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SILENT WMDs – EFFECTS OF DEPLETED URANIUM

By

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*Heat not a furnace for your foe so hot ..that it do singe yourself.
- William Shakespeare*

This brief presentation is aimed at conveying to the primarily Indian participants of the Conference the fateful and disastrous consequences of the indiscriminate use of depleted and non DU munitions on the people of the west, central and south Asian regions, women, children, men, animals, plant and animal life now and in the future, in gross violation of international law, the Hague convention and domestic US military law.

Official Gamma Ray damage caused studies have been deficient in a number of respects.....internal contamination, internal dose to individual cells, omissions of diseases other than cancer, mutagenic, long term degeneration, oncogenesis, effects of the killer isotopes in particular. The case studies of the years 1945-50 were ignored. A recent European Parliament Report ECRR 2003 (European Committee on Radiation Risk) concludes that 'A' Bomb studies underestimate the radiation risk by more than 1000 times and failed to consider the internal exposure and diseases caused by 'Alpha' and 'Beta' rays. They did not consider the Manhattan Project classified memo that, in case the Project objective of producing Plutonium fission and the 'A' Bomb did not succeed, 'Depleted Uranium' munitions would be deployed towards the attainment of the same objective (encl. 1).

DU weapons emit 'Alpha' particle dose to a single cell from U-238 which is 50 times the annual dose level. Cancer is initiated with one alpha particle, its daughter isotopes effect generations as the isotopes bio-concentrate in plants and animals, and travel up the food chain. It is a nuclear weapon because the energy is derived from the nucleus of the atom. They enter the body through the lungs, the digestive system or breaks in the skin. One gram of DU releases more than 12,000 particles per second. The radiation slowly kills the cells that make life possible. The Gulf War syndrome of 1991 did just that (reported by Dr Asaf Durakovic, Prof. of Medicine , Georgetown University, and discoverer of the 'Gulf War Syndrome'.)

We are well aware that the radiation fall-out map "Under the Cloud: Decades of Nuclear Testing" has demonstrated the effects of 1200 nuclear weapon tests conducted at the Nevada Test Site; and the US Government admitted in Nov. 2002, that every living person in the US between 1958-63 was exposed to this fall out – resulting in cancer, gene mutation, heart disease, autism, diabetes, Parkinsons, ALS, asthma, chronic fatigue syndrome , hypothyroidism in newborns, obesity and learning disabilities. One out of twelve children in the US is disabled. The fall out did not stop at the US borders. It travelled around the world, as atmospheric dust and remains even in the biosphere/ sub-orbital space today. High breast cancer rates have been co-located in the proximity of nuclear power plants in the west and more so in the east coast areas of the US (The Breast cancer map from "The Enemy Within: the high cost of living near nuclear reactors", quotes US Govt. Disease Control Centers.

The Radiation & Public health Report (RPHP), rendered by a group of independent scientists collected 4000 baby teeth and by measuring Strontium 90 levels in the baby teeth (a built in dosi-meter) they have been able to co-relate with radiation related diseases in children living near the nuclear power plants; the main path ways being dairy products and drinking water.

The induction of DU weapons in 1991 in Iraq, the radio-active trash from nuclear plants broke a 46 year taboo. This Trojan Horse of nuclear war, an omnicidal weapon has since then continued to be used more and more. DU remains radioactive longer than the age of the earth (estimated at 4.5 billion years.)

The long-term effects from over a decade of DU exposures are emerging in Southern Iraq. They are devastating. The increased quantities of radio-active material (including non-depleted uranium), used in Afghanistan are 3 to 5 times greater than Iraq 199. In Iraq 2003 they are already estimated to be 6 to 10 times 1991 and will travel through a larger area and affect many more people, babies and unborn. Countries within a 1000 mile radius of Baghdad and Kabul are being affected by radiation poisoning , that includes the Capital, New Delhi, where the ruling elite lives. The reported coming of an AIDS epidemic last year in India , down wind, may have a relationship to DU bombing in Afghanistan. If we think cancer is a problem now wait until more DU is released in wars against terror and for 'regime change', on 'mistaken' Intelligence reports.

