

Cover-up

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Uranium Weapons Cover-ups in Our Midst

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*...We deal
With invisible
enemies
We trade
In dangers unseen...*

Afon Claerwen, November 2002

Introduction

From Manhattan Project to Hamburg

The concept of toxic-radioactive warfare dates back to World War II when air attacks with uranium oxide aerosols were considered a realistic threat. The military recognized the potential of uranium smoke (aerosol) as a terrain contaminant and an instrument of gas warfare that kills and incapacitates troops and civilians and denies territory to enemy. US War Department's Manhattan Project considered development of uranium aerosol weapons, as is documented in a 1943 memo to general Groves [<http://www.mindfully.org/Nucs/Groves-Memo-Manhattan30oct43.htm>].



The War Department was later re-named Department of Defense (Pentagon). Pentagon knew the hazards of fine uranium particles, but has developed depleted uranium (DU) ammunition that became a contentious issue after wars in the Persian Gulf and the Balkans. Leading scientists have joined with an increasing number of victims of DU weaponry, including former combatants and civilians, and pressured the governments that have developed and used, or sanctioned the use of, these weapons.

Cover-ups of uranium effects must have gone on since WW II, but pro-DU propaganda surfaced only after the first massive use of DU ammunition in 1991 Gulf War. That war broke a 46-year-long taboo against the intentional use or induction of radioactivity in combat, creating a military and legal precedent, and trivializing the combat use of radioactive materials.

The “Kosovo” DU scandal in 2000/2001 saw information warfare employed to defend uranium non-atomic weapons, including intimidation of vocal victims of DU, independent researchers, and activists in the West and former Soviet block countries. A growing number of concerned groups tracked misinformation, deceptions and the politics of uranium weapons. This material precipitated propaganda analyses presented to international conferences in Manchester in November 2000 [Bein], in Prague a year later [Bein and Zori?], and in a University of Belgrade monograph in 2003 [Bein and Parker].

The latter paper married the propaganda and the legalistic themes, as the illegality of uranium weapons continues to be the weakest point (actually, a no-point) of their proponents. UN resolutions since 1996 call DU weaponry “incompatible” (i.e. illegal) under existing humanitarian law and human rights [UN Doc. E/CN.4/Sub.2/1997/27 and additions; E/CN.4/Sub.2/2000/38 and E/CN.4/Sub.2/2003/35]. The cover-ups are bound to tighten around the illegality issues.

UK researcher Dai Williams substantially expanded the understanding of uranium weapons other than DU. Shaped charge munitions, explosive charges, a fill in thermobaric bombs, and a new generation of hard target guided weapons that use “dense metal” to double their penetration effect are all suspect of containing uranium [<http://www.eoslifework.co.uk/du2012.htm>; <http://www.eoslifework.co.uk/u231.htm>; <http://www.eoslifework.co.uk/u23.htm>]. Misinformation and cover-ups of these weapons exhibit patterns similar to those employed for DU armour-piercers. Uranium shaped charge warheads

are rapidly proliferating in smaller ground-to-ground and air-to-ground missile systems. A variation of shaped charges are used in anti-tank cluster bombs.

Uranium Medical Research Centre (UMRC) found high contamination of residents near sites bombed in Afghanistan [<http://www.umrc.net/AfghanistanOEF.asp>; Durakovic 2003]. UMRC planned the first field trip to Afghanistan, based on data about uranium weapons in Afghanistan that was researched independently of Williams. His research corroborated UMRC information. All samples were analyzed for the concentration and ratio of uranium 234, 235, 236 and 238. The analysis identified non-depleted uranium and urinary excretion of total uranium significantly exceeding the values in the non-exposed population.

Media reports, and political and legal campaigns, including the work of the UN Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights, have focused specifically on DU weapons. The isotopic composition of military uranium residue in Afghanistan resembles natural uranium, except for traces of uranium 236, which most labs cannot detect and would declare natural uranium. Williams commented to the Sub-Commission recently: “[Undepleted uranium] offers a major advantage of concealment from detection during medical and environmental testing - except for excessive abundance as seen in the UMRC samples. Unless great vigilance and advanced laboratory methods are applied, undepleted Uranium can be dismissed as “increased background” levels of natural uranium (as done by US and Canadian military environmental reports from Afghanistan).”

How does it affect us

If the new weapon systems contain undepleted uranium, then the governments responsible can deny that they use DU. Williams writes: “Scores of written replies from the UK Government to MPs, and personal correspondence to me, have contained specific denials about the use of DU in guided weapons of all kinds. They have declined to respond to recent questions about undepleted uranium.” The ability to uncover uranium weapons other than DU depends much on public opinions. The complex will continue to mislead. Our movement, using outside scientific and legalistic expertise, must change existing perceptions.

