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Central Intelligence Agency



Washington, D.C. 20505

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(b)(3)

16 June 1992

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Analysis of Surface Markings
at Sam Neua, Laos (C)

REFERENCE: Letter to D/OCA, Same Subject, dtd June 3, 1992

1. [redacted] showed several unusual markings--the letters "USA" and what resembled a US Air Force escape and evasion symbol known as a "Walking Kilo"--on the ground west of Sam Neua, Laos. We are uncertain as to who may have made those markings, but recently completed analysis gives us a better understanding of how the markings were made, how long the markings may have been present, and what activity may have been going on concurrently in the surrounding region. (S [redacted])

2. [redacted]

- The USA letters were newer by an undetermined period of time (but not more than a few months) than the possible Walking Kilo. [redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

Derivative CI by
Declassify: OADR
Derived From: [redacted]

[redacted]

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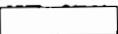
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SUBJECT: Analysis of Surface Markings at Sam Neua, Laos (S)

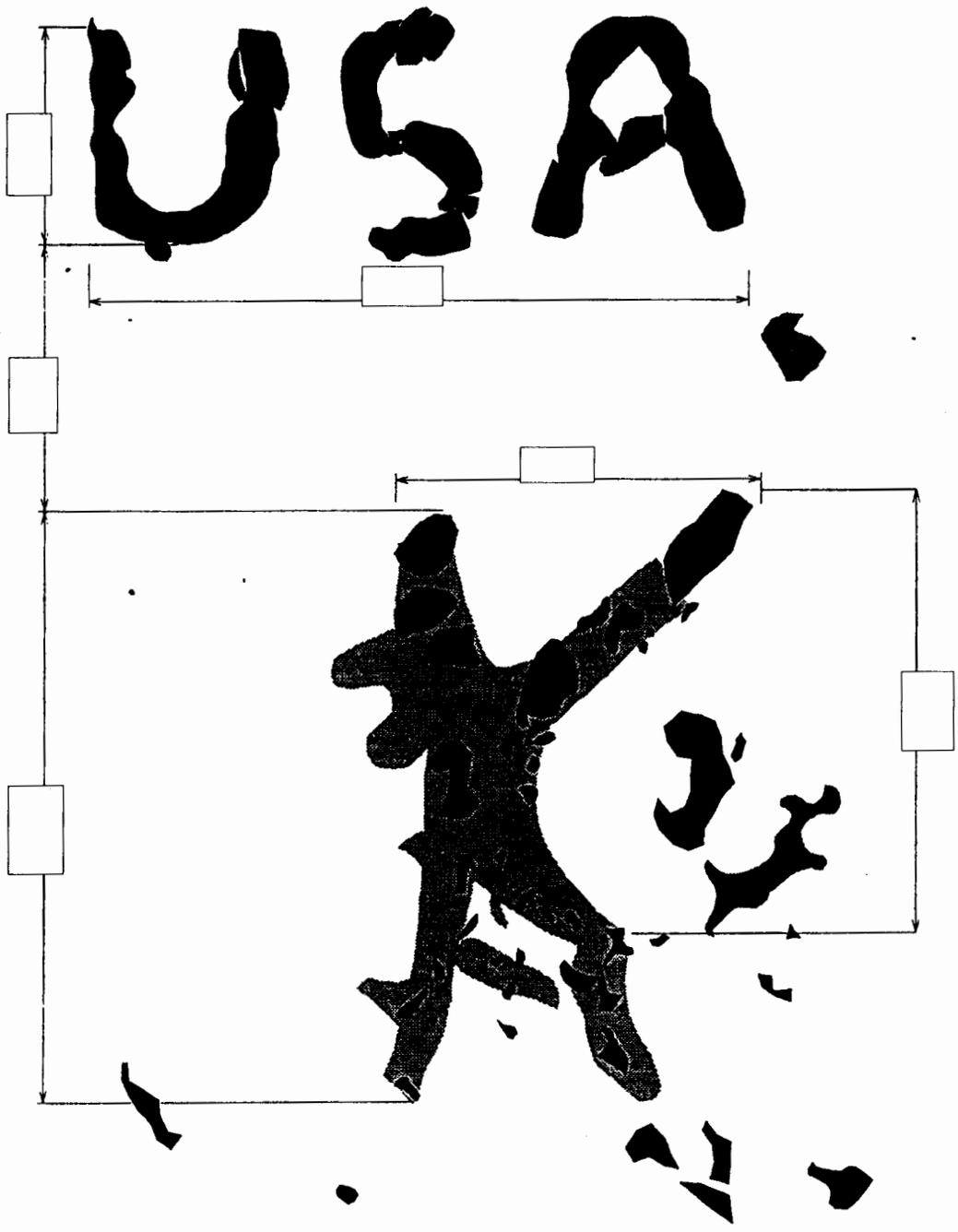


- The USA markings were manmade. Because of the apparent age and decay of the possible Walking Kilo, it could not be determined if it was manmade, although that possibility cannot be ruled out.
