS OF
PROBABLE CHEMICAL INJURY.

-- SEVERAL TEAM MEMBERS HAVE BEEN SPENDING
SOME TIME CONSIDERING THIS ISSUE. THE MANPOWER
REQUIRED TO PROPERLY SCREEN AND INTERVIEW ALLEGED
VICTIMS IS CLEARLY BEYOND THE PRESENT MISSION
STAFFING, AND SUPERFICIAL INTERVIEWS COULD BE
COUNTER-PRODUCTIVE. AT THIS TIME, IT SEEMS TO
THE TEAM THAT VICTIMS WITH SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF
CHEMICAL INJURY AT THE ORIGINAL TIME OF CONTACT
SHOULD BE EXAMINED BY CAMP PHYSICIANS FIRST. IF A
DETERMINATION IS MADE THAT NO OTHER MEDICALLY
LIKELY CAUSES EXIST EXCEPT CHEMICAL INJURY AND THE
PATIENT RELATES A CW STORY, THE PATIENT SHOULD BE
REFERRED TO DR. TOWNSEND FOR DETERMINATION AS TO THE
ADVISABILITY OF TRANSFER TO A SUITABLE
BANGKOK HOSPITAL. SUCH A CASE WAS PROCESSED BY
DRS. TOWNSEND AND GREEN AND A PATIENT HAS BEEN
ADMITTED TO BANGKOK'S SIRIRAJ HOSPITAL (APRIL 7).
-- DRS. GREEN, WATSON AND TOWNSEND HELD EXTENSIVE
AND DETAILED CLINICAL MEDICAL DISCUSSIONS WITH
15 MEMBERS OF THE STAFF AT SIRIRAJ HOSPITAL ON
METHODOLOGY AND HANDLING OF CHEMICALLY INJURED
PATIENTS. DR. WATSON, HERE AS AT ALL MEDICAL
FACILITIES VISITED, LEFT DETAILED DOCUMENTATION
ON DIFFERENTIAL DIAGNOSIS, LAB WORK-UP AND
TREATMENT PROTOCOLS. DRS. TOWNSEND, GREEN AND

WATSON MADE A GRAND ROUNDS CALL ON THE CW PATIENT
WITH THE HOSPITAL CHIEF-OF-STAFF. EMBASSY
WILL REPORT PATIENT'S STATUS SEPTEL.

10. VISIT TO THAI-KAMPUCHEAN BORDER:
-- ON APRIL 10, THE TEAM SPLIT INTO MEDICAL
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DEPARTMENT PASS TO MCS AND ACDA;
CINCPAC FOR PUBLIC AFFAIRS ADVISOR
AND MILITARY SUB-GROUPS TO MAXIMIZE EXPOSURE. THE
MEDICAL MEMBERS, LED BY DR. TOWNSEND, VISITED THE
HOSPITALS, SAW PATIENTS AND BRIEFED THE STAFFS
AT KHAO I DANG, HONG SAMET AND NONG CHAN. FOREIGN
MEDICAL STAFF GENERALLY RECEIVED MEMBERS WITH
THINLY VEILED SUSPICION AT FIRST, BUT BY END OF
BRIEFINGS HAD CLEARLY BECOME PERSUADED AS TO THE GOOD
INTENTIONS OF THE USG, LARGELY BY VERY DIRECT AND
HONEST CONVERSATION IN WHICH TEAM MEMBERS "SET
THE RECORD STRAIGHT" ABOUT EXAGGERATED PRESS
ACCOUNTS, AND AFTER DR. WATSON HAD PRESENTED HER

PACKAGE OF MATERIALS ON DIAGNOSIS AND TREATMENT.
ASKED BEEN OBSERVED IN PAKISTAN, VOLAG PHYSICIANS
ARE WILLING TO DEAL WITH SUBJECT WHEN THEY DO NOT
HAVE TO INITIATE CONTACTS WITH THE USG. THE
CRITICAL ROLE OF DR. TOWNSEND IN PROVIDING A
BRIDGE TO PERMIT PASSAGE OF MEDICAL DATA FROM
VOLAGS TO US IS OBVIOUS. AFTER THE BRIEFINGS OF
CAMP MEDICAL STAFF, IT IS NOW MORE LIKELY THAT
REFERRALS OF CHEMICAL INJURY WILL OCCUR.

-- THE MILITARY SUB-GROUP VISITED THE SAME
CAMPS AND RECEIVED UPDATES ON THE LOGISTICS,
FOOD AND CURRENT POLITICAL SITUATIONS. AT NONG
CHAN, ABOUT 1000 NEWLY ARRIVED REFUGEES RESPONDING
TO A SIRAKOUK PLOY TO SHOW POLITICAL STRENGTH
DEMONSTRATED FOR THE TEAM IN ATTEMPT TO GAIN
SUPPORT FOR ADDITIONAL FOOD. DR. GREEN LATER
VISITED THE AREA TO DETERMINE EXTENT OF
MALNUTRITION (SIGNIFICANT) AMONG THE CHILDREN.

11. APRIL 9 MEETING AT EMBASSY:

THE TEAM MET WITH SENIOR MEMBERS OF THE MISSION,
EMBASSY OFFICERS DIRECTLY INVOLVED WITH REFUGEE AFFAIRS AND
THE FIRST SECRETARY FROM VIENTIANE. DISCUSSIONS
INVOLVED VERY POINTED QUESTIONS ABOUT THE
CREDIBILITY OF EVIDENCE, RELIABILITY OF REFUGEE
REPORTING, WAYS TO MAXIMIZE INTERVIEWING,
NEED FOR EITHER INCREASING RESOURCES OR
SHARPENING COLLECTION REQUIREMENTS. ALL SEEMED
TO THINK THIS SESSION WAS AMONG THE MOST
VALUABLE OF THE TRIP IN THAT A GOOD DEAL OF
FACTUAL INFORMATION WAS SHARED, MISCONCEPTIONS WERE
CLEARED UP AND NEW REQUIREMENTS WERE LEVIED.
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