

Uranium Coverup 01/21 - Crime against mankind

Munitions that contain low-grade uranium 235 – insufficient to trigger nuclear explosion – are chemical-radiological weapons. They contain other toxic-radioactive elements and have indiscriminate effects.

They are illegal by virtue of international conventions, laws and customs of war. When used in populated areas or in the presence of numerous troops (enemy or friendly), they become weapons of delayed but mass destruction (WMD). Fatal consequences of depleted uranium (DU) armour-piercing ammunition emerged in veterans and civilians after wars in the Persian Gulf and the Balkans. While the victims remain neglected, hundreds of tons of uranium from weapons developed in recent years against hard and buried targets have polluted Afghanistan. Up-coming war scenarios involve larger chemical-radiological contamination potential.

The military, governments, and nuclear and weapon industries fail to or inadequately disclose the effects of uranium weapons, and manipulate inquiries of international health organizations. The media act as a propaganda outlet for these groups. The purpose of Information Operations behind the propaganda is to influence perceptions and actions of foreign and domestic public, governments, and intelligence. A spiraling group self-deception perpetuates the propaganda for fear of liability and criminal responsibility. Covering up information on war crimes and crimes against humanity, and military and foreign policy based on such information, are crimes themselves.

Independent researchers urge priority actions to reverse the cycle of deception and human suffering because of deception on uranium weapons: (i) weapon inspections to determine which ones contain uranium, (ii) target inspection to identify those hit and contaminated by uranium weapons, (iii) health monitoring and support for target communities in uranium-contaminated areas, and (v) fundamental review of all research that was so far restricted to DU instead of uranium weaponry in general.

The weapons clearly violate humanitarian law, even in the absence of a specific treaty barring their use. The violations related to the use of the weapons are sufficiently grave to be classified war crimes or crimes against humanity, which would impose legal liability and criminal sanctions on the users as well as fair compensation and other remedies for the victims of these weapons. A treaty banning uranium weaponry is not necessary, but preparations for one could be exploited to duck responsibility. Even beginning the process to draft a treaty could be used by the US to argue that any ban on uranium weaponry in light of existing customary law is null and void. The US uses public pressure for an anti-DU treaty to bolster its position and to argue against the existing ban. Unsuspecting activists play into the US position and seriously undermine all anti-uranium initiatives.

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Paper prepared in January 2003, for a monograph Politics and Environmental Policy in the 21st Century, Faculty of Political Sciences, University of Belgrade

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