

**Science and Weapons
Daily Review**

6 July 1983

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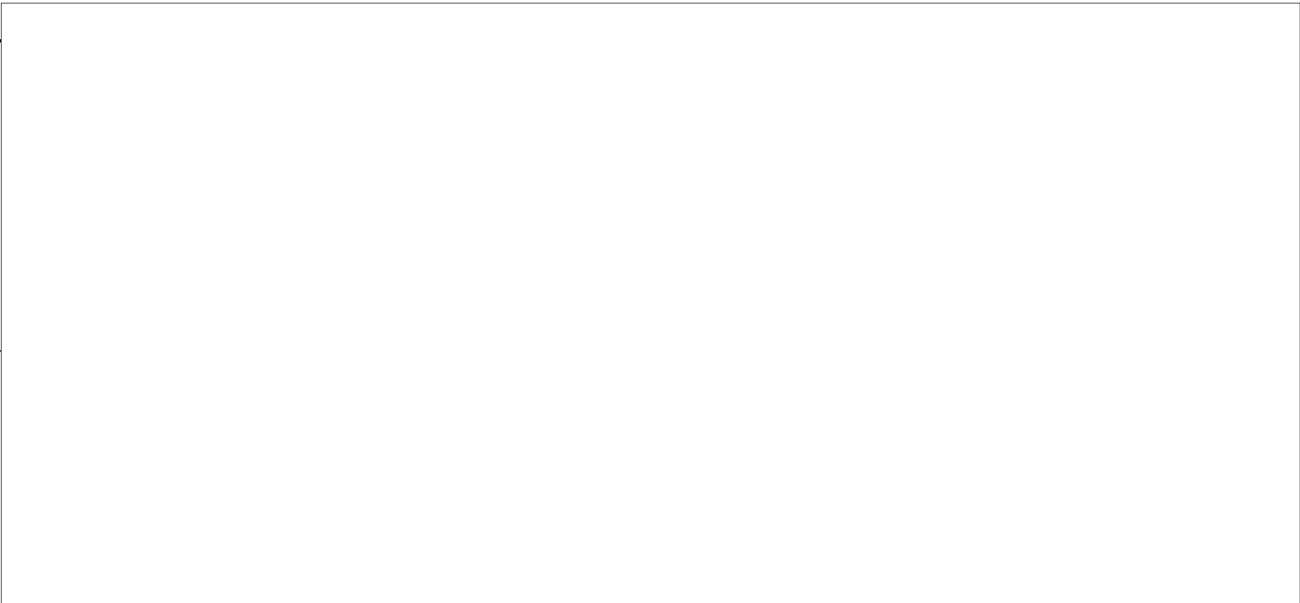
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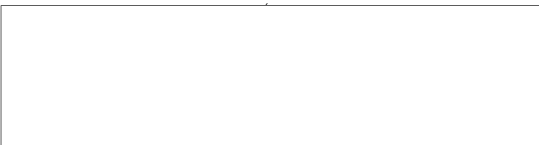
SOUTHEAST ASIA/AFGHANISTAN: APPARENT DECREASE IN LETHAL
CHEMICAL ATTACKS ~~(U)~~



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Science and Weapons Daily Review

SOUTHEAST ASIA/AFGHANISTAN: APPARENT DECREASE IN LETHAL CHEMICAL ATTACKS ~~(U)~~

In the past five months, significant hostilities have continued in the same areas of Southeast Asia and Afghanistan where lethal chemical weapons were used from late 1979 to mid-1982.

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screening of victim refugees and their medical histories, physical examinations, and tests. By April 1983, a sharp decrease in the number of chemical attacks was reported. This included both a decline in reported deaths and an absence of medical evidence of mycotoxin effects, such as bleeding and blistering.

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Comment:

A number of important findings resulted. Visits to field hospitals and interviews with physicians actively involved in screening for CW-toxin injuries and reviewing patient histories revealed little evidence of patients or refugees having observed or been exposed to lethal chemical attacks in 1983. Victims with active lesions and evidence of attacks in mid-to-late-1982 were, however, encountered, further confirming our earlier findings. New information of Soviet involvement in the supp., and use of agents in Southeast Asia also was obtained.

