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Who Used WMD in Iraq?

By: Dr. Elias Akleh*

Saddam Hussein's possession of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) was used by the American administration as the major justification for invading Iraq. In August 2002 Vice President Dick Cheney stated "There is no doubt he (Saddam) is amassing them to use against our friends, against our allies and against us." Secretary of State Colin Powell testified before the U.N. Security Council on February 5th 2003 that Iraq has WMD, and could launch them within 45 minutes. His testimony included satellite pictures and illustration of mobile chemical weapon manufacturing trucks. President Bush had chiseled the allegation of Iraq's possession of WMD into the psyche of the American people throughout all his speeches.

After two years searching every inch of Iraq and interrogating Iraqi scientist with the cost of millions of dollars, the administration had quietly ended its search during the first week of January 2005 stating that no WMD had been found; no nuclear program and no stockpile of biological and chemical weapons. Yet the administration was deceitful again. Iraq is littered with WMD. These are American WMD (nuclear, chemical and biological) used by American troops against Iraqis. These weapons did not affect only hundreds of thousands of Iraqis as well as American troops, but had also condemned the future generations of Iraqis as well as the offspring of the American troops. This is genocide. The administration dares not bring this fact to the spot light.

Americans had used, and are still using, nuclear weapons in the form of depleted uranium

(DU). DU is a byproduct from nuclear weapons, nuclear fuel, and nuclear power industries through the process of uranium enrichment process. Due to its high density, higher than lead, DU is used to coat ammunitions such as tank shells and missiles to give them extra piercing characteristic to penetrate any armor. Thousands of DU shells and bombs had been used in Yugoslavia, Afghanistan and both in 1990/91 Gulf War and the ongoing conflict in Iraq. The term "depleted" is used to deceive people and to give the impression that DU is uranium that does not contain radioactivity any more, which is not the case. DU plated ammunition, when fired, will produce radioactive contamination, and is harmful the same way nuclear weapons are. On January 16th 2002 the American Secretary for Defense, Mr. Rumsfeld in a briefing confirmed that "high levels of radioactive counts" had been confirmed due to the result of DU shells. DU has a half-life of 4.5 billion years; that means DU stays radioactive that long for just half of its atoms to decay. This makes the DU a long lasting weapon that keeps destroying life and contaminating natural resources – water, food, and vegetation. DU is a weapon that could not be turned off when war ends. It does not affect only legal military targets, but include also all civilian lives.

The UN had studied the DU weapon issue and its lasting effect on population and land in 1995, and in 1996 the UN Human Rights Commission described DU ammunition as weapons of mass destruction that should be banned. Despite this ban the American forces used DU bombs and missiles against Yugoslavia in 1999. Although scientists in Yugoslavia, Greece and Bulgaria measured elevated levels of gamma radiation after the American carpet bombing of the region, the American administration had denied the use of DU. Yet when scientists had identified a DU warhead on an American missile that landed on Bulgaria but did not explode, Lord George Robertson, the head of NATO at the time, could not but admit to the public that DU had been used.

DU has devastating effects on both parties of a conflict, those who use it, and those targeted by it. When fired a DU round turns into a fire ball that explodes on impact, and turns into infinitesimally fine dust contaminating the targeted as well as the adjacent areas since it could be easily carried by the wind. DU individual particles are estimated to be smaller than a virus or bacteria and it was found that one millionth of a gram accumulating in a person's body would be fatal. DU particles accumulate in the bone, kidney, reproductive systems, brain

and lungs with verified gene-toxic, mutagenic and carcinogenic properties, as well as reproductive mutations even 10 years after exposure. DU destroys the body's immune system and leaves it vulnerable to all types of diseases, even those that could be easily cured. Yet the attempt to treat these diseases is futile. There are no known methods of treatment till now.

The mass destructive characteristic of DU comes from its effect on the genetic code of persons who are exposed to it. It scrambles the genes producing horrible birth defects. New born babies of infected persons exhibited severe deformation and mutation such as missing organs or limbs, deformed genitalia, and large tumors on body among many others. Many are born in a non-human form or as a mass of unidentifiable meat. The majority of these babies live only for few days only. Those who are "unlucky" to survive are condemned to life of misery and suffering, and will be a huge burden on their families and their society.

