

EFFECTS OF WARS AND THE USE OF DEPLETED URANIUM ON IRAQ

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During the last 50 years, Iraq passed through many wars. The more destructive one is the 1991 war (gulf war 2). In this war the infrastructure of Iraq has been destroyed completely. The war targeted the military as well as the civilian targets. The factories, government buildings, bridges, and hospitals were destroyed. During this war and for the first time in the history the allied forces used Depleted uranium containing weapons extensively at the west parts of Basrah City (more than 300 tons were delivered at that area). The estimated delivery of depleted uranium all over Iraq was 800 tons. This Depleted uranium led to the increased levels of radiation in the battlefield and the nearby cities and countries. The levels of radiation in the area, measured by the department of environmental engineering (college of engineering, university of Baghdad) reached hundreds to thousands times the normal background levels in the Iraqi soil which is 70 Bq/kg of soil. This radiation and other factors like chemicals and poor nutrition caused many diseases (cancers, congenital malformation in children, kidney diseases and infections...etc.), then the economic sanction is added to increase the suffering of the Iraqis.

We were lacking food and medicines. The death rate among children is increased because of poor nutrition and infections (more than 5 millions of children died within the last 12 years). Although the Iraqi government accepted the memorandum of understanding (oil for food and medicines), the committee 661 of the Security Council has crippled this memorandum in many ways. The committee delayed contracts, partially accepting contracts and sometimes delaying payments to the companies with which the contracts are signed.

The Iraqi people were deprived from the recent advances in different sciences and technology. The newly issued journals and published books were not allowed to enter and to reach the Iraqi universities. We were pushed backward years behind the fast development of technology and we are now suffering the great lag of that period.

The damaged factories, hospitals and bridges were reconstructed by the Iraqi people but still unable to provide our requirements. The electricity, the water supply, and the industries are not sufficient.

In addition, our own government (saddam regime) assaulted our people by low payments at work, which led to the low income of the families and poor financial capabilities specially for those who have simple jobs. This low financial income (2-5 dollars/month) led to the appearance and the increase in the low social classes of population and low educational levels. Children left their schools to work in order to increase their families' income and to maintain their lives. We could say all aspects of life have been affected by that war and it could be described as the most destructive war against Iraq. It was dirty war because of the use of weapons containing depleted uranium against military as well as civilian targets.

The recent war (gulf war 3) in 2003 was a violation of the international law and against the will of the international community, which opposed this war. The reasons were unbelievable (the Iraqi weapons of mass destruction which till now have no evidence).

During this war, again the depleted uranium was used extensively around the city of Baghdad, city of Babylon, city of Karbala, city of Najef and in the city of Basrah, which is still suffering the effects of the depleted uranium of the gulf war 2 (1991). According to a report from the Guardian newspaper 1000-2000 tons were delivered on 51 local areas in different Iraqi cities. I witnessed the A-10 planes for three days delivering the depleted uranium rounds against the tanks and armor vehicles near Basrah airport and at the southern parts of Basrah city. The estimated amount of this weapon of mass destruction is exceeding the amount used in gulf war 2 (1991).

Again the infrastructure of our country is destroyed to greater extent. More buildings were destroyed, libraries and other government buildings were burned, the banks were robbed, and the occupation forces did not take any action to protect these buildings, the schools and hospitals from damage. Unknown people had stolen the Iraqi museum. All the Iraqi army forces were released and no more army to protect the Iraqi cities. In my opinion the aim of this war is the destruction of the Iraqi structure, its history and its role in the civilization of the world. Also to secure the oil of Iraq and Gulf States and to control all the energy sources of the world and not merely the weapons of mass destruction, which are not detected till this moment.

The rate of crime is increased to a dangerous level. Many people were killed in the streets, at their homes and in their cars. Children and girls were kidnapped from their schools. Doctors were killed at their clinics. In spite of all these crimes the occupation forces did nothing to stop it. Till now we have no elected government, and we have weak police offices and no army to protect the people and their properties. The electricity is not available and no healthy drinking water supply. No security but we hope this situation will improve in the near future.

