

2.4.2 Briefings and Clearances

Since this field trip was not directly related to any specific allegation of the use of toxin/chemical weapons, it was necessary to explain in greater detail the nature and purpose of the investigation to officials of the host country. Briefings were provided by the Canadian team to senior officials of the office of the Minister of the Interior, to senior officers of the office of the Supreme Commander, and to senior officers of the Armed Forces Research Institute of Medical Sciences (AFRIMS).

As a result of these briefings, a "study protocol" was developed by the Canadian team in conjunction with the AFRIMS staff and submitted for approval to the offices of the Minister of the Interior and the Supreme Commander. The protocol outlined methods to be used, the study groups and locations, and other procedural matters.

Clearances had to be obtained from military authorities to travel to certain border regions, particularly if there was some danger of military activity, and to gain access to refugee camps. On more than one occasion, an accompanying Thai senior officer succeeded in allaying the concerns of local authorities which might otherwise have prevented access in spite of possession of the appropriate clearances.