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"Iraq is full of WMD"

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(YellowTimes.org) -- The United States went to war against Iraq in 2003 on the basis that Iraq was chock-a-block with 'weapons of mass destruction' (WMD). Eventually, the Americans had to admit they were wrong and they just couldn't find those weapons. Many skeptics suspect the Bush administration lied about the WMDs in Iraq to cover a desire to invade and steal Iraqi oil.

Few understand that the United States is still lying. Iraq is full of WMDs, both used and unused, but the Bushoviks and their sycophantic media fail to alert the public because it is the Americans who are using them.

The United States has a long history of manufacturing, storing, selling and deploying WMD. As far back as the World War II, there is clear evidence of use by the United States of several chemicals which meet the current U.S. definition of WMD.

Most of us who point fingers at the Americans are best familiar with their exploits in Vietnam. Agent Orange and napalm are the best known WMDs used in Vietnam although they also deployed Agents White, Blue, Purple, Pink and Green (the 'agents' were so named because of the colour of distinguishing markers on their shipping containers). These products are actually herbicides, developed during the 1940s, but in Vietnam they became defoliants, used to strip away the trees and grasses in order to deny the enemy hiding places. Most of these products are known carcinogens and their extensive use in Vietnam has compromised the health of many who came in contact with them, including American forces.

Napalm, or jellied gasoline, was also used as a defoliant in Vietnam but, unlike the Agents, it burned the vegetation and killed by incineration anyone unfortunate enough to get in the way. Napalm bombs were also dropped on Japan by Allied troops during World War II and used in flamethrowers in Germany in the same war. Later, it was used by United Nations forces during the Korean War. Although its use was banned by the United Nations in 1980, the United States did not sign the agreement.

The U.S. claimed to have destroyed its supplies of napalm by 2001 but that appears to be a matter of semantics rather than fact; current evidence shows they have used it as recently as 2003 in Iraq. A report carried in The Independent on August 10,

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2003 quotes Colonel James Alles, commander of Marine Air Group 11: "We napalmed both those [bridge] approaches. Unfortunately there were people there ... you could see them in the [cockpit] video. They were Iraqi soldiers. It's no great way to die. The generals love napalm. It has a big psychological effect." The Pentagon claims its denial of napalm use is not untrue because they have altered the petroleum distillate used and renamed the product the 'Mark 77 firebomb'. Its victims will surely appreciate the clarification.

While the United States remains the only nation to actually drop an atomic bomb on an enemy, there have been four occasions in the past 15 years where the United States has actually engaged in nuclear war: in the Balkans, in Afghanistan, and in Gulf Wars I & II.

American soldiers have dropped Depleted Uranium (DU) on enemy combatants since 1991. It is lethal, it is horrid, and although it doesn't have the bluster and showmanship of a mushroom cloud, it is still a nuclear bomb.

The use of DU is illegal under all international agreements, treaties, and covenants and it is illegal even under U.S. military law regarding WMDs. But in defiance of those international treaties, and its own laws, the United States continues to use this destructive material in full knowledge that its use could result in the slow annihilation of all species, including our own.

Depleted uranium is a waste by-product of nuclear weapons and domestic nuclear power. It is used in weapons because it is cheap, ignites easily and burns fiercely on hitting a solid target. When it impacts, it releases an aerosol of fine uranium oxide that is breathable and spreads great distances by wind until weighted down by rain, where it falls to the ground and is absorbed into soil or water sources. It was first developed for the U.S. Navy in 1968 and DU weapons were supplied to, and used by, Israel during the 1973 Yom Kippur War. Since then, the U.S. has sold DU weapons to at least 29 countries. The plans for this substance, however, actually date back to 1943. A declassified document from the Manhattan Project is a blueprint for depleted uranium weapons. The Americans have given DU to weapons manufacturers free of charge.

Scientists are quite certain on two points: DU is deadly; and the effects of this material will continue to contaminate the earth long after humans are extinct. They are also fairly clear that continued use of DU will mean the future is going to move ahead without us. Euphemistically, some in military circles refer to DU as the Trojan Horse of nuclear war, the ultimate gift that keeps on giving. The half-life of the material is 4.5 billion years.

This is very dangerous material: it meets the U.S. definition of a 'weapon of mass destruction' and while the United States is prepared to invade sovereign countries on the basis they 'might' have WMD themselves and they 'might' be willing to use them, the Americans actually have them and actually use them. And they use them in complete disregard for the people and nations on whom they are dropped, even in disregard of the health of their own and allied troops. In the three-week Gulf War in 1991, just 467 U.S. personnel were reported as wounded. Of the 580,400 GIs who served in that war, more than 11,000 are now dead and in excess of 400,000 are on permanent medical

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disability. New cases are arising by an astounding 43,000 per year. In a nutshell, more than 70% of those who served in the Gulf in 1990-91 now have medical problems. The only substances to which these troops are known to have been exposed are vaccines and depleted uranium. Vaccines do not cause the diseases these troops have contracted.

In response to the mounting evidence of the hazards, the American response has been to use the same material in the Balkans, in Afghanistan, and for a second time in Iraq. This transcends mere politics: it has now gone on through three presidential administrations. Even worse, the Americans knew the deadly hazard inherent in this material before they ever started to use it. A military report prepared by the U.S. Department of Defense in 1974 stated: "In combat situations involving the widespread use of DU munitions, the potential for inhalation, ingestion, or implantation of DU compounds may be locally significant." A contractor to the military, Science Applications International Corporation, noted in a July 1990 report that "aerosol DU exposures to soldiers on the battlefield could be significant, with potential radiological and toxicological effects."

Americans have cheered the successes of their military men and women in Iraq and Afghanistan and, to a lesser degree, in the Balkans. Most remain ignorant of the horrendous weapons their troops used to destroy such feeble enemies. Even more, they are almost completely ignorant of the hazards faced by their own troops from the toys at their disposal. There is no outrage in the U.S. for the dangers being faced by American troops, even less outrage for the innocent victims of this lethal onslaught. But America's craven allies can offer no excuses for their silence. None of the information presented in this article is secret: it is readily available from a variety of sources. In several countries, there are victims of DU exposure who thought they were going to fight the good fight with their Yankee friends, little realizing that their best buddy was going to expose them to lethal substances, just because they could.

The American decision to initiate the use of DU weaponry, and then to continue its use even when evidence mounted to thwart any lingering doubts about the hazards, is a despicable act. This has been a cold, calculated decision to inflict long-lasting harm on enemies with no regard for the innocent in those lands and no regard even for American and allied troops.

There are few observers who would excuse any other nation behaving in this way from charges of war crimes.

Depleted uranium appears to have been given the green light in 1990 for three reasons: to test the efficacy of fourth generation nuclear weapons still in their development stage; to blur the distinction between conventional and nuclear weaponry; and to facilitate the reintroduction of nuclear weapons into the American arsenal. And it has done a marvelous job of stopping the enemy. Unfortunately, the side effects on civilian populations and the long-lasting environmental effects are horrendous.

If the use of this weaponry marks the future of American strategy, and given their proclivity for military adventures, the deleterious effects of DU on the environment and on the population of various countries is assured. More, the health of American and allied troops is also compromised.

The continued use of DU weapons should be sufficient reason for America's allies to decline invitations to future military excursions. Regardless of the peril presented by the enemy, America's allies need to be concerned about the peril presented by America.

[Paul Harris is self-employed as a consultant providing businesses with the tools and expertise to reintegrate their sick or injured employees into the workplace. He has traveled extensively in what is usually known as "the Third World" and has an abiding interest in history, social justice, morality and, well, just about everything. He lives in Canada.]

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