

Depleted Uranium in NATO missiles threatens generations to come

Barry Grey
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One of the most sinister aspects of the US-NATO war is the use of depleted uranium in the Tomahawk cruise missiles that are raining down on the Yugoslav population. Upon impact the missiles release radioactive uranium oxide that is inhaled by people and can pollute the soil and food chain. The radioactive material can, moreover, be carried by the wind far from the site of the explosion, thereby placing at risk the peoples of the entire Balkan region.

Organizations of scientists, environmentalists and physicians have issued protests over the use of these weapons in the NATO war against Yugoslavia, warning of devastating long-term consequences. According to radiobiologist Dr. Rosalie Bertell, president of the International Institute of Concern for Public Health: "When used in war, the depleted uranium bursts into flame, releasing a deadly radioactive aerosol of uranium, unlike anything seen before. It can kill everyone in a tank. This ceramic aerosol is much lighter than uranium dust. It can travel in air tens of kilometers from the point of release, or be stirred up in dust and resuspended in air with wind or human movement. It is very small and can be breathed in by anyone: a baby, a pregnant woman, the elderly, the sick.

"This radioactive ceramic can stay deep in the lung for years, irradiating the tissue with powerful alpha particles within about a 30 micron sphere, causing emphysema and/or fibrosis. The ceramic can also be swallowed and do damage to the gastro-intestinal tract. In time it penetrates the lung tissue and enters into the blood stream... It can also initiate cancer or promote cancers which have been initiated by other carcinogens." (Cited in the press release of the Ad-Hoc Committee to Stop Canada's Participation in the War in Yugoslavia).

Some scientists believe that depleted uranium in US

weapons was a major contributor to the Gulf War Syndrome experienced by both veterans and the people of Iraq. Paul Sullivan, executive director of the National Gulf War Resource Center, said, "In Yugoslavia, it's expected that depleted uranium will be fired in agricultural areas, places where livestock graze and where crops are grown, thereby introducing the specter of possible contamination of the food chain."

An April 10 article by Truth in Media cited a report from Greece that "an increase in levels of toxic substances in the atmosphere of Greece" had been registered. The report went on to say that "Albania, Macedonia, Italy, Austria and Hungary all face a potential threat to human health as a result of NATO's bombing of Serbia, which includes the use of radioactive depleted uranium shells."



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