Each new war disposes of very hazardous nuclear waste on new territory, away from the producer's country, in uranium weapons that the proponents call "conventional". We are unfortunately richer in experience through a series of wars that the US politicians promise will not end any time soon. We also learned that the movement is manipulated by the adversary, making us divided, instead of focused on the most desired objectives. With our numbers, brain power and determination we will turn these challenges into opportunities, and will beat uranium weapons to the Earth's insides, from where they should have never arisen.

The material and evidence I reviewed for this invited brief indicates that anti-uranium weapon movement is infiltrated and corrupted. The subterfuge usually occurs on the more specialized frontlines, into where the general membership does not look and therefore remains unaware of the threats. Consequently, the establishment has marginalized, if not intimidated, many of our warriors, making them less effective and delaying the achievement of our goals. The manipulations create or increase our polarization, and plant intrigues among our groups, which lead to distrust within the movement and frustrate the efforts of sincere membership. Davey Garland wrote: "these issues are vital to the survival of the movement, but also for it to evolve." [du-watch, September 21, 2003]. Without it, he added privately two days later, "we will be throwing mud for the next few years."

I submit some of the cases that have sufficient background material for verification. I present them without prejudice and in good faith, trusting they will help our leaders and members use them wisely for the common good. Hopefully, this brief will be useful for dealing with the perpetrators: remedying the damage done within our ranks and in public opinions, and mitigating adversary's future attempts. We can make a change even though we cannot control production and use of the weapons.

Responsible authorities are liable under a wide range of international law beyond humanitarian law. They contaminate battlefields with military uranium and endanger health of civilians and combatants. The findings of research into the health effects of DU and other weaponry containing radiation but not causing nuclear fission or fusion explosions (which as a whole is referred to as radiological weaponry in this brief) are indisputable. Even a cursory review of humanitarian law supports the conclusion that uranium weaponry of any type is so patently illegal that

the discussion should really focus on bringing to justice those who have used it and redirecting action towards the victims of these weapons. But the international community and the anti-uranium movement still confronts the "denial and deflect" policies of the weapon makers, proliferators and users.

Understanding of humanitarian law relating to weaponry and the consequences of violations reveals why those responsible think they have to cover-up that they knowingly developed and used "illegal" weapons. Rather than face those consequences, they misstate, mislead, and misinform.

This brief analyses the cover-ups with a view on exposing the methods and tactics for the movement to educate themselves in preparation for effective countermeasures. Part 1 outlines the anatomy of cover-ups: group-think, information warfare and media manipulation. Part 2 presents our adversary's tactics and effectiveness. Part 3 analyses cases that illustrate Parts 1 and 2 in the context of prime concern to this conference: our adversary's cover-up and deception operations imposed on the movement. Conclusions and recommendations are mine, as well as supplied in confidence and extracted from postings to du-watch. They are by no means complete, but are meant to precipitate discussions and thinking. Readers familiar with my previous work can proceed to Parts 3 and 4.

Part 1: Anatomy of cover-ups

Reasons for cover-ups

Bein and Parker [2003] summarized the health hazards of uranium in non-nuclear weapons and civilian applications: radioactivity and toxicity. The hazards are similar, regardless of the type of uranium metal used: depleted, non-depleted or in alloys with other metals. That paper gave an ample sampling of government, military and industry documents that prove the authorities responsible for uranium contamination knew about the risks involved – the principal reason they suppressed the evidence.

Uranium radiation hazards are covered-up and misrepresented. Central technical basis in the deception are obsolete models of risk and derived standards of allowable exposure. The total radiological dose inside an exposed person over years severely exceeds safe limits. Standards set by the International Commission on Radiological Protection (ICRP) derive from empirically invalid assumptions due to secrecy and distortions around the effects of Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombs, then around Cold War developments of nuclear power and weapons. The ICRP risk model arose from studies of bomb survivors, which overlooked the effects from an internal radiation source and ignored cancers that take decades to appear.

Physicists instead of biologists developed the ICRP model before DNA was known, yet it purports to represent cell damage processes. ICRP model spreads a dose over a large mass of tissue instead of considering biophysical and biochemical damage mechanisms at the cellular level. A critique by the European Committee on Radiation Risk reveals that ICRP models of risk from internal particles underestimate empirical mortality and morbidity by a factor of 100 to 1000 [ECRR 2003].

A team from the Uranium Medical Research Center (UMRC) reported after a visit to hard-target bomb sites in Afghanistan: "The UMRC field team was shocked by the breadth of public health impacts coincident with the bombing. Without exception, at every bombsite investigated, people are ill. A significant portion of the civilian population presents symptoms consistent with internal contamination by Uranium."

The perpetrators of all radiological wars and illegal weapons face potential liability for war crimes, military and civilian casualties, contamination of environment, and battlefield clean-up costs as well as social costs of other parts of the uranium weapon cycle, including disposal of astronomical quantities of expired uranium weapons on own territory. Cover-ups and deceptions are expected under such circumstances.

