

FOREIGN TECHNOLOGY DIVISION



VIETNAM -- NATO'S TESTING FIELD FOR CHEMICAL WEAPONS

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English pages: 6

Source: Zeitschrift für Militärmedizin
(Military Medicine Journal), No. 2,
1968, pp. 82-84.

Translated under: Contract No. F33657-70-D-0607

GE/0075/68/000/002

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On the basis of facts known from the press and from statements made by the FLN (National Liberation Front), we will attempt to review the individual stages of the "chemical warfare" in South Vietnam, describe the objectives and effects, unmask the USA's demagoguery, and evaluate the use of CW (Chemische Kampfstoffe; Chemical weapons) in South Vietnam.

American military officials and economists frequently complain that in the United States approximately 180 million persons inhabit a territory of less than 10 million square kilometers, while in the Soviet Union approximately 210 million persons inhabit an area of about 22 million square kilometers, and that the military industry in the United States is limited to a few large centers which can be easily destroyed with nuclear weapons.

When in August 1953 the Soviet Union detonated its first operational nuclear weapon and in this way overtook the United States in applied technology, the United States was annually allocating 31.1 million dollars for the development of chemical weapons (CW) and biological weapons (BW).

1960	the amount was 103.4 million dollars
1961	133.3 million dollars
1963 to 1966	200.0 million dollars
1967	230.0 million dollars

Obviously, these figures are not very trustworthy, since they were taken from the NATO press into which they might have been tossed haphazardly. However, the comprehensive growth of chemical weapons, organic phosphates, and psychic and sabotage poisons, as well as the appearance of new irritating substances, clearly demonstrate that expenditures for this purpose are increasing.

The loss of supremacy in nuclear weapons and the powerful defensive potential of the Soviet Union and other socialist countries with a more advantageous population density and distribution of defensive industries are objective reasons for the fact that some NATO countries, especially the United States, devote so much attention to chemical and biological weapons.

Naturally, the NATO professional press does not emphasize these reasons. A biased interpretation of the comparative effects of individual mass destruction methods (MDM) usually is as follows:

- chemical and biological weapons are more economical than nuclear weapons; they can be manufactured secretly at small costs and achieve their appropriate material importance;
- chemical and biological weapons are tactically very versatile; they can defend routes of transportation and rail junctions as well as other objects militarily advantageous to their users; the extent, onset, and duration of the effect can be adjusted to the tactical requirements "in doses";
- chemical and biological weapons offer great advantages in a "limited war."

The use of chemical weapons in the dirty war waged by the United States, its allies and accomplices against the Vietnamese people courageously fighting for their freedom and independence must therefore be regarded as a test of new chemical weapons and utilization of their tactical versatility.

Table 1 contains a summary of the chemical weapons used by the United States in the "chemical war" which it began in 1961 against the inhabitants of South Vietnam.

the development of V-agents completely contradicts the well-known inclination of USA imperialists to present their "chemical warfare" as philanthropic actions for combating weeds and insects or, at worse, for "combating riots" as they do in their own country. When insecticides that are highly toxic for warm-blooded animals are used in appropriate doses, the same effects may be extended to humans in unprotected human beings.

The exact extent of damage done by the United States in South Vietnam through the use of chemical weapons cannot be stated. It has been estimated that the application of herbicides in August through October alone, in 1962, in the first stage, destroyed 3,200 hectares of mangrove forests. However, the annually repeated application of herbicides started in August, 1961, during which year a 24 kilometer long and 550 meter wide strip south of the demilitarized zone between North and South Vietnam was presumably "radically cleared of all plant growth."

According to FLN statements of 13 March 1966, 700,000 hectares of useful crops were destroyed, thousands of persons were killed, and hundreds of thousands were poisoned.

In the western area alone, 150,000 to 200,000 persons were cited as injured by "poison gas." This figure approximately corresponds to the casualties suffered by Germany, England, and France, the main participants in the "chemical warfare" of World War I. It amounts to about one-fifth of the total number of CW injured persons recorded by all countries participating in that war.

These figures show the complete invalidity of arguments in regard to killing weeds with usual herbicides, combating pests with commercial insecticides, and suppressing riots with means that are used for policing purposes in the United States.

The true intention is revealed by the facts that:

- the application of lime nitrogen as fertilizer and weed killer requires eye protection and impervious garments, while aromatic

nitrogen compounds used against mosquitoes require protective devices not only for eyes and the skin but also for breathing;

- The application of arsenic compounds, which are highly toxic, as wood-conserving substance, for combating pests is not customary;

- the application of arsenic compounds requires protective garments and protective devices for breathing;

- Americans use gas sprayers, which are common in Germany, for the purpose of spraying insecticides, which, because of their high toxicity, have generally been used as pesticides in viticulture;

- Gas sprays of arsenic are lethal, and therefore its use as well as that of various other agents has no justification at all;

- herbicides and insecticides have been sprayed over villages and towns; and

- lacrimators and not sternutators are usually used for policing purposes.

There is no doubt that the United States is flagrantly violating the Geneva Convention which prohibited "the use of suffocating, toxic, and similar gases, liquids, and solids as well as bacteriological agents" in future wars.

Even though this convention was not signed by the United States, it still became a valid constituent of international law.

Furthermore, by waging "chemical warfare" in South Vietnam, the United States is guilty of mass destruction for aggressive purposes - an act which was declared criminal by the UN General Assembly on 9 December 1948.

Thus, it is hardly surprising that again in west Germany we find representatives of those forces which handed cyan and zylone B to the fascists and who want to participate in the dirty, deadly business by selling licences, establishing subsidiaries in the United States, and building "fertilizer factories" for the

Soligon Government.¹ If the described the intervention herein, the military evaluation given initially becomes more understandable.

The application of toxic compounds has shown that:

- new American herbicides (Agent Orange, Alar, and ECH), and organic phosphorus compounds (VX, sarin, and tabun) have been used in the war area of Vietnam, and the results of the war area are becoming more and more evident.

Considering the low education level of the population in the South Vietnamese rural population, the use of water supply, and the specific climatic conditions, the chemical warfare has succeeded in producing devastating results.

In conclusion, we may state that "chemical warfare" will have a specific character in each different war area. The crimes committed in Vietnam should inspire us anew to do everything possible to frustrate the imperialist plans.

References

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2. Kunz. Krieg ohne Tote? (War without death?), Die milit. Anw. v. Herbiziden (Military Use of Herbicides).
3. Vojenska Technika (Military Technology), Prague, 7 (1965) 1, p. 12.

Submitted on 12.12.1967

¹Editorial Comment: In this connection, alarming detailed information was recently disclosed testifying anew to the long-Washington collaboration in the production and use of toxic substances. For example, in 1951 the Bayer AG Lye Factory formed with the Chemagro Corporation, an American subsidiary which can meet the United States' and Canada's total demand for insecticides. Chemagro Corporation's cooperation with the US Army Medical Corps has been proven.

Security Clearance: Secret[illegible]

DD FORM 1473

Security Classification

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