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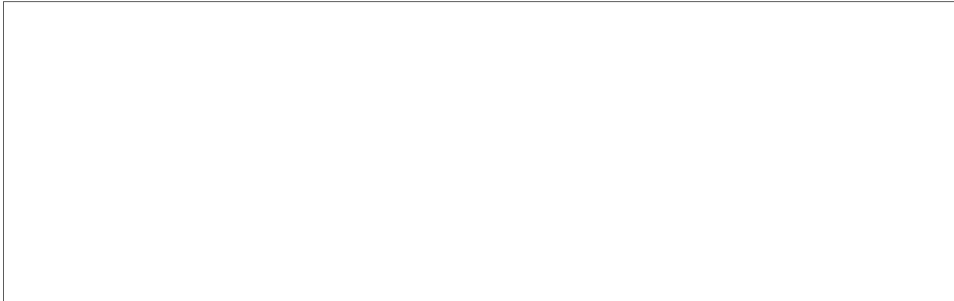
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 FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
 TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2032
 INFO RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC IMMEDIATE
 RUEHIA/USICA WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0948
 RUFHNA/USMISSION USNATO IMMEDIATE 1182
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 RUEHRO/AMEMBASSY ROME 6714
 RUEHKOB/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 4820
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 RUSBLK/AMEMBASSY KABUL 0972
 RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 2169
 RUMTBK/AMEMBASSY BANGKOK 1470
 RUMJFS/AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE 1040
 RUEHDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 0141
 RUFHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 5649
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 RUDORRA/USNMR SHAPE BE
 RUSNAAA/USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GE
 RUHQQA/CINCPAC HONOLULU HI
 RUFHLG/AMCONSUL LENINGRAD 6158

BT
C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 02168

E.O. 12065: GDS 2/23/88 (ZIMMERMANN, WARREN) OR-M
TAGS: MOPS, PARM
SUBJECT: AGENT ORANGE AND YELLOW RAIN

REF: MOSCOW 2035
1. (LOU) LAST WEEK AN AUTHORITATIVE TASS STATEMENT CHARGED THAT IN THE VIETNAM WAR THE U.S. CAUSED "MASS LOSS OF HUMAN LIFE" BY USING CHEMICAL WEAPONS. IZVESTIYA HAS NOW ELABORATED ON THIS ALLEGATION. IN A COLUMN WRITTEN BY A T. EMEL'YANOV, IZVESTIYA FEBRUARY 22 CLAIMS THAT:

-- LIKE NO OTHER COUNTRY IN THE HISTORY OF MANKIND, VIETNAM WAS BOMBARDED BY "POISONOUS" OR "TOXIC" (OTRAVL'YAYUSHCHIYE) AGENTS;

-- "FROM THE SO-CALLED 'DEFOLIANTS' -- THE DISPERSION BY U.S. AIRCRAFT OF 'AGENT ORANGE' -- TENS OF THOUSANDS OF VIETNAMESE PERISHED AND ALMOST TWO MILLION PEOPLE LOST THEIR HEALTH, TWO TIMES MORE

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THAN THE NUMBER OF SOLDIERS MAIMED BY GASES IN
WORLD WAR I."

-- THE U.S. ARMY IS NOW ARMED WITH "POISONOUS
AGENTS," INCLUDING "SARIN, SOMAN, AND TABUN"
GASES. (COMMENT: THE TASS ENGLISH WIRE CALLS
THESE AGENTS "TOXINS", WHEREAS IZVESTIYA REFERS
TO THEM MORE GENERALLY, AS "POISONOUS" OR "TOXIC"
AGENTS.)

COMMENT

2. (C) IT IS NOW CLEAR THAT SOVIET PROPAGANDISTS
HAVE DECIDED TO PUSH THE LINE THAT AGENT ORANGE
IS A LETHAL AGENT AND THAT THE U.S. KILLED THOUSANDS
OF PERSONS WITH IT IN VIETNAM. THE SOVIETS
EVIDENTLY PERCEIVE A NEED TO BOLSTER THEIR DEFENSE
ON YELLOW RAIN, BY CHARGING THAT THE U.S. HAS RECENTLY
USED LETHAL AGENTS IN WARFARE. THE USG SHOULD TAKE
IMMEDIATE STEPS TO COUNTER THIS SOVIET FABRICATION.
WE SHOULD NOT ONLY STRESS THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN
DEFOLIANTS AND LETHAL AGENTS, BUT ALSO HIGHLIGHT THE
IMPLICATIONS OF SOVIET ACTIONS FOR THE 1972 BIOLOGICAL
WEAPONS CONVENTION. ANOTHER STEP THAT MIGHT BE PARTICU-
LARLY EFFECTIVE WOULD BE TO RELEASE FURTHER DETAILS
ON THE TWENTY SOVIET BW AND CW PRODUCTION PLANTS
WHICH AMBASSADOR KAMPELMAN CITED LAST WEEK IN MADRID.

3. (U) KABUL MINIMIZE CONSIDERED. HARTMAN
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