The second reason for cover-ups is long-term. DU weapons belong to the diffuse category of low-radiological-impact nuclear weapons to which emerging types of low-yield (i.e., 4th generation) nuclear explosives also belong. The cover-ups might serve to ease public acceptability of present uranium weapons against hard targets, present small nuclear warheads, and future pure fusion nuclear weapons [Gspöner 2003]. All of these weapons contaminate with low level radiation. A future combat scenario with micro-nukes translates into a low-level radioactive input comparable to that on DU battlefields [<http://arxiv.org/abs/physics/0210071>]. Elimination of uranium radiological weapons would not terminate the health and environmental problems of low-level radiation battles.

Group-think

Uranium weapons likely persist due to institutional pressures that, once started to defend an effective DU bullet, escalated to a point of no return. Substitution of uranium weapons would indirectly admit the hazards, while ample evidence incriminates those responsible because they knew the potential dangers from the beginning. In an extreme case scenario, war-mongers and ethnic-haters in high positions may have discovered in uranium weapons an effective toxic-radioactive terrorist tool. With it, they can damage present and future generations of the "enemy" without public stigma of WMD, though with some "collateral damage" to own civilians and troops over the lifecycle of the weapons.

The US and UK governments claim they deploy DU ammunition because it costs less than tungsten, has an advantage over enemy armour, reduces own casualties and utilizes industrial waste.

The claims are not justified. The additional expense on tungsten is negligible both relative to the military value of a destroyed target, and in the total military spending. This is a socially irresponsible reasoning, as it ignores the health costs and clean-up costs over the life-cycle of uranium weapons. Recent announcements about development of tungsten substitutes of DU tank ammunition undermine the claim. The DU weapon systems are not better or cheaper than

alternatives. Military applications of DU do not utilize significant quantities of nuclear waste, either.

Own soldiers, the victims of “friendly fire” suffer from acute poisoning and radiation sickness, instead of ordinary wounds, while longer-term casualties are substantial. A September 2002 Gulf War report on US veterans shows 0.1% casualty rate in combat, but a 36% post-combat rate for almost 700 thousand troops engaged in the war and shortly after. However, according to a 1998 admission of the military, only 436 thousand troops entered into areas that were contaminated by DU dust. That boosts the casualty rate to 58% post-combat! Uranium is one of several major causes of the syndrome, so a casualty rate of about ten percent could be attributed to DU.

Official reports in the West ignore civilian casualties of uranium weapons in Iraq, the Balkans, and recently in Afghanistan. Iraqis and Serbs were subject to economic sanctions when they most needed medical supplies, fuel and food. Sick Afghans with weakened immune resistance due to uranium contamination died of cold and starvation, without being recorded as victims of uranium weapons. Given that the governments responsible knew about the consequences for civilians, it seems likely that the severe imposition of sanctions against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and Iraq was meant to cover-up damage due to radiological weaponry.

Pro-uranium propaganda has seriously compromised scientific reports subject to military-government funding and control, even those by international organizations. Deceitful propaganda also appears in statements from government, military and arms and nuclear industry. It is of great concern that political representatives are unable to obtain information from alternative sources and uncritically trust doctored intelligence and distorted data. This points to a fundamental flaw in how these countries address military issues and weapons. Countless journalists, researchers, professors, and persons in responsible public positions help in misinformation campaigns, thus breaking professional ethics of primary allegiance to public good. Willingly or not, knowingly or not, they collude in the crimes by spreading lies and distortions about fatal effects of uranium.

The propaganda has led to an absurd situation where US and UK justified attacking Iraq because it might have potential in the future to deploy WMD – but themselves used uranium weapons of indiscriminate or mass effect against Iraq.

Williams considered that civilian and military decision makers responsible for uranium weapons may be caught up in a self-justifying logic that generates illusory morality, demands conformity, accepts high risk strategies and demonizes enemies and dissenters. Some Western governments seem to be following the group-think in the wars with “Saddam”, “Milosevic” and recently the “Wars on Terrorism”. Group-think in authoritarian organizations would explain why the military downplayed or outright ignored the health risks of uranium weapons, and why those responsible chose to cover up their criminal position, rather than relinquish uranium weapons.

Indirect evidence exists that cover-up was desired to deceive the public and escape liabilities. In 1947 a secret memo from the US Atomic Energy Commission had this self-incriminating statement about medical experiments on human subjects: “It is desired that no document be released which refers to experiments with humans and might have adverse effects on public opinion or result in legal suits. Documents covering such work field should be classified ‘secret.’ “

Following the full scale low-radiation experiment with DU bullets in Gulf War I, a memo dated March 1, 1991, from Lt. Col. Ziehm of Los Alamos National Laboratory apparently defined future US military policy regarding DU weapons: “It is believed that du penetrators were very effective against Iraqi armor; however, assessments of such will have to be made. There has been and continues to be a concern regarding the impact of du on the environment. Therefore, if no one makes a case for the effectiveness of du on the battlefield, du rounds may become politically unacceptable and thus, be deleted from the arsenal. If du penetrators proved their worth during our recent combat activities, then we should assure their future existence (until something better is developed) through Service/DoD proponentcy. If proponentcy is not garnered, it is possible that we stand to lose a valuable combat capability. I believe we should keep this sensitive issue at mind when after action reports are written.”

