

Uranium Coverup 12/21 - Anatomy coverups

Group-think

The US and UK governments claim they deploy DU ammunition because for a lower cost compared to tungsten, it can have an advantage over enemy armour, reduce their own casualties and utilize industrial waste. The claims are not justified.

The additional expense on tungsten would be negligible in the total military spending. The DU weapons are not effective compared to alternatives [Venik's Aviation, 2001]. DU ammunition and armour do not utilize significant quantities of the total nuclear waste. As to protecting 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 US study of 10,000 Gulf War Veterans indicated that 80% could have been exposed to DU, i.e. more than half a million. Of the tens of thousands of coalition soldiers serving after the war's end, only about 30 specialists knew how to identify equipment contaminated by DU and were aware of the need to wear protective clothing. September 2002 Gulf War report on US veterans shows 0.1% casualty rate in combat, but a 36% post-combat rate. Uranium is one of several major causes of the syndrome, so a casualty rate of several percent would be attributable 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 US and other NATO governments knew about the consequences for civilians, it seems likely that the severe imposition of sanctions against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and Iraq is meant to cover-up damage due to radiological weaponry. 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. For this reason alone, the sanctions regime against Iraq could be characterized as a crime against humanity. 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 set out above.

Pro-uranium propaganda has seriously compromised scientific reports, even by international organizations, all subject to military-government funding and control. It was also verbalized in statements from government, military and arms and nuclear industry. It is of great concern that political representatives were unable to obtain information from alternative sources. That the propaganda was accepted by decision makers despite unverifiable contents points to a fundamental flaw in how these countries address military issues and weapons. Countless journalists, researchers, professors and persons in responsible positions help in NATO deception and misinformation. Those individuals break professional ethics of primary allegiance to public good, and have willingly or unwillingly, knowingly or unknowingly, colluded in the crimes by spreading lies and distortions about fatal effects of uranium. The propaganda has led to an absurd situation where national leaders and parliaments justify attacking Iraq because it might have potential in the future to deploy WMD – but plan themselves to use equally lethal

uranium weapons of indiscriminate or mass effect against Iraq.

Uranium weapons likely persist due to institutional pressures that, once started to defend an effective DU bullet, escalated to a point of no return. Switching to other types of 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 an effective toxic-radioactive terrorist tool in uranium weapons. 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.

Williams [2002] considered that civilian and military decision makers responsible for propagation and use of uranium weapons may be caught up in a “group think” – a self-justifying logic that generates illusory morality, demands conformity, accepts high risk strategies and demonizes enemies and dissenters. The phenomenon led to the Bay of Pigs fiasco. Some Western governments seem to be following the group-think in the US wars with “Saddam”, “Milosevic” and recently the "Wars on Terrorism". Group-think in authoritarian organizations would explain why the health risks of uranium weapons have been downplayed or outright ignored by the military, and why those responsible chose to cover up their criminal position, rather than relinquish uranium weapons.

Indirect evidence exists that cover-up was desired. 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 affects on public opinion or result in legal suits. Documents covering such work field should be classified 'secret.'" Following the Gulf War's “full scale low-radiation experiment with DU bullets, 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."

A few years later, as hard-target weapons came on the development, testing and combat use stream, the philosophy must have been extended to the newer military applications of uranium waste. Logically, similar cover-up approach would govern next weapons that leave low-level radiation behind, for many future generations to deal with.

(c) Copyright Piotr Bein and Karen Parker, 2003. All rights reserved.

Permission is granted to post this text on non-commercial community internet sites, provided the source and the URL are indicated, the paper remains intact and the copyright note is displayed.

To publish this text in printed and/or other forms, including commercial internet sites and excerpts, contact Piotr Bein at piotr.bein@imag.net and Karen Parker at ied@igc.org