DU had inflicted Afghans, Iraqis, as well as American troops. Birth defects are now way up in Afghanistan since the American invasion. Iraqi children, too, had suffered birth defects since the first Gulf War in 1990/91, and are still suffering now. Thousands of American troops, who participated in the first Gulf War, had suffered what was then termed "Gulf War Syndrome". The American administration had denied that such syndrome was the effect of exposure to DU. The US Department of Veteran Affairs had issued a report in September 2002 confirming that over than 221 thousands of those troops are now suffering serious adverse health effects, to the point where they are on permanent disability, and so far well over than 10 thousands had already died. It was also concluded that the wives of these veterans had also been affected by DU, and that many of them had either aborted or given birth to sick or deformed babies.

American Major Doug Rokke, professor of physics and geosciences of Jacksonville State University and former director of DU weapons project of US army from 1994/95 in charge of the cleaning up of DU in Iraq, had produced a document that proves conclusively that the US government and military were aware of the genocidal nature of DU weapons since 1943. The document states "...inhaled by personnel ... it is estimated that one millionth of a gram accumulating in a persons body would be fatal. There are no known methods of treatment for

such casualty.... water reservoirs and wells would be contaminated....food poisoned..."

Professor Katsuma Yagasaki of the Faculty of Science of the Ryukyus University in Okinawa had calculated that 800 tons of DU to be the atomicity equivalent to 83 thousands Nagasaki bombs. With each round fired by an Abrams tank containing over 4,500 grams of solid uranium it was estimated the amount of DU used in Iraq is equivalent to 250 thousands Nagasaki bombs. Geologist Leuren Moret from Livermore Labs stated that "DU dust is now everywhere. A minimum of 500 – 600 tons now litter Afghanistan, and several times that amount are spread across Iraq. In terms of global atmospheric pollution the US had already released the equivalent of 400 thousands Nagasaki bombs."

Due to its long lasting deadly effects on humans, animals, vegetations, and water resources Professor Albrecht Schott, scientist member of World Depleted Uranium Center in Berlin, described DU as "A Weapon Against This Planet."

An International Criminal Tribunal for Afghanistan, a Japanese citizens' initiative, was set up by prominent lawyers and judges to look into war crimes in Afghanistan after the American invasion. This tribunal, on March of 2004, had found the American president George Bush, his administration, and manufacturers of DU weapons guilty of war crimes in the Balkans, in Afghanistan, and in Iraq due to the manufacture and use of illegal weapons.

American troops had also used chemical weapons in Iraq in the form of Napalm bombs. Napalm is a deadly mixture of polystyrene and jet fuel. Napalm gel bonds to the skin of humans while burning making it very difficult to put out. It turns victims into human fireball. The famous pictures of a naked Vietnamese girl victim shocked the world, and lead a 1980 UN convention to ban the use of napalm. The US did not ratify the Napalm ban and is the only country in the world still using the weapon. It even upgraded the Napalm bomb to what they call Mark 77 firebomb that weigh 510 lbs, consisting of 44 lbs of polystyrene-like gel and 63 gallons of jet fuel.

Americans used Napalm originally in Vietnam causing the worst and most disfiguring injuries to victims. Napalm was also used by Israeli forces against Palestinians during the 1967 war. The US used their new upgraded Mark 77 firebomb in an attack on Iraqi troops at Safwan Hill

near the Kuwait border where Iraqi "...observation post was obliterated" as reported by Sydney Morning Herald correspondent on March 22nd 2003. Last December American marines used Napalm in their invasion of the city of Fallujah. American Colonel James Alles, commander of Marine Air Group 11, stated that in March and April of 2003 Napalm bombs were also dropped near bridges over the Saddam Canal and the Tigris River, south of Baghdad, as reported by Independent reporter in August of same year. The Bush administration, then, admitted the use of napalm in Iraq. American forces used napalm as well as white phosphorous bombs, another incendiary weapon, against civilians during their assault on Fallujah last December. Melted corpses of civilians were discovered in Fallujah.

American forces had also used chemical weapons in the form of gases during their assault on Fallujah especially in the Julan district. Three types of these chemical gases were used. The first was a sleeping gas that caused people to lose consciousness, allowing American forces to run over them with their tanks, and to gather them in houses and blow up the houses over them. The other two gases were poisonous; one turned the color of the victims to yellow, while the other turned their colors into black.

The American use of these weapons, especially DU, in Afghanistan and Iraq did not affect only these two countries, but also all the countries within a radius of approximately 1000 miles. Due to the fact that DU radioactive particles travel with wind, it had already affected countries like Pakistan, Iran, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Russia, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, China, India, Syria, Lebanon, Palestine, Kuwait, Qatar, and Saudi Arabia.

With the use of these WMD the US had turned into the terrorist monster it claims to fight.

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