

3.2 Although an earlier Canadian report<sup>1)</sup> has claimed that there is no indication of natural occurrence of trichothecenes or diseases due to these mycotoxins in Southeast Asia, the critiques say<sup>2)</sup> that we still don't know whether the victims with the symptoms of trichothecene-mycotoxicosis may have or may not have ingested naturally contaminated food.

There are many, rather time-consuming and round-about methods to solve this problem, such as food-basket surveys over one or two years (with particular attention paid to seasons of the year), or search for potentially toxigenic fungal species, or diligent search for trichothecene-related disease in animals, but the only fast way to come to an assessment is the analysis of human body fluids (blood, urine). It is a generally accepted view that humans don't have trichothecenes (or their metabolites) in their body fluids (or organs) unless exposed to these mycotoxins - no matter whether via the diet ("naturally", i.e., because the diet contained, unknowingly, trichothecenes, or "unnaturally", i.e., because they ingested food contaminated from an attack)

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- 1) Schiefer, H.B. Study of the Possible Use of Chemical Warfare Agents in Southeast Asia. A Report to DEA, Canada, June 1982.
  - 2) Meselson's various cautious suggestions to the possibility of natural occurrence of trichothecenes in Southeast Asia, coupled with the enigmatic reports from Thai scientists may serve as example.