The UK government also was aware of the need to cover up. On March 2, 1998, UK armed forces minister Lord Gilbert referred to a letter of 30 April 1991 by P.G.E. Bartholomew, business development manager at UK Atomic Energy Authority: "I promised to produce a threat paper on the contamination of Kuwait from depleted uranium used by the US and UK forces in the recent war. [The paper] covers the threat and outlines the action we believe is necessary for health safety," Bartholomew's letter reads. "The whole subject of the contamination of Kuwait is emotive and thus must be dealt with in a sensitive manner. It is necessary to inform the Kuwait government of the problem in a useful way [...] (The good news is that we've saved you from Saddam -- the bad news is...)" [<http://www.ahram.org.eg/weekly/2001/525/in2.htm>].

As hard-target uranium weapons came on the development and use stream, the philosophy must have been extended to the new applications. Logically, similar cover-up approach would govern next weapons that leave low-level radiation behind, for many generations to deal with.

Information warfare

Information warfare is one of the instruments of power, beside combat, diplomacy, and economic sanctions. PsyOps (Psychological Operations) are among its most conspicuous tools. Information warfare is effective and inexpensive compared to combat, and would fit the needs of "Service/DoD proponency" named in Ziehm's memo. The military specifies the structure and methods of Information Operations that engage behavioural science, mass media and high technology [Joint Chiefs of Staff 1987; Headquarters Department of the Army 1996]. US Department of Defense (DoD) targets foreign nations and groups, including foreign governments. DoD actions "convey and/or deny selected information and indicators to foreign audiences to influence their emotions, motives, and objective reasoning; and to intelligence systems and leaders at all levels." DoD management of the foreign perceptions, "combines truth projection, operation security, cover and deception, and psychological operations."

According to NATO [Office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff 1996], their PsyOps target "enemy, friendly and neutral audiences in order to influence attitudes and behavior affecting the achievement of political and military objectives." NATO and candidate countries' military and media act like clones of Pentagon. Critique comes mainly from pressure groups and governments outside the Pact.

Information Warfare integrates several types of special services when needed. A joint command of US Special Operations is then engaged to assemble teams of various "specialists" to suit a mission. Assaults on anti-DU activist, Dr. Doug Rokke, former Pentagon expert on DU, were likely steered by US Special Operations in a broader campaign of "fighting" the truth. Former Chief of Nuclear Medicine at the Veterans Affairs Medical Facility, Dr. Asaf Durakovic, was forced to leave the US because he was told that his life was in danger if he continued his research. After Ray Bristow and Dr. Colin Purcel Lee, both ill Gulf War I veterans, attended a DU health effects conference in Baghdad, a UK senior cabinet minister called them traitors and their homes were raided by military police in search of documents incriminating official DU testing of UK veterans. When the plight of Australian Gulf veterans received extensive press coverage, all files relating to the illness were stolen from campaigner Philip Steele. The military and government authorities in NATO countries routinely denied or forged death certificates of Balkan DU military victims. In March 2001, "unknown criminals" broke into the home of Mrs. Riordon, the widow of a Canadian veteran of the Gulf War, destroyed her computer and stole medical certificates of uranium presence in the body of her husband.

With the emergence of uranium weapon issues, the propaganda applies simple, often ridiculous ideas and phrases based on two rules: (i) a repeated lie becomes accepted truth; (ii) the public accepts outrageous lies more readily. Propaganda plays with words bred in PsyOps bureaus. The words, phrases and contexts are then uttered by authoritative persons, proving the speakers and their controllers are either criminally negligent, or consciously contravening humanitarian law. Former NATO political chief Javier Solana, while heading an ad hoc "investigation" to prove Kosovo DU was no danger, affirmed in January 2001: "The evidence points in the other direction." A letter to Washington Times wondered then: "Is DU a health benefit?"

Lord Robertson, supposedly an educated man, defended the “proven [DU] technology that has been independently tested [...] We cannot possibly act on the perceptions of people or on the view of a word such as ‘uranium.’” Bein and Zori? [2001] assembled other deceptive statements, nomenclature and phrases coined by PsyOps of DU weapons.

Behind the scenes

Public Affairs (PA) of Information Warfare “provides objective reporting without intent to propagandize” and disseminates information internationally. PA involves press releases, media briefings and statements by the military that “are based on projection of truths and credible message [that serve to discredit] adversary propaganda or misinformation against the operations of US/coalition forces [which] is critical to maintaining favorable public opinion.”

