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 FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK  
 TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 6452  
 RUEHIA/USIA WASHDC 3769  
 INFO RUMJFS/AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE 6792  
 RUMJRV/AMEMBASSY RANGOON 5333  
 BT  
 UNCLAS BANGKOK 02224

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EO 12356: N/A  
 SUBJ: CODEL RANGEL MEETINGS WITH THE PRESS

MEMBERS OF A VISITING CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION HEADED BY REPRESENTATIVE CHARLES RANGEL MET WITH THAI REPORTERS AND BANGKOK-BASED AMERICAN CORRESPONDENTS ON TWO OCCASIONS. IN ADDITION TO WIRE SERVICE REPORTS, THERE WERE A NUMBER OF REPORTS IN LOCAL ENGLISH-LANGUAGE NEWSPAPERS QUOTING CONGRESSMEN RANGEL AND BENJAMIN GILMAN. THE CODEL DISCUSSED MIAS IN LIGHT OF LAOTIAN DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER SUBAN SARITTHIRAJ'S STATEMENT LAST WEEK, AND U.S. AID TO OPIUM-PRODUCING COUNTRIES FOR ERADICATION PROGRAMS. EXCERPTS FOLLOW.

1. BANGKOK WORLD "U.S. HOPES LAOS WON'T 'BARGAIN' OVER MIAS".

- "THE U.S. GOVERNMENT HOPES THAT LAOS WILL TREAT THE ISSUE OF AMERICAN SERVICEMEN MISSING IN ACTION (MIAS) FROM THE INDOCHINA WAR AS A HUMANITARIAN ISSUE AND NOT AS ONE REQUIRING AMERICAN RECIPROCITY, A U.S. CONGRESSMAN SAID IN BANGKOK YESTERDAY.

- "BEN GILMAN, A NEW YORK REPUBLICAN WHO HAS BEEN GATHERING INFORMATION ON MIAS DURING A TRIP WITH A CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION HERE, WAS ASKED HIS REACTION TO LAOTIAN DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER SUBAN SARITTHIRAJ'S REPORTED CALL LAST WEEK FOR A 'RECIPROCAL ACT' FROM WASHINGTON FOR ALLOWING AN AMERICAN MIA TEAM INTO LAOS LAST MONTH.

- "AT A NEWS CONFERENCE, GILMAN SAID ALTHOUGH HE WAS 'NOT IRRITATED' BY SUBAN'S CALL, 'WE HOPE IT (THE MIA ISSUE) WILL BE TREATED AS A HUMANITARIAN ISSUE,' NOT AS ONE REQUIRING A 'QUID PRO QUO.'

- "SUBAN CALLED ON THE UNITED STATES TO RECIPROCATE IN AN INTERVIEW IN VIENTIANE WITH THAI JOURNALISTS.

- "WE'RE HOPING WE'LL BE ABLE TO TAKE SOME STEPS TO BUILD SOME BRIDGES (WITH LAOS) TO RESOLVE THE ISSUE," GILMAN SAID.

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- "GILMAN ALSO SAID THAT TWO REFUGEES AT THE PHANAT NIKHOM REFUGEE TRANSIT CENTER HAD YESTERDAY GIVEN HIM 'SOME INFORMATION...ON REMAINS AND LOCATIONS OF REMAINS' OF MIAS, BUT REFUSED TO GO INTO DETAILS. ONE REFUGEE WAS LAOTIAN AND THE OTHER VIETNAMESE, HE SAID.

- "RANGEL SAID AT THE PRESS CONFERENCE THAT SOME 22 PER CENT OF THE HEROIN REACHING AMERICAN STREETS NOW COMES FROM SOUTHEAST ASIA, AN INCREASE OVER RECENT YEARS. HE SAID HE APPRECIATED THAILAND'S EFFORTS TO COMBAT DRUG PRODUCTION AND TRAFFICKING, AND ITS CROP-SUBSTITUTION PROGRAM IN THE NORTHERN PART OF THE COUNTRY.

- "RANGEL SAID THE TRADITIONALLY DRUG-PRODUCING COUNTRIES WERE NOW GETTING WORRIED AS THEY FOUND THEMSELVES SADDLED WITH LARGE ADDICT POPULATIONS OF THEIR OWN.

- "HE SAID HE SUPPORTED NEW U.S. LEGISLATION LINKING U.S. FOREIGN AID WITH A COUNTRY'S ANTI-DRUG CAMPAIGNS BECAUSE OLD LEGISLATION HAD TOO MANY LOOPHOLES, BUT CONCEDED THAT CUTTING OFF AID TO NON-COOPERATIVE COUNTRIES MAY MAKE THEM EVEN MORE DEPENDENT ON DRUG-DERIVED REVENUES."  
2. NATION REVIEW "U.S. READY TO GIVE MORE AID TO FIGHT AGAINST DRUGS IF...."

- "THE U.S. GOVERNMENT IS WILLING TO EXTEND MORE FINANCIAL SUPPORT TO THAILAND IF THERE IS A LONG-RANGE PLAN TO FIGHT AGAINST NARCOTICS HERE, A LEADING U.S. CONGRESSMAN SAID YESTERDAY.

-- "CHARLES RANGEL (NEW YORK, DEMOCRAT) SAID THAT THAILAND SHOULD DRAW UP A SPECIFIC PLAN FOR INCREASING AID.

- "HE SAID THAILAND HAS SET A GOOD EXAMPLE FOR OTHERS IN FIGHTING AGAINST DRUGS. 'I WOULD NOT HESITATE TO RECOMMEND THAILAND FOR MORE MONEY,' HE ADDED.

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- "HE SAID: 'WE WANT TO SEE WHAT WE CAN DO TO SUPPORT THE GOVERNMENT OF THAILAND'S EFFORT TO FIGHT THE INCREASED OUTPUT OF OPIUM.'

3. BANGKOK POST "U.S. DRUGS TEAM IMPRESSED"

- "A GROUP OF VISITING U.S. CONGRESSMEN SAID YESTERDAY THEY WERE IMPRESSED BY THE THAI ANTI-NARCOTICS AGENCY'S 10-YEAR PROGRAM TO WIPE OUT OPIUM PRODUCTION.

- "THE U.S. CONGRESSIONAL TEAM HOWEVER EXPRESSED DISAPPOINTMENT AT THE LACK OF COOPERATION BETWEEN THE THAI AND BURMESE GOVERNMENTS IN TACKLING OPIUM GROWING AND DRUG SMUGGLING.

- "THEY SAID THEY HOPED THE TWO GOVERNMENTS WOULD SIT DOWN AND TALK TO ONE ANOTHER AND COOPERATE MORE TO ERADICATING OPIUM CULTIVATION IN THEIR RESPECTIVE COUNTRIES." MORTON

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