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There often is a lag, some times as long as 60 to 90 days, from the time of attack to receipt of either human or sample evidence.

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But, extensive efforts have been made beginning this year to contact all new arrivals at the holding centers to question them about CW-related incidents, and to screen them for medical signs and symptoms. This process has resulted in some cases being turned up by nurses, physicians, and social workers in northern Thailand (for refugees coming from Laos), eastern Thailand (for Cambodia), and Peshawar, Pakistan (for Afghanistan). [redacted]

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In Laos, 12 chemical attacks were reported in 1983, the most recent on 7 May. Two reports claimed deaths--one subsequently was found to have been caused by non-chemical means and one remains unconfirmed. Two reports claimed toxin signs and symptoms--one was found to be spurious and one is unconfirmed. The remaining attacks were characterized as non-lethal. In Cambodia, none of the reported deaths in 1983 have been confirmed, but one of three alleged victims from a March attack had detectable levels of toxins in her blood. All physical and biological control (nonexposed subjects and physical locations) samples from both countries were negative. [redacted]

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Medical evidence, first noted in late 1982, shows that an unidentified non-lethal or blister agent that causes extreme discomfort and sometimes dizziness is continuing to be used in Laos in 1983. In Afghanistan, there is evidence of continued use of an unidentified agent that causes unconsciousness for several hours with little side effects and no systemic medical problems; and in Cambodia, frequent attacks occurred with irritants and riot-control agents. [redacted]

*← Laos**← Cambodia*

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In Laos, the resistance leadership denies having any evidence of lethal chemical attacks in 1983, and the civilian Hmong leadership denied any chemical use except for "tear gas." The leadership of the Kampuchean Popular National Liberation Front, Khmer Rouge, and other resistance fighters in Cambodia have been contacted, and they also deny lethal chemical weapons use. These include long-standing reliable contacts who would have preferred to have provided positive evidence. Physicians and military sources in Afghanistan, who similarly have provided excellent data in the past, also reported that no deaths due to chemical

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weapons have occurred since early 1983. Upon close questioning of all of these sources, it was clear that absence of attacks with lethal agents rather than presence of improved individual protective measures accounts for the decrease. [Redacted]

Reasons for decreased use of CW (b)(3)

Physical samples continue to be received from alleged sites of attacks that occurred in 1983; but the evidence lacks specific locations, times, and effects, or it indicates the use of non-lethal chemicals. Recently acquired and analyzed samples from mid-1982, however, show positive results for lethal toxins. [Redacted]

← samples summary

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[Redacted]

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[Redacted] covering northeastern Laos and southern Cambodia, areas where US collection efforts always have been limited. In the past, these areas have yielded some of the best physical evidence available of lethal and mycotoxin chemical use. The [Redacted]

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[Redacted] responsible for CW collection recently were contacted and acknowledged they too have no evidence of chemical attacks since the beginning of 1983, except for riot-control agents. They also confirm having laboratory evidence of lethal agents from 1982 attack sites. [Redacted]

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Significant uncertainties remain concerning our observations:

Possible add'l reasons for decreased CW use.

-- It is possible that we may have missed some refugee arrivals in remote border locations, especially from northeast and western Laos.

-- [Redacted]

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-- There is a lag averaging one month, but in some cases as long as three months, in the acquisition from refugee and resistance groups of reports of attacks.

[Redacted]

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-- There is a lag in the reporting and analysis of biological and physical samples from 1983 attack sites.



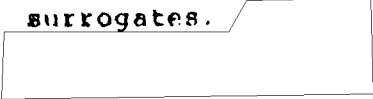
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Conclusion

[Redacted] consistent evidence from all human and technical sources indicate an absence of lethal chemical incidents since the beginning of this year and provide support to the hypothesis that the cessation of these attacks reflects a conscious policy change by the Soviets and their surrogates.

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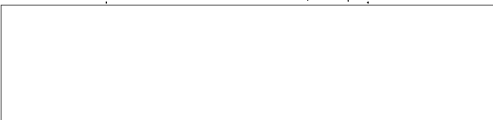
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