In psychology, “projection” means the act of ascribing one’s own attitudes, thoughts, etc. to someone else. PA use propaganda - white (telling the truth), gray (ambiguous) or black (lying) - often through Public Relations (PR). NATO spokesman Jamie Shea “won the war” in Kosovo by carrying out daily briefings in a PR style. A deep control of the global media by Information Operations to demonize the Serbs was perhaps the most “successful” aspect of that war.

Public Affairs units prepare information for news brokers, who send it to media outlets. Independent journalists do not have a chance to publish in mainstream media, since NATO information operations subtly control chief editors. The structures of media seem corrupted top to bottom. In the words of the former president of CBS News, Richard Salent, “Our job is to give people not what they want, but what we decide they ought to have.” John Swinton, the former New York Times Chief of Staff, whom colleagues named “The Dean of His Profession”, confessed before the New York Press Club: “I am paid weekly for keeping my honest opinions out of the paper I am connected with. Others of you are paid similar salaries for similar things, and any of you who would be so foolish as to write honest opinions would be out on the streets looking for another job.”

Many authors point out that North American media, reduced to a handful of conglomerates by deregulation, mold public’s minds. The largest conglomerates are growing by consuming com-

petition, almost tripling in size during the 1990s. As the media empires consolidate, TV stations, newspapers and radio broadcasting are no longer independent. Only a handful are large enough to maintain own reporters. The rest must depend on the chains for all of national and international news. It is also unsettling that one ethnic group dominates North American media ownership and staff, contrary to the ethnic profiles of respective groups in the general population.

TV, radio, newspapers, magazines, books, movies speak with a single voice, reinforcing each other. Despite apparent diversity, there are no alternative sources of information. The most prestigious and influential newspapers in the USA, New York Times, Wall Street Journal, and Washington Post illustrate the ability of the media masters to use the press as an unopposed policy instrument. The papers set the trends and the guidelines for nearly all the others, and originate the news for the others to copy. In a joint venture with the New York Times, the Post publishes the International Herald Tribune, the most widely distributed English-language daily in the world [.

The Washington Post has an inside track on news involving the federal government. Reference to “military sources”, “senior administration officials”, or “Pentagon analysts” reveal relations between media outlets and the military. Another clue of a single source of information for international press agencies are standard phrases, beginnings and endings in all press reports, in accord with Pentagon position. A November 10, 2002, Washington Post article provided an insight into media-Pentagon relations: “This article was discussed extensively in recent days with several senior civilian and military Defense Department officials.” Military censors at PA vetted the article, then the supposedly independent newspaper published it. Major news corporations manufacture opinion polls to meet government specifications, which usually combine plans of the administration, the Pentagon and the business. The media lend themselves to what White House aides themselves have described as a campaign to “sell” the war to the American people, as was seen during 2002-2003 preparations for invasion of Iraq.

Military control of the media extends to the battlefields, using lessons from the Vietnam War, when coverage of atrocities against civilians and of US soldiers in body bags contributed to anti-war protests. Nowadays, a “pool system” selects daily a few out of hundreds of journalists, and escorts them to scenes deemed fit for the pub-

lic. The coverage is then shared with their colleagues, so that the same controlled story comes from every major news outlet. This “embedding” of reporters in Gulf War II operations demonstrated how the military compromise journalistic ethics. CBC series *With Passionate Eye* of May 25, 2003, titled *War Spin*, provided evidence of media deception by embedding.

Embedding would not allow objective reporting from the scene about victims of acute exposure to uranium weapons. Pentagon press briefings would black out or distort any incriminating leaks from independent reporters. Should independent sources fail to observe this censorship (as was the case with the Serb TV in 1999) their facilities are targeted with US precision-guided munitions, consistent with Special Operations integration of services to suit Information Warfare needs. A few reporters died this way in the most recent wars.

Part 2: The Adversary's Tactics and Effectiveness

David and Goliath

Cover-up operations had the opposite effect on public opinion. It eroded public trust, particularly of the ill veterans. Recruits and staff soldiers being prepared for next wars now think twice. Upon seeing NATO disrespect for their health in Kosovo, many KFOR troops mutinied, while volunteers withdrew. Several countries withdrew from their NATO obligation in the Balkans because of contamination. Some post-war aid organizations were reluctant to go to Kosovo, Afghanistan and Iraq for the radiation-toxicity risk.

The US has refused to disclose information about DU in Operation Iraqi Freedom, and did not let a UNEP team study DU contamination in Iraq. By the beginning of September 2003, nearly 5000 US troops were evacuated ill for non-combat reasons, of which only about 300 were injured in incidents such as vehicle accidents. There were fears that soldiers have already died or are falling ill from exposure to DU or vaccine, but Pentagon denied. The sensitivity of the military hierarchy to the suspicions is demonstrated by the reassurances on the US army medical website that neither DU nor the anthrax vaccine pose a health risk [<http://www.armymedicine.army.mil/default2.htm>].

