

# Radioactive Ammunition Fired in Middle East May Claim More Lives Than Hiroshima and Nagasaki

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By firing radioactive ammunition, the U.S., U.K., and Israel may have triggered a nuclear holocaust in the Middle East that, over time, will prove deadlier than the U.S. atomic bombing of Japan.

So much ammunition containing depleted uranium(DU) has been fired, asserts nuclear authority Lauren Moret, "The genetic future of the Iraqi people for the most part, is destroyed."

"More than ten times the amount of radiation released during atmospheric testing (of nuclear bombs) has been released from depleted uranium weaponry since 1991," Moret writes, including radioactive ammunition fired by Israeli troops in Palestine.

Moret is an independent U.S. scientist formerly employed for five years at the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory and also at the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, both of California.

Adds Arthur Bernklau, of Veterans For Constitutional Law, "The long-term effect of DU is a virtual death sentence. Iraq is a toxic wasteland. Anyone who is there stands a good chance of coming down with cancer and leukemia. In Iraq, the birth rate of mutations is totally out of control."

Moret, a Berkeley, Calif., Environmental Commissioner and past president of the Association for Women Geoscientists, says, "For every genetic defect that we can see now, in future generations there are thousands more that will be expressed."

She adds, "the (Iraq) environment now is completely radioactive."

Dr. Helen Caldicott, the prominent anti-nuclear crusader, has written: "Much of the DU is in cities such as Baghdad, where half the population of 5 million people are children who played in the burned-out tanks and on the sandy, dusty ground."

"Children are 10 to 20 times more susceptible to the carcinogenic effects of radiation than adults," Caldicott wrote. "My pediatric colleagues in Basra, where this ordnance was used in 1991, report a sevenfold increase in childhood cancer and a sevenfold increase in gross congenital abnormalities," she wrote in her book, "Nuclear Power is not the Answer"(The New Press).

Caldicott goes on to say the two Gulf wars "have been nuclear wars because they have scattered nuclear material across the land, and people—particularly children— are

condemned to die of malignancy and congenital disease essentially for eternity.”

Because of the extremely long half-life of uranium 238, one of the radioactive elements in the shells fired, “the food, the air, and the water in the cradle of civilization have been forever contaminated,” Caldicott explained.

Uranium is a heavy metal that enters the body via inhalation into the lung or via ingestion into the GI tract. It is excreted by the kidney, where, if the dose is high enough, it can induce renal failure or kidney cancer. It also lodges in the bones where it causes bone cancer and leukemia, and it is excreted in the semen, where it mutates genes in the sperm, leading to birth deformities.

Nuclear contamination is spreading around the world, Caldicott adds, with heaviest concentrations in regions within a 1,000-mile radius of Baghdad and Afghanistan.

These are, notably, northern India, southern Russia, Turkey, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Tibet, Pakistan, Kuwait, the Gulf emirates, and Jordan.

“Downwind from the radioactive devastation in Iraq, Israel is also suffering from large increases in breast cancer, leukemia and childhood diabetes,” Moret asserts.

Doug Rokke, formerly the top U.S. Army DU clean-up officer and now anti-DU crusader, says Israeli tankers fired radioactive shells during the invasion of Lebanon last year. U.S. and NATO forces also used DU ammunition in Kosovo. Rokke says he is quite ill from the effects of DU and that members of his clean-up crew have died from it.

As a result of DU bombardments, Caldicott writes, “Severe birth defects have been reported in babies born to contaminated civilians in Iraq, Yugoslavia, and Afghanistan and the incidence and severity of defects is increasing over time.”

Like symptoms have been reported among infants born to U.S. service personnel that fought in the Gulf Wars. One survey of 251 returned Gulf War veterans from Mississippi made by the Veterans Administration found 67% of children born to them suffered from “severe illnesses and deformities.”

Some were born without brains or vital organs or with no arms, hands, or arms, or with hands attached to their shoulders.

While U.S. officials deny DU ammunition is dangerous, it is a fact Gulf War veterans were the first Americans ever to fight on a radioactive battlefield, and their children apparently are the first known to display these ghastly deformities.

Soldiers who survived being hit by radioactive ammunition, as well as those who fired it, are falling ill, often showing signs of radiation sickness. Of the 700,000 U.S. veterans of the first Gulf War, more than 240,000 are on permanent medical disability and 11,000 are dead, published reports indicate.

This is an astonishing toll from such a short conflict in which fewer than 400 U.S. soldiers were killed on the battlefield.

Of course, “depleted uranium munitions were and remain another causative factor behind

Gulf War Syndrome(GWS),” writes Francis Boyle, a leading American authority on international law in his book “Biowarfare and Terrorism,” from Clarity Press Inc.

“The Pentagon continues to deny that there is such a medical phenomenon categorized as GWS—even beyond the point where everyone knows that denial is pure propaganda and disinformation,” Boyle writes.

Boyle contends, “The Pentagon will never own up to the legal, economic, tortious, political, and criminal consequences of admitting the existence of GWS. So U.S. and U.K. veterans of Gulf War I as well as their afterborn children will continue to suffer and die. The same will prove true for U.S. and U.S. veterans of Bush Jr.’s Gulf War II as well as their afterborn children.”

Boyle said the use of DU is outlawed under the 1925 Geneva Convention prohibiting poison gas.

Chalmers Johnson, president of the Japan Policy Research Institute, writes in his “The Sorrows of Empire”(Henry Holt and Co.) that, given the abnormal clusters of childhood cancers and deformities in Iraq as well as Kosovo, the evidence points “toward a significant role for DU.”

By insisting on its use, Johnson adds, “the military is deliberately flouting a 1996 United Nations resolution that classifies DU ammunition as an illegal weapon of mass destruction.”

Moret calls DU “the Trojan Horse of nuclear war.” She describes it as “the weapon that keeps killing.” Indeed, the half-life of Uranium-238 is 4.5-billion years, and as it decays it spawns other deadly radioactive by-products.

Radioactive fallout from DU apparently blew far and wide. Following the initial U.S. bombardment of Iraq in 2003, DU particles traveled 2,400 miles to Great Britain in about a week, where atmospheric radiation quadrupled.

But it is in the Middle East, predominantly Iraq, where the bulk of the radioactive waste has been dumped.

In the early Nineties, the United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority warned that 50 tons of dust from DU explosions could claim a half million lives from cancer by year 2000. Not 50 tons, but an estimated two thousand radioactive tons have been fired off in the Middle East, suggesting the possibility over time of an even higher death toll.

Dr. Keith Baverstock, a World Health Organization radiation advisor, informed the media, Iraq’s arid climate would increase exposure from its tiny particles as they are blown about and inhaled by the civilian population for years to come.

The civilian death toll from the August, 1945, U.S. atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki has been put at 140,000 and 80,000, respectively. Over time, however, deaths from radiation sickness are thought to have claimed the lives of another 100,000 Japanese civilians.

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