

January 10, 2001

From:

Tedd Weyman
Uranium Medical Project

Attention:

Grattan Healy, Adviser on Energy,
Green/EFA Group in the European Parliament

Topic: Statement to the European Parliament regarding the testing of veterans for depleted uranium by the Uranium Medical project, January 11, 2001.

Ladies and gentlemen

The Uranium Medical Project thanks you for the opportunity to submit this statement in lieu of our ability to participate directly in the European Parliament's Public Hearings on Depleted Uranium.

Due to circumstances beyond our control, we are unable to attend these Hearings but this does not reflect a lack of interest by the Uranium Medical Project. We are very interested in collaborating in any effort to (1) establish an understanding of the hazards of depleted uranium and (2) assist in the development of scientifically and medically credible testing of veterans exposed to depleted uranium in the Persian Gulf and Kosovo.

Overview of depleted uranium testing by the Uranium Medical Project

The Uranium Medical Project has been conducting independent laboratory testing of urine specimens and scientific analysis of the test results on American, British and Canadian veterans for three years. Veterans of Desert Storm have come to us because they suffered the symptoms of Gulf War Illness and have been unable to find a source of objective and scientifically sound testing for contamination by depleted uranium.

Of the 100 Gulf War veterans whose urine specimens have been analysed or are currently being analysed by our laboratory, 50% have been found positive for traces of depleted uranium. We have also conducted post mortem examinations of deceased veterans who served in Desert Storm, and found depleted uranium in their organ tissues, fluids and bones.

It should be noted that the internal contamination of these test subjects is reported to have occurred almost 10 years ago. We might therefore expect that veterans with more recent exposures in Kosovo will have higher and more concentrated levels of internal contamination.

Understanding the physics and biology of internal contamination by depleted uranium

Contrary to various NATO government's statements, internal contamination by low level, ionizing radiation has been scientifically studied and is established as a biological hazard. Internal contamination of veterans by depleted uranium begins by their inhaling microscopic particles of depleted uranium which are subsequently transported by the blood to target organs in the body; including the liver, kidneys, brain and stem cell production sites in the

bones. Depleted uranium, in fact any uranium particles so lodged in the body's tissues, interferes with normal function at a systemic, cellular and sub-atomic levels.

In order to understand the nature of the hazard faced by veterans who may have inhaled depleted uranium particles, it is essential to recognize that internal contamination by low-level ionizing radiation is a result of the concentration by these particles inside the body. This presents a significantly different hazard from uranium ingested in food or water which the body is better equipped to eliminate, or from temporary exposures to sources of low level radiation from external sources such as to as tank armor or commercial aircraft blast.

Microscopic particles of depleted uranium in the body will continue to emit low level radiation (alpha, beta and gamma particles) for the entire life span of the contaminated individual. This means that bodies internally contaminated receive continuous bombardment of radiation at a sub-cellular level. The lack of adequate scientific and medical understanding of these hazards is demonstrated by the television coverage in North America of United Nations and NATO technicians testing Kosovo bomb sites for radiation without the use of face masks and protective breathing apparatuses.

Depleted uranium presents a temporary low-level risk as an external source of radiation when found in the stable metal alloys of tank armor and anti-tank projectiles. But, once the metals have aerosolized and burned in a military theater or airplane crash, depleted uranium particulate invades the environment and presents a direct and real risk to anyone who arrives at the scene and inhales it.

The need for proper and credible scientific testing

The Uranium Medical Project has recommended to the British, Canadian and American governments and their respective Defense Departments, that scientifically accurate studies should be conducted on Gulf War veterans. We made the same recommendation to Holland following the El Al crash and we now make the same recommendation to the European Parliament. So far, to our knowledge, none of the countries have undertaken studies using the proper methodologies.

The Uranium Medical Project has developed specialized testing and analytical methodologies to detect depleted uranium in the body fluids and tissues. These methods require the correct procedures be followed in the use of the very sensitive laboratory equipment. The method also requires that the correct models of analytical-chemistry be used to measure depleted uranium levels. So far, none of the countries noted above have, to our knowledge, used these procedures. Without understanding how to identify and measure the presence of uranium, we can expect that the NATO nations will continue to announce negative results in their testing of Gulf War and Kosovo veterans and peacekeepers. It is for these reason that the Uranium Medical Project suggests to you that it is absolutely critical that the right scientific practices, equipment and analytical methods be used in any program designed to study DU levels in Kosovo veterans.

Our experience is that many of the agencies that report negative findings in veterans' tests for DU are not following credible methodologies. The issue is greater than simply possessing the right mass spectrometry equipment. It also requires an understanding of the science for calculating and comparing the "abundances" of each type of uranium isotope found in the urine specimens. In addition, the interpretation of these results, in so far as they may represent biological hazards requires physicians knowledgeable in the internal effects of low-level ionizing radiation and how it compromises the human body at a systemic, cellular and atomic level. The fact that the United Nations staff that tested NATO bomb sites in Kosovo did not wear face masks and

protective breathing apparatuses is a clear indication that those directing the research do not understand the biological hazards of contamination via inhalation.

Recent reports from various scientific and government representatives stating that low-level ionizing radiation is not a biological hazard are misinformed with regards to the effects of internal contamination by uranium through inhalation. The body's reaction to microscopic particles of uranium breathed into the lungs and transported by blood to the organs, the brain and other tissues is quite different from the uranium swallowed in food or water or imbedded in flesh from shrapnel. This work requires the best scientists and medical researchers who must work at arm's length from the agencies that might not want the facts uncovered.

The Uranium Medical Project would be pleased to work with you and others that are prepared to approach the matter with integrity. We would be more than pleased to educate and supervise the transfer of the methodologies to laboratories and researchers. We can provide you with a recommendation or perhaps a proposal regarding how we can assist in organizing and conducting veteran testing and results analysis. We can also organize the Uranium Medical Project to provide an independent testing service to European nations. It is our experience that the best way to ensure integrity in the testing process is to finance the veterans directly so they are free to select the labs and not to require them to use government owned or appointed facilities.

Sincerely yours:

Edward (Tedd) C. Weyman
Advocate
Uranium Medical Project
Tel Canada 416-397-1326 or 416-521-7181