The statement of purpose of Bring Them Home Now, an organization of military families demanding the immediate withdrawal of US forces from the Middle East, demands: “Not one more troop spending one more day inhaling depleted uranium.” Their website bluntly advised on the best way to limit exposure to DU: “Get out of Iraq or Afghanistan.” [<http://www.voice4change.org/stories/showstory.asp?file=030908~bthn.asp>]

In August 2003, Dutch parliamentarians were concerned that US intelligence provided to the Dutch government concealed the use of DU by US troops in southern Iraq. Based on false information, Holland sent 1,100 soldiers to the area [<http://www.rferl.org/nca/features/2003/08/08082003162230.asp>].

Propagandizing uranium weapons as effective means against “terrorism” or “evil states” also seems counterproductive in the cover-ups of adverse health effects of uranium. The fallout and residue from the weapons terrorize innocents. Terrorists are best taken out covertly. Neutralization of secret WMD with like weapons does not justify the end, either.

Unexploded DU bullets are themselves a potential terrorist weapon. Shortly after ABC News reporters smuggled 7 kg of DU into the country in September 2003 to show how ineffective home security was, a retired Californian research chemist Dr. Vince Calder noted that intact DU bullets pose a terrorist threat. They are readily available from the battlefields, easy to import, and simple to turn into dirty bombs, making them a potential WMD inside the US territory. Realizing the potential threat, the Department of Homeland Defense and the FBI were distressed. Calder asked: “But from whom are they keeping the secret? Certainly not potential terrorists, they know how and what to do. The only conclusion is that the government wishes to keep the public in the dark, ignorant of the threat facing all of us.” [http://www.journaltimes.com/articles/2003/09/19/opinion/iq_2452057.txt]

With statutory disclosures of secrets from the atomic era, and as the number of casualties of “safe” radiation weapons grows, the public mis-

trust and soldier mutiny would rise, creating an additional stressor in Western societies. Abroad, radioactive contamination of one's soil fortifies the resentment, general animosity and terrorism against the US, UK and their allies. It is seen in the Balkans, Afghanistan and Iraq.

From now on, either the perpetrators step up neutralization attempts on the opponents of uranium weapons, or start backing away. Because the US and UK are in the focus of proliferation and use of radiation weapons, it is up to the governments of these countries to take a lead. Continuation on the destructive course must inevitably lead to a major confrontation between society and those at power, if not to international conflicts. The power elites are playing with fire. Radiation issues are intensely, emotionally charged regardless of nationality, religion and ethnicity, for at stake is a human's continuation in the gene pool.

Anything goes

Despite large resources expended on PsyOps, amateurs recognize and debunk spin and deception easily. In 1999, Bein predicted in a Polish article [<http://www.eco.pl/zb/147/>] the following techniques for cover-up of Balkan DU, based on post-Gulf War I experience:

- Deny information and delay its release; understate the quantity of DU weapons used.
- Belittle harmful effects of DU, change emphasis and dilute scientific information.
- Manipulate reports and scientific evidence, including those from previous DU wars.
- Censor DU information in mass media.
- Blame other causes, such as pre-war or general pollution.
- Coerce the government to withhold the truth.
- Blame "Milosevic's" secret weapons, and DU deployed by Yugoslav forces.

All of the above tricks were noted during and after NATO campaigns in the Balkans. Then they re-appeared, with "Milosevic" changed to "Taliban and Al Qaeda" after the recent war in Afghanistan, and "Saddam" after Gulf War II. The same tricks apply to covering-up the newer uranium weapon systems, as recent developments have proven.

NATO coerced old and new Yugoslav governments to suppress DU casualty information. Yugoslav de-contamination units operated during NATO bombing, while the government likely concealed DU casualties in military hospitals. After a new Yugoslav foreign minister visited Lord Robertson in the beginning of 2001, the Western media reported that Yugoslavia tested soldiers for DU "negative," as in all NATO countries.

Coercion of occupier-installed governments is easy. In Iraq, to be sure, the occupier removed medical records from hospitals, making it difficult to investigate casualty rates due to uranium exposure of the population after both Gulf Wars. An Iraqi scientist, Dr. Huda Ammash, was incarcerated by the US military at a concentration camp that was set up in primitive conditions at the Baghdad airport. This dean at the Baghdad University, and a minister of education before the invasion, published in peer-reviewed publications in the US, Italy and Iraq on the consequences of uranium contamination and sanctions imposed on Iraq. Her arrest was made on trumped-up charges of overseeing purported development of biological weapons. Yet, United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission has confirmed that they did not single Dr. Ammash out for interviews for lack of evidence up to January 2003 [<http://leb.net/pipermail/counterpunch-list/2003-May/026447.html>].

In both wars after the Balkans, Pentagon supported dissemination of stories that, true or not, could serve to cover-up own radiological weapons in case serious uranium contamination would be discovered. On January 16, 2002, US secretary of defence, Donald Rumsfeld, reported an elevated level of radioactivity in one area of Afghanistan due to “depleted uranium on some warheads”, allegedly missiles captured from Al Qaeda. The risk of Al Qaeda using “dirty bombs” was a major theme in Pentagon statements up to May 2002, but Rumsfeld never reported which type of missiles was found or which country made them.