- No other markings or symbols were identified in the Sam Neua area 
- The markings appear to have been created by forming slight depressions in the ground--either stamped, or more likely dug--that were then filled with water. The light tone surrounding the letters may indicate recently-dug soil, and the narrow portions of the "S" may indicate that the water was drying up. The markings do not appear to be formed from manmade material or from vegetation.
- Since the markings were constructed in a rice paddy, it is likely that the USA was formed after the harvest season, which ends in December, and would have been obliterated by the beginning of the rainy seasons in May, when rice shoots are transplanted into the flooded paddies. (S) 

3. In related analysis, our study indicates that the markings may have been visible from a portion of Route 6 just to the northeast. The letters were positioned so that an individual traveling along Route 6 from northeast to southwest could have seen them. In addition, the markings would have been clearly visible to an aircraft or helicopter taking off from the airfield at Sam Neua, which is 3.2 km to the west northwest, if that aircraft took off from east to west into the prevailing winds and flew in the direction of Vientiane or Xiangkhoang. (S) 

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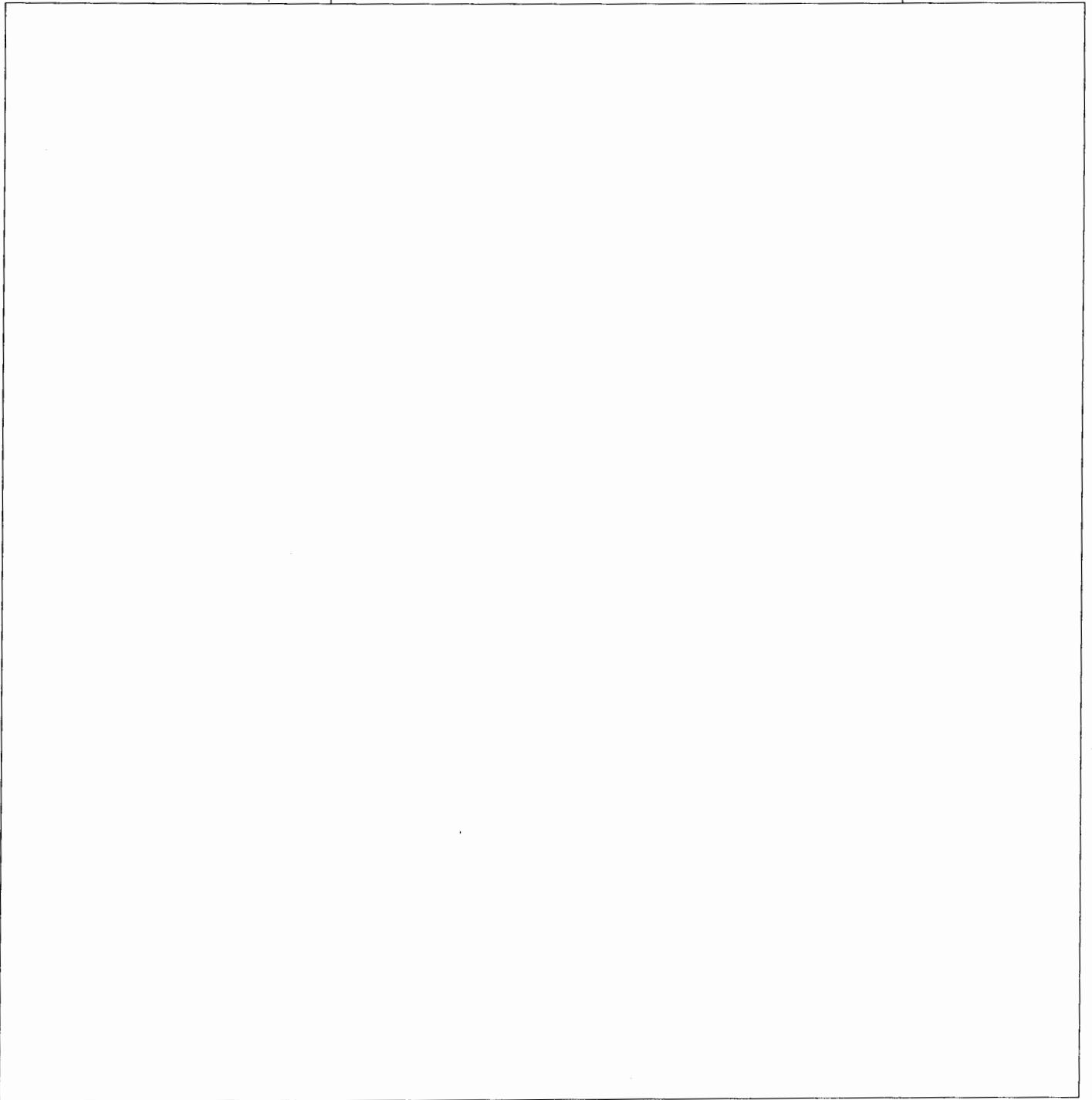
Markings in Rice Paddy
Near Sam Neua, Laos



