

Possible Use of Chemical Warfare  
Agents in Southeast Asia  
Refugee Interviews at  
Ban Vinai 5 May 1982

1.1 Introduction

The Canadian Government has been concerned about reports of the use of chemical agents in Southeast Asia. Reports were first received from Laos in 1976 and later from Cambodia in 1979. As a result of this concern Canada supported a 1980 United Nations resolution (35/144C) which requested the Secretary-General to establish a group of experts to investigate allegations of use and a later (1981) resolution (36/96C) which extended the group's mandate.

In response to a request by the Secretary-General, Canada submitted a number of interviews obtained by Canadian immigration officers during their routine duties in the screening of applicants. These interviews clearly indicated that some sort of attacks had been made against villages and groups of refugees, particularly those from the Laotian highlands.

While the report of the United Nations Experts Group was inconclusive in this regard, the General Assembly decided to extend its mandate to carry on with its investigation with the objective of reporting to UNGA 37.

Two further reports were submitted to the Secretary-General by Canada in support of the investigation by the Experts Group. The first was a toxicological study carried out by Dr. H. Bruno Schiefer at the invitation of the Department of External Affairs. This study was submitted on June 21 and published by the United Nations as document number A/37/308. An epidemiological study initiated by the Surgeon General of the Canadian Armed Forces was conducted by a medical team and made available to the Secretary-General on August 25, 1982.

1.2 Refugee Interviews at Ban Vinai

... This report summarizes interviews conducted by Canadian officials on May 5, 1982. These interviews concern alleged attacks which took place, in spring 1982 in a river valley (see attached map and overlay, shaded area) in Laos approximately thirteen kilometres to the