Al Qaeda’s DU was of course “dangerous”, unlike the benign DU in American and British armour-piercers. The Taliban and Al Qaeda would not have the means to make or deliver large munitions made of uranium. They may have acquired small surface-to-surface anti-tank missiles made of uranium, or supplies of DU to make “dirty bombs”.

Greenpeace became Pentagon’s spin conduit in Iraq [US military radiation expert backs Greenpeace call for full inspection of contaminated communities in Iraq, June 24, 2003, <http://mailman.greenpeace.org/mailman/listinfo/press-releases>]. Most likely Pentagon spin doctors enhanced the story’s publicity, so it could be used to deny illness causation by their own uranium weapons. If independents would find uranium weapon fallout in Iraq, Pentagon could blame the yellowcake that Greenpeace activists collected from looters of “Saddam’s” nuclear facility in Tuwaitha near Baghdad. Otherwise, why would a military, who contaminated Iraq with uranium twice, advertise such environmental responsibility through Greenpeace? It was the US lobby after all, who influenced the UN General Assembly in November 2001 to turn down a longstanding Iraqi request for a study on the effects of DU from Gulf War I.

Being a concentrate of uranium ore, yellowcake has a “natural uranium” signature. How would the Greenpeace story help cover-up uranium weapons? Independent tests to identify the uranium isotopes (and therefore the origin of the contamination) would be suppressed, as has been the rule in official “investigations” so far. All irradiation symptoms could then be blamed on the looted material that somehow managed to spread to all regions of the country where U-weapons have been used. The non-depleted uranium that UMCR discovered in Afghanistan resembles the isotopic composition of yellowcake. Therefore there is a suspicion that newer generations of

weapons contain uranium alloys formulated to resemble “natural uranium” in order to make widespread contamination hard to distinguish from uranium occurring naturally most anywhere.

Implemented by a military-bureaucratic machine, information warfare inadvertently produces mistakes and blunders. PsyOps then attempt to cover the blunders up with more blunders. An imperative to hide the truth drives the perpetrators and their operatives – Special Operations, PsyOps, spokesmen, official media, pseudo-scientists – into thought contraptions and staged events designed to convince the audience. The Kosovo DU case had several obvious blunders. Those responsible failed to warn and protect NATO and UN forces, foreign workers, and local civilians (for whom they supposedly bombed “Milosevic”), including no warning about dirty DU. The public objected to Stalinist-like special operations that attempted to silence evidence in several Western countries. The cover-ups further clouded the risks of civilian applications of uranium (for example, in aircraft counterweights), increasing the risks to NATO country populations.

Deny, delay, deceive

Propaganda tactics of the nuclear-military-government complex follow 3 d’s: deny, delay, deceive, in which concealment of chronic exposure and effects of uranium on human health are key.

Bein and Zoric [2001] (with supplements in [Bein and Parker 2003]) assembled ample examples of delays and omissions with bombed site information and with carrying out “studies” by the authorities. The “deny” phase of deception and cover-up of uranium weapons has been most intense after the war in Afghanistan, but recent war in Iraq may still eclipse it.

It seems that a campaign of denials regarding uranium weapons is underway within a broader campaign for acceptability of weapons that contaminate with low-level radiation. Statements by US government about plans to develop nuclear penetrating bombs, threats of terrorist radiological bombs, and recent warning of potential first strike nuclear attacks by the US and UK play down potential hazards of “conventional” uranium weapons. The rhetoric may aim at lowering the threshold of acceptability for radiological weapons systems. A nuclear strike makes little sense when existing systems can destroy deeply buried WMD, unless the goal is to shake underground installations with a nuclear blast.

As long as there is no proof of any connection of illness and death to uranium on radiological battlefields, all the other claims of the opponents, including illegality of the weapons, can be discounted. A dedicated set of information operations manages the proof aspect. Besides “damage control” of information coming out of the military’s own medical institutions, the activities have revealed themselves as follows:

- Manipulation and corruption of laboratories chosen to do medical research for the complex.
- Pressures on the executives of national and international organizations conducting studies of contaminated sites and victims.
- Intimidation and discreditation of independent medical scientists and researchers.

The above actions create in the medical science an artificial controversy with a dual purpose: to cloud the truth for an average consumer of information and – most important – to draw decision makers and public attention away from a “controversy” that concerns the complex the most: the illegality of uranium weapons of any kind. The effectiveness of this approach is seen in most mainstream press reports on the health effects of DU and other uranium weapons. Seldom, if ever, the press quotes a humanitarian law jurist or a researcher of the new uranium weapon systems. This happens even in media outlets that declare journalistic standards of objectivity and quote the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Obstruction of international law is thus a strategic goal of our adversary. We must be aware of it and support only those law initiatives against uranium and the weapons that we are sure will not be used to stall the process of abolishing the weapons, bringing liability cases of uranium victims before courts, and prosecuting the perpetrators..

