

DEPLETED URANIUM/URANIUM WEAPONS: TROJAN HORSES OF NUCLEAR WARS?

Conference aims to create international movement to confront “legitimization” of nuclear warfare

By Dave Kraft

HAMBURG—Activists, scientists, researchers, lay people, health professionals, veterans and international law experts will converge on Hamburg Germany October 16-19 to participate in a major international organizing effort dealing with the controversial issues of depleted uranium – or, “DU” – and other uranium weapons (UW).

DEPLETED URANIUM / URANIUM WEAPONS: THE TROJAN HORSES OF NUCLEAR WAR - AN INTERNATIONAL EDUCATIONAL/ORGANIZING CONFERENCE, is a four day Conference of informational panels, exhibitions, and planning sessions organized by Gewaltfreie Aktion Atomwaffen Abschaffen (GAAA, Germany), an organization dedicated to the abolition of nuclear weapons. Other sponsoring organizations include Pandora DU Research Project and Campaign against Depleted Uranium (CADU) of Great Britain; Nuclear Energy Information Service (NEIS) and Nukewatch of the USA; and over 31 other sponsoring organizations on five continents. The event will take place at Hamburg Universität in cooperation with the student organization ASTA.

“Our century long experience in resisting the ongoing cover ups in the name of national security due to the nuclear industry -- uranium mining, nuclear testing, nuclear power plant accidents -- makes it clear to us that we cannot trust to have this work being done by those governments responsible for such cover-ups,” states GAAA Conference Coordinator Marion K pker of Hamburg, Germany. “This fundamental lack of trustworthiness of governments and other international institutions on the DU/UW issue is the driving force behind this Conference.”

Attendees will be treated to panel presentations from over 30 speakers from all walks of life on various facets of the DU/UW issue. Panel topics include: recent observed health effects and radiation exposure study results; legal opinions on the legality of DU/UW use under currently existing international law and conventions (and the potential for users and manufacturers to be prosecuted as war criminals); and reported exposure effects among different populations, including Gulf War veterans, war zone civilians exposed to DU/UW in Iraq, the Balkans and Afghanistan, and civilians exposed to weapons manufacture and testing. Attendees will also receive selected “briefings” on the current status of DU/UW use and development, and the efforts governments and other international bodies engage in to cover up or minimize the health effects of DU/UW.

Of special note is the attendance of Dr. Souad Al-Azzawi of Iraq, who is a 2003 recipient of the prestigious Nuclear Free Futures Award. She will receive this award in Munich, Germany, the week before the Conference. The Award is accompanied by a 10,000 EURO prize. She will be complimented by three other medical researchers from Iraq, reporting on recent exposure-related issues in their country.

After two days of informational sessions, participants will spend the remaining two days of the Conference creating an international action plan to confront the issues raised at the Conference. It is this organizing component which sets this Conference apart from other recent events on the same issue. Conference planners hope to launch an international campaign to enforce existing laws and conventions prohibiting the further use and development of such weapons. Such a campaign would also seek to gain health follow-up and environmental clean up for affected populations – the hundreds of thousands, perhaps millions of civilians and veterans worldwide who have been exposed to these radioactive and chemically toxic materials through war (civilians, peace-keepers and veterans in Iraq, Afghanistan, Kuwait, the Balkans), or through manufacturing and testing of these weapons (USA, Puerto Rico, England, Russia, Okinawa, South

Korea, India and many other lands). (NOTE: This part of the Conference is closed to the general public without prior arrangements and approval for attendance).

The Conference also hosts four photographic exhibitions relating to the DU/UW issues; and will also make available a video room open to the public, where a variety of videos on the topic will be shown at scheduled times.

The Conference will also be available for international viewing through a live Internet feed. Interested viewers will need to download Real Player, which is accessible through the Conference website Internet link at: <http://www.uraniumweaponsconference.de>
For more information, please visit the Conference website.