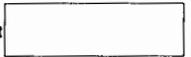
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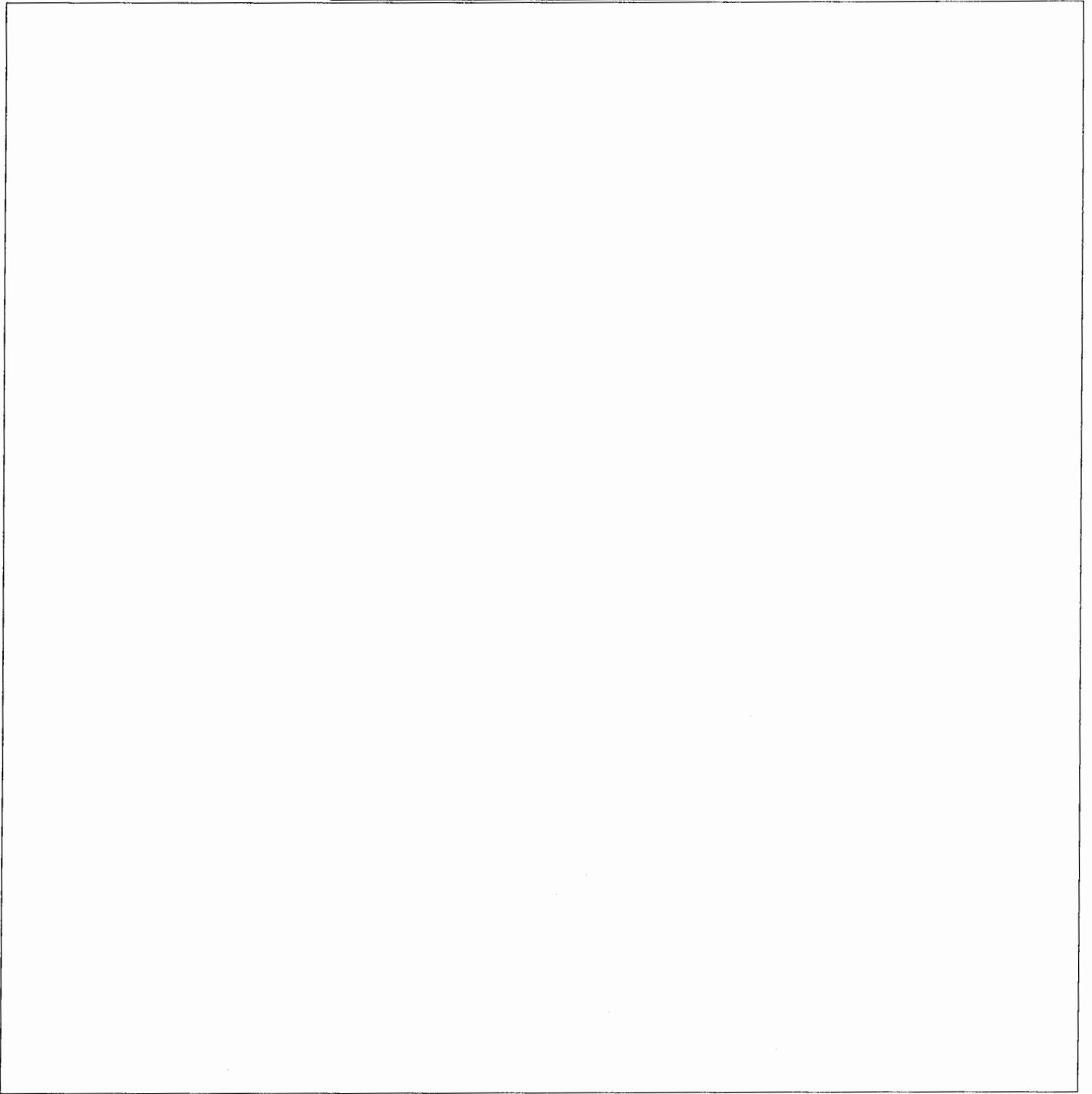


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