More than 500 tons of DU munitions have been dispensed in Afghanistan. Professor Yagasaki calculated that 800 tons of DU is the atomicity equivalent to 83,000 Nagasaki bombs in a paper presented at the 'World Uranium Weapons Conference' in Hamburg in October 2003 (5 months ago). The amount of DU used in Iraq in 2003 is equivalent to nearly 250,000 Nagasaki bombs (Busby and Leuren Moret have calculated that 1900 tons of DU is equivalent to 60 TBq of Alfa and Beta particulate activity).

We need not enumerate the DU munition types used in Iraq 199, Kosovo 1999, Afghanistan 2001-04 and Iraq 2003. They have been dispensed by all air / ground and sea systems on innocent civilians. DU burns intensely and is very hard. It releases Uranium Oxide. The aerosol contains particles of 0.5-5 microns in size, once they are in the air or dust they are inhaled or ingested, including from contaminated soil. Once in the lungs one such particle is equivalent to having one X-Ray per hour, for life. Because it is impossible to remove, the victim is gradually irradiated. Still births, birth defects, leukemia, damaged central nervous systems and other cancers have been common in children born since 1991. Child leukemia has risen 600 % in areas of Iraq as reported by the Netherland Visie Foundation. Beyond just the health consequences, *DU munitions are in fact, weapons of 'Silent' Mass Destruction in so far as the consequences of their usage are vast, indiscriminate and violate all Human Rights Conventions . Tora Bora , Kabu , Paktia , Karises or underwater supply tunnels have been contaminated forever.* All this has been documented in a comprehensive paper “ Uranium wars : The Pentagon steps up its use of Radio-active Munitions,” by Marc W. Herold to whom this paper owes sincere acknowledgement.

In another paper Dr Mohammed Daud Miraki, Director Afghan DU Recovery Fund, quotes George W Bush , “we will smoke them out”, condemning the unborn, the living and the future generations of Afghans and the neighbouring people to a pre-determined, death sentence. “After the destruction of our village, I realised that the Americans had sentenced us all to death. When I saw my deformed grandson I realised my hopes for the future have vanished ... This time we are part of the invisible genocide brought on by America... a silent death from which we will not escape (Jooma Khan of Laghman province..March 2003.) Similar stories are repeated from Paktita province of ‘*Jelly Babies*’. *Pregnant women are afraid of giving birth...This is the legacy of US ushered liberation, freedom and democracy.* DU is cheap for the US, utilising nuclear waste, cheaper than titanium and tungsten, not for the ‘liberated’ (non-DU is still cheaper as it is the uranium feedstock, pre-enrichment).

The Uranium Medical Research Center (UMRC), Washington DC, and the Bulletin of Atomic Scientists (1991) - Steve Fetter and Frank Von Hippel have reported on extensive research by ‘Field’ teams of the UMRC in Afghanistan. Testimonies of fathers and mothers are horrifying – “ What else do the Americans want ? They killed us , they turned our new-borns into horrific deformations, and they turned our farm lands into grave-yards, and destroyed our homes. On top of all this their planes fly over and spray us with bullets.. we have nothing to lose ..we will fight them the same way we fought the previous invaders...” (Sayed Gharib at Tora Bora).

Radiological dispensing devices or warfare is the latest of the weapons of the new millenium, but it sings even those who use it , as shown in the after effects of the tests at home ground in the US, where evidence of cognitive damage during early infancy have been compiled. For us in Eurasia, Pakistan and India we have a new health epidemic to drain our scarce resources.

As world citizens we need to focus on a new scourge, the reality of the PNAC - ‘Rebuilding America’s Defenses, Strategy, Forces and Resources for a New Century’.

The Report notes that , “ Much has been written in recent years about the need to transform the conventional armed forces of the United States to take advantage of the ‘Revolution in Military Affairs’ Our military requires a dramatic transformation , lest we lose

our ability to fight the future unconventional wars .. some may be fought in cyberspace, others under water or in outer space . *And some even within our bodies.*

Paul Wolfowitz, William Kristol and others are some of the men representing contemporary ‘power centers’, who define US policy. History indicates that the men who define US military policy from the shadows , are worthy of our attention.