Manipulation and corruption of laboratories

An article explains why testing by the US Department of Defense (DOD) and Canadian Department of National Defense (DND) is unable to detect any hazards [Weyman 2003]. It states: “The constructing of follow-up and screening programs that persist at refusing to conduct isotopic analyses on veterans whose medical symptoms and deployment histories suggest a

high likelihood of inhalational exposure to DU is a distinct contradiction with other government policies and a slap in the face to veterans.”

The article exposes the cover-ups methods employed in studies under control of the military: “By their own admissions, DND’s and DOD’s DU screening and follow-up programs have not been conducted by laboratories and researchers reliably able to measure DU in veterans. Instead, multi-millions of research dollars are diverted to gratuitous studies on laboratory animals to examine irrelevant anatomical mechanisms and questionable biological pathways -- body hair, shrapnel, ‘nose-only inhalation’, and ‘nose-brain barriers’. The outcomes of these studies will be meaningless for the majority of Gulf and Balkan veterans.”

Inadequate and inconclusive radiological, bio-assay programs mean inability to examine DU contamination for veterans or the possible links to mutagenic effects on their children: “This means the largest population of battlefield DU exposed veterans will not be recognised – even if they have, in fact, been contaminated.”

Pressures on national and international organizations

The complex controls international legislation and management of low-level-radiation issues. Without doubt, the organizations responsible for radiological safety of humankind employ dedicated, highly ethical and knowledgeable staff. But by yielding to external pressures from the complex, the executives compromise the sincere efforts of the staff and the integrity of competent investigations. There is evidence to this effect regarding the international organizations, such as ICRP [ECRR 2003], and UNEP [<http://www.monde-diplomatique.fr/en/2001/02/03uranium>], down to national bodies, such as the Polish Atomic Agency, the Institute of Chemistry and Nuclear Technology, and the Central Laboratory for Radiological Protection in Warsaw [<http://www.stopnato.org.uk/du-watch/bein/neonato.htm>].

Selected organizations play a key role in covering up the radiological risk. ICRP is responsible for prevalence of invalid models of risk to human health from internal, low-level radiation sources like uranium fine particles. By an agreement with WHO dating back to 1959, the only UN agency serving a private sector (nuclear industry), IAEA, has a monopoly on radiation aspects

of uranium health effects, leaving to WHO the toxic aspect. This is a deliberate tool of control and cover-up of irradiation issues around the world. A 1990 revision by the ICRP cut the permitted low-level radiation dose by a factor of five. The US has not accepted that revision, so they claim their soldiers received “safe” doses. In the US, the Atomic Energy Commission (AEC), a civilian agency headed up by the military with no interest in exploring the hazards, controls the subject of ionising radiation. Each of the four most distinguished scientists who worked for the AEC, John Gofman, Karl Morgan, Thomas Mancuse and Alice Stewart, was intimidated for proving that low-level radiation causes cancer.

No NATO country nor the World Health Organization (WHO) have carried out any epidemiological studies of either soldiers or civilians exposed in uranium wars. This guarantees no confirmation or discovery of the health effects of uranium weapons. Several governments in the UN must have joined to prevent a post-Gulf War I study of DU in Iraq. The Iraqi government formally invited WHO to investigate uranium contamination and health effects, but the US put serious pressure on the WHO to cancel a full-fledged study. When a draft resolution passed through a committee at the UN General Assembly that would have mandated a specific investigation, the US secured enough (but barely enough) “no” votes to cancel the initiative. A planned visit by UN Justice Sik Yuen in 2002 was delayed by a heavy increase in bombings in the southern “no fly” zone.

The NATO website [<http://www.nato.int/kosovo/010110du.htm>] is a record of corruption at international organizations, research and strate-

gic studies institutes, and universities that were enlisted to misinform about DU. Pentagon’s more objective reports are found on many independent websites, but looking for them at the NATO website is futile.

Obstruction of international law

Ignoring military and civilian casualties, placing serious obstacles on humanitarian aid, and failing to disclose the truth about uranium effects is a serious violation of humanitarian law. Yet the US has indicated that it would militarily attack any country that tries to bring American military to the International Criminal Court or to courts in their own countries, notwithstanding the provision of the Geneva Conventions.

Legal initiatives on uranium weapons are subject to operations similar to those applied to seekers of scientific, physical proofs. The work of the UN Sub-Commission for the Protection and the Promotion of Human Rights provides a case. Dr. Karen Parker describes it first-hand in her presentation to this conference. The case indicates that “certain forces” were doing what they could to delay any legal finding on DU. The US, UK and other governments certainly do consider the impacts of our legal initiatives. This case demonstrates that the US and UK are striving to delay any legal finding on uranium weapons, and that committees may be subject to pressure by members with vested interests.

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