

Central Intelligence Agency
National Foreign Assessment Center
Office of Imagery Analysis

16 December 1980
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MEMORANDUM FOR

(b)(3)

SUBJECT : Detention Camp East of Thakhek, Laos (S NF)

1. A detention camp is located in central Laos, 67 kilometers east of Thakhek at 17-30-46N 105-25-19E. It is in a relatively isolated area. The camp was established between April 1978 and September 1979, and was occupied on [redacted] of 10 December 1980. The identity of the persons being held in the camp cannot be determined [redacted] (S NF)

2. The camp is located in the northwest corner of a large cleared area of slash and burn activity. What appears to be a low fence is present at the tree line around part of the clearing. The camp consists of an outer area and an inner area, each of which is enclosed by a fence. (S [redacted])

3. The outer stockade-type fence is about 2-2.5 meters tall and encompasses an area of about 18,200 square meters. Between this outer fence and the inner fence, there are guard force quarters, a trench, an automatic weapons position, two observation towers, and row crops. The observation towers appear to be positioned for observing the inner compound. The towers are thatch-roofed and each has a platform estimated to be 3 to 4 meters above ground. The only entrance through the outer fence is at the southwest corner. A trail leads from this entrance to Route 12, about 500 meters to the west. The trail is wide enough for vehicles but no vehicle tracks or activity are observed on December 1980 [redacted]. The trail appears to be lightly traveled by foot traffic. (S [redacted])

Warning Notice
Intelligence Sources and
Methods Involved (WHINTI)

Derivative CI By 365274
Decl. Xitev on 16 Dec 2000
Derived From B9C3.2

Secret

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4. The inner compound is located near the center of the camp. The compound encompasses an area of about 2,800 square meters and is enclosed by a stockade-type fence about 2-2.5 meters in height. The main entrance to this compound is near the southwest corner with a second entrance near the northwest corner. The inner compound contains five buildings, several sheds, and various unidentified structures/objects located mostly along the compound perimeter. The two largest buildings appear to be barracks and measure 6 meters by 26 meters by 5 meters in height. A narrow fenced corridor (not visible on the attached photographs) extends from the southeast corner of the inner compound into a cluster of trees. We cannot determine the function of the area under the trees. (S ☐)

5. A flat, nearly square cleared area of about 760 square meters is located about 40 meters east of the camp. Its function is unknown. A small possible earthen dam is located on a stream that flows through the east side of the camp. A few buildings, which could have some relation to the camp, are located in the forest south of the slash and burn area around the camp. (S ☐)

6. The assessment that this facility is for the detention of personnel, rather than to keep out personnel or animals, is based on several factors. First, the two stockade-type fences are not typical of defensive measures in the area nor do villages in the area commonly use fences of any type. Second, the observation towers are located outside of but near the inner compound, providing a good view of the compound but only a limited view of areas beyond the outer fence. Third, the camp is located near the edge of the slash and burn area and the vegetation has been allowed to return outside the outer fence on the northern and western sides. Fourth, the facility was not built on high ground for control over the surrounding terrain. Finally, the low level of activity between the camp and the surrounding villages and Route 12 indicates little contact with the outside. (S ☐)

7. In April 1978 only a narrow foot trail, used by the villages in the area, passed by the heavily forested area that now contains the camp. By September 1979, the primary structures at the camp had been constructed but the camp did not appear to have been completed. (S ☐)

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8. Enclosed are graphics showing the location and details of the camp. If you have any questions, please contact [redacted] of the [redacted] (C)

Attachments:
As stated

Distribution:

Original - Addressee (w/attachments)
1 - Director NFAC (w/attachments)
1 - DIA/DI-7C/POW/MIA Branch, Attn P.J. Hurt (w/o attachments)
1 - [redacted]
1 - DDO/ [redacted]

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