GENETIC BOMBS

When creating ‘genetic-bombs’ or weapons to target specific groups; genetic profiles are subtler and more accurate than the coarse pseudo category called race. The group with ADHD (the Edison Gene) uniquely share common inherited variations in their dopamine regulating genes regardless of race, geography or ethnicity. Thus anybody who’s part of a group with a shared genetic profile may be at risk in the future.

A virus or bacteria may attack only a particular type of person, killing, disabling or sterilising only those of a particular gene profile. Threatening a particular type would be sufficient political black-mail.

Wolfowitz, Kristol and their colleagues suggested that the Pentagon should be thinking about not just germ warfare of which they have plenty of capabilities, *but gene warfare.*

Genetic terra-forming could replace diplomacy, or it could change the face of politics if an organism got loose that killed all the people of a particular minority community who tend to vote for a particular political party.

According to the PNAC, “*Genetically targeted weapons could change world politics for ever, and the report notes, advanced forms of biological warfare that can target specific genotypes may transform biological warfare from the realm of terror to a politically useful tool*”

To conclude 4th generation micro-nukes, with their war-head composition, were deliberated upon and decided at the US Airforce Strategic Command Headquarters at the Offutt Airforce Base, Nebraska, between the top Corporates /weapon manufacturers and the US military brass. The former not only have prior knowledge of numbers and types of all types of nuclear weapons, but the locations of the planned and approved targets, globally.

This meeting took place on Hiroshima Day, 6th August, 2003, and to reiterate, the aim was to define a new generation of nuclear weapons to be used on a pre-emptive basis against rogue enemies and terrorist organisations. (mini-nukes have an explosive capacity between one-third and six times a Hiroshima bomb).

In this Strangelovian logic, nuclear weapons are now viewed as a means to ensuring peace and security against non-existent WMDs.

AT A GLANCE

1. In the 2003 war, the IraqiS were subjected to the Pentagon’s radioactive arsenal, mainly in the urban centers, unlike in the deserts in 1991. The aggregate effects of illnesses and long term disabilities and genetic birth defects will be apparent only 2008 onwards.

2. By now, half of all the 697,000 US soldiers involved in the 1991 war have reported serious illnesses. *According the American Gulf War Veterans Association, more than 30% of these soldiers are chronically ill, and receiving disability benefits from the Veterans Administration.*
3. *The number of disabled veterans is shockingly high . They are in their mid-thirties and should have been in the prime of health.*
4. Near the Republican Palace where US troops stood guard and over 1000 employees walked in and out, the radiation readings were the ‘hottest ‘ in Iraq, at nearly 1900 times background radiation levels.
5. At a roadside stand, selling fresh bunches of parsley, mint, and onions, children played on a burnt out Iraqi tank just outside Baghdad, the Geiger counter registered 1000 times normal background radiation.
6. “The Pentagon and the United Nations estimate that the US and Britain used 1,100 to 2,200 tons of armor piercing shells made of DU during attacks in March-April 2003, far more than the 1991 Gulf War (this does not include air dispensed DU munitions and missiles),” wrote the *Post Intelligencer*.
7. An otherwise useless by-product of the uranium enrichment process, DU is attractive to military contractors because it is so cheap and often offered for free by the Government.
8. The long term effects, as Dr Asaf Durakovic elaborates, after the early neurological symptoms are cancer, and related radiation illnesses such as chronic fatigue syndrome, joint and muscle pain, neurological and/or nerve damage, mood disturbances, auto-immuno deficiencies, lung and kidney damage, vision problems, skin rupture, increase in miscarriages, maternal mortality and genetic birth defects/deformation.
9. For years the US government described the Gulf War Syndrome as a post traumatic stress disorder. It was labelled as a psychological problem or simply as mysterious unrelated ailments much in the same way as health problems of Vietnam veterans suffering from Agent Orange poisoning.
(With acknowledgements to Sara Flounders, for 1-9 above, Coordinator of the DU education program).

I also gratefully acknowledge the facts learnt from evidence led by scientists/papers presented and accepted by the International Criminal Tribunal on Afghanistan, at Tokyo on 13-16 Decembe, 2003 and earlier at the World Depleted Uranium Weapons Conference, Hamburg 16-19 October, 2003, by Leuren Moret, whose continuing contribution to this cause against ‘ Silent Wepons of Mass Destruction’ (SWMD), in defense of humanity, deserves our support.

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