

Uranium Coverup 18/21 - The other factor

NATO "science" emphasizes the "other factor" of Gulf and Balkan syndromes. A 1999 RAND "report" released concurrently with Operation Allied Force absolved DU and blamed drugs that Gulf War soldiers received against chemical weapons. In the "Kosovo DU" scandal, NATO cited chemicals in wood handled by the soldiers, and benzene with which they supposedly cleaned guns. Soldiers denied the use of benzene.

The media also cited natural asbestos deposits and lead contamination of Kosovo to divert attention from DU. Amidst the Balkan DU debate, Associated Press dispatch from Kosovo named lead, untreated sewage, dust from a cement plant, and toxins from neglected factories.

US Army Col. David Lam announced, "I think we need to look at all possible causes, such as other pollutants and hazards, and not focus only on DU." Dr. Milan Orlic, president of the Nuclear Sciences Society at Vinca Institute, said at a January 2001 conference in Athens that Balkan syndrome was more likely correlated with other agents than DU. One article blamed kidney diseases in the Balkans on well water contamination by toxins from coal deposits.

After the Gulf War, which saw a cocktail of poisons used and released – from destroyed stocks of Iraqi chemical-biological weapons, to DU ammunition – the "other factor" was adopted in DU cover-ups. It would likely be pursued for the Balkans and other areas, once cancers from the use of uranium weapon take a higher toll. Vaccines given to the soldiers could not be a cause of the syndrome among residents, neither there was smoke from burning oil wells in the Balkans, nor chemical weapons used by "Milosevic" against his own people. Apologists of Gulf War syndrome in Iraqi population cited the two latter factors, though no independent epidemiological study was done.

After reporting in April 2002 of a claim about a direct link between DU shells and a 20-fold increase in child cancer in southern Iraq, BBC was accused of peddling Hussein's propaganda. Dr. Richard Guthrie, an expert in chemical warfare at Sussex University, said that it was far more likely that any childhood cancers were caused by Saddam's use of mustard gas against his own people in 1986. Prof. Brian Spratt, who chaired the UK Royal Society inquiry into DU said: "Claims that there is an increase in birth defects and childhood cancers in Iraq are impossible to measure as there is no comparable data from before the war." Dr Michael Clark, a spokesman for the National Radiology Protection Board in London (connected to ICRP), thought the report was "not exactly objective," since it was difficult to get proper information from Iraq.

Those who look, however, do find the information. Dr. Chris Busby (www.llrc.org) found leukemia clusters in Iraqi children born after the Gulf War (i.e. aged 5 to 9 years) while normally the disease dwells in 0 to 4 years olds. The "Hussein's mustard gas" theory and other counter-arguments of the authorities quoted above thus don't hold water. Busby also found a correlation between the increases in child leukemia and the districts where DU ammunition was used. He measured a 20-fold increase in α -activity in the air around the Desert Storm battlefields, compared to the air in Baghdad. In Basra, it was 10 times higher than in Baghdad. [Al Ahram, October 3-9, 2002].

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