The resistance against the occupation forces is increasing and stills active even after the capture of Saddam Hussein. This is mainly at the middle and northern parts of Iraq, while at the south the resistance is slight and nearly negligible. This is because the middle and northern parts are more loyal to Saddam regime than the southern regions. The aggressive behavior of the American soldiers worsens the situation in their occupied areas. The more calm British soldiers made the resistance less in the south. As revenge the Americans destroyed the houses and killed many Iraqi people blindly without differentiation between innocent people, terrorists and resistance militias. Thousands of people were captured and put in prisons. In my opinion the Iraqi people dislike occupation and will continue to fight until they extract their sovereignty and to have their own elected government, which represents all the parties and the different slices of community.

The health consequences of these wars affected mainly the people in the south of Iraq. The rate of cancers is increased more than ten times (that is 12 years after the gulf war 2) the rate in 1988. The death rate from cancers increased 19 times the rate of death in 1988. The congenital malformations in newly had borne babies increased 7 time the rate in 1990. New and strange phenomenon of cancers appeared like clustering of cancer in families, the double and triple

cancers in one person. The death rate among children is increased as a result of malnutrition and infections. Lack of medicines and medical equipment worsens the health situation.

The causes of all these health problems are multifactorial. The most important factors are the radiation, the chemical, nutritional and infection.

The victims are mainly the children who were affected by cancers, malnutrition and congenital malformations.

The following pictures are the evidences of the effects of the wars and the use of depleted uranium in the gulf war 2(1991).

We have many reasons to blame the radiation as a cause for all the health problems in the south of Iraq:

- Significant increase in cancer rates after 1991.
- Significant increase in death rate from cancers after 1991.
- Increased rate of congenital malformations in children borne after 1991.
- Cancer clustering in families is noticed only after 1991.
- Double and triple cancers are seen only after 1991.
- The only cancer-producing factor that is added to our environment after 1991 is the radiation factor.

We need to confirm the cause (the radiation) by testing the soil for levels of radiation, confirming the uranium particles in the tissues and urine of patients, chromosomal analysis and cytogenetic studies of the affected people and patients. In that case we could confidently prove the causal relationship between the cancers, congenital malformations, other diseases and radiation due to depleted uranium. We are lacking the equipment for investigations and nobody is allowed to find evidences and to prove that there was great crime committed by those who are supposed to protect the world.

At the end of my talk I hope that every nation will fight for freedom and sovereignty, to strengthen the solidarity with other nations for the sake of peace and freedom. This conference is one of the means by which we build the good and solid relations between the different nations.

I hope that the Iraqi people and other people elsewhere will live peacefully in a world free of nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction. No for occupation by strangers and yes for sovereignty and self-ruling of nations.

Thank you

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Dr. Al-Ali is Director of the Oncology Center in Basrah, Iraq. This speech describes the horrendous impacts of D.U. on the people of southern Iraq and Dr. Al Ali's sober description of the impacts of both the U.S. wars against Iraq and the legacies of Saddam Hussein's regime. It was presented at the International Symposium of the Japan Peace Conference, held in Naha, Okinawa, January 29 – February 1, 2004.

The photographs in a corresponding power point presentation were taken by Japanese photo-journalist Morizumi Takashi. **Many of the photographs are deeply disturbing pictures of people suffering from radiation disease and cancers caused by depleted uranium.** These are similar or nearly identical to horrifying pictures of the impacts of atomic weapons on the people of Hiroshima and Nagasaki . **So, viewer caution and discretion are advised .** (Note: the file is very large- 42 MB - Web Ed.) If you are sure you want to access this presentation, contact Joseph Gerson for the address JGerson@afsc.org.

We do hope that these will be used as widely as possible. For further information about how you may be able to send medicines or otherwise provide direct assistance to Dr. Al-Ali's cancer center, please contact Joseph Gerson at JGerson@afsc.org.