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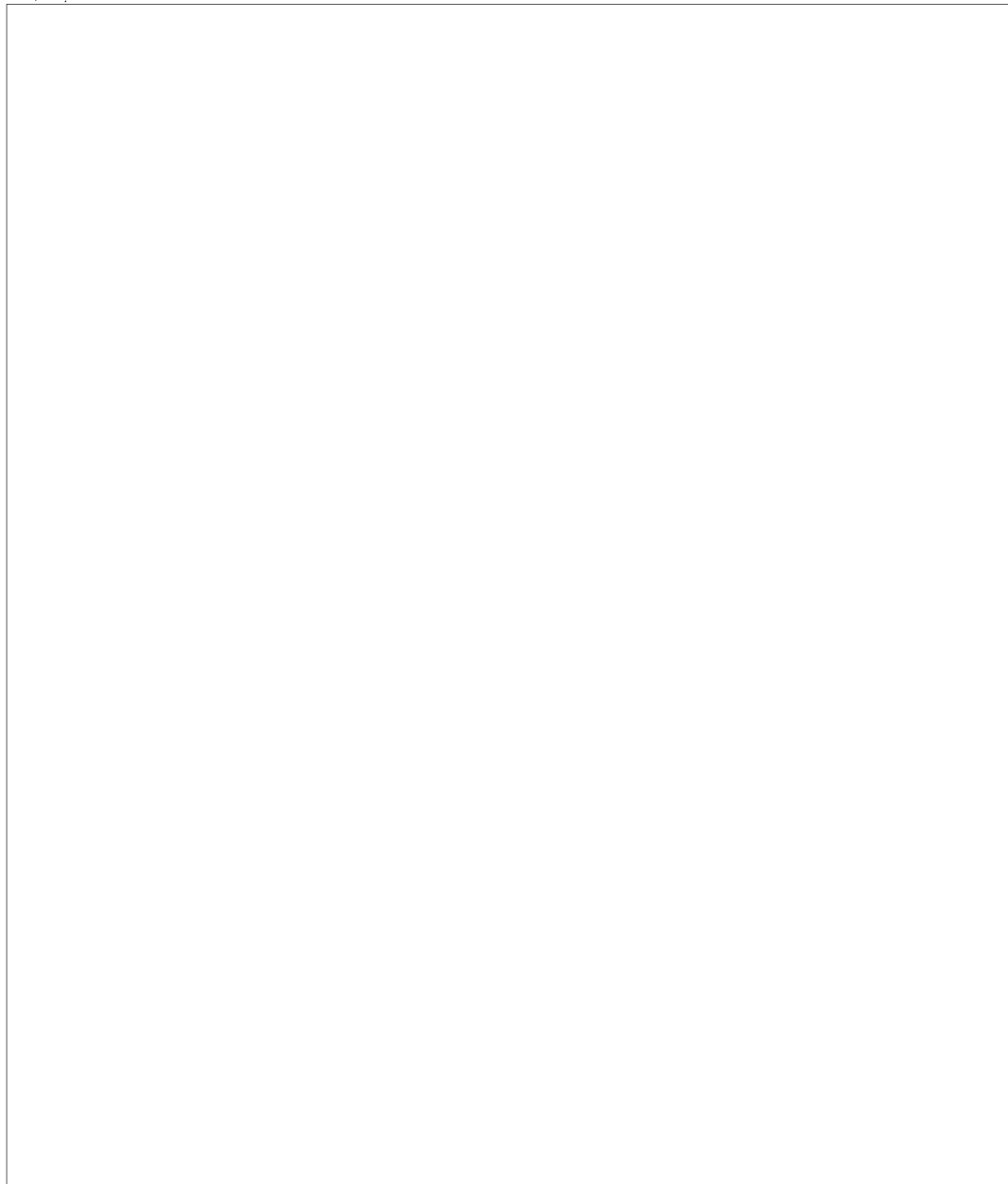
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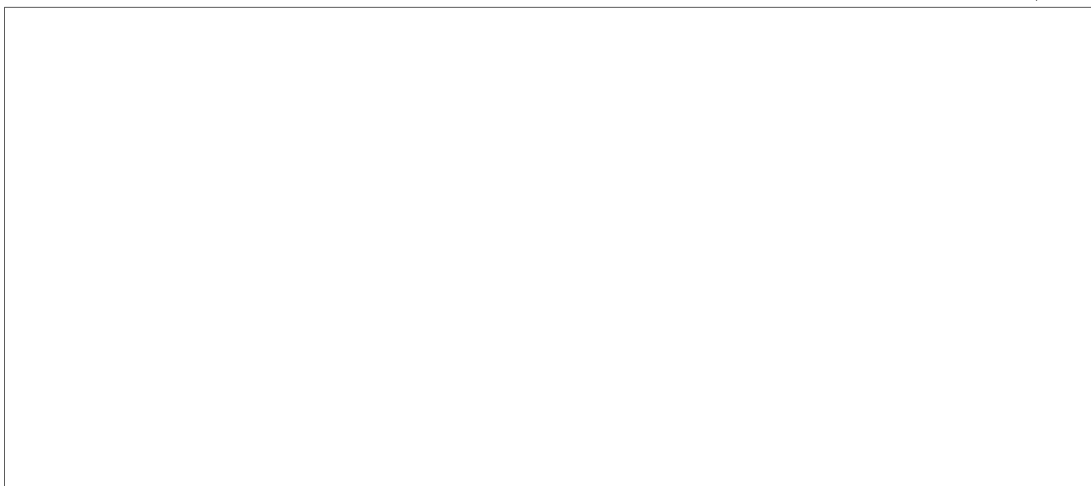
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BIOLOGICAL AND CHEMICAL WARFARE

Laos: Chemical Warfare Reportedly Used Against
the Meos 1

The Laotian Army reportedly is using CW
agents against Meo tribesmen.

PHYSICAL SCIENCES AND TECHNOLOGIES



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BIOLOGICAL AND CHEMICAL WARFARE

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Laos: Chemical Warfare Reportedly Used Against the Meos

If chemical warfare were employed, the agents used probably were chlorine or phosgene, which are readily available on the world market.

A recent Bangkok newspaper cited four witnesses who stated that the CW agent was delivered by aircraft using bombs and rockets. The agent was described as a green, red, or yellow cloud that covered a village. Physical symptoms reported included vomiting, disorientation, loss of equilibrium, and death in about 20 minutes. This report has not been confirmed, and some other refugees from the area reportedly showed no symptoms. If true, this is the first known use of chemical warfare by Laos.

The effects described by the witnesses include some symptoms suggesting that the reported cloud was a World War I - type respiratory agent, and the colors suggest that it could have been chlorine or phosgene, either of which would be effective against small villages. Inasmuch as these agents are gases at ambient temperatures and have a specific gravity greater than air, they would form a layer of gas at ground level rather than dispersing rapidly.

Chlorine and phosgene are readily available on the world market. Shipping containers could be used as crude bombs, which would rupture on striking the ground, or the chemicals easily could be transferred to bombs or other aircraft-compatible tanks that would rupture in the same manner.

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