

Uranium weapons 2001-2003

Hazards of Uranium weapons for Afghanistan and Iraq

Occupational, Public and Environmental Health Issues in Radiological Warfare

Collected studies and public domain sources compiled by:

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Second report updating

Depleted Uranium weapons in 2001-2002

Mystery Metal Nightmare in Afghanistan?



Photo: Oleg Nikishin © Getty Images
published in the Guardian 27 Nov 2001

- Updated list of hard target guided bombs, missiles and sub-munitions suspected of Uranium warheads
- Increasing concerns about use and effects of Uranium weapons in the Afghan War
- Undepleted Uranium?
- New evidence from US Patents with Uranium warhead designs
- Outlook for civilians, troops and aid workers from US war plans for Iraq
- Issues for governments, UN agencies and NGO's.



PREFACE

20 October 2002

These investigations have immediate implications for the health and welfare of civilians, troops and aid workers in Afghanistan and Iraq. They pose serious questions for many countries and the UN.

Hazards of Uranium weapons in the proposed war in Iraq was written on 22nd September. ***Uranium weapons 2001-2003*** contains this report, a summary for decision makers and new findings from US Patent records. These include updated lists of the 23 weapon systems now suspected of Uranium warheads and extracts from 7 US weapons patents including **Uranium** as a warhead material.

These papers cover developments since my first report ***Depleted Uranium weapons 2001-2002, Mystery Metal Nightmare in Afghanistan?*** published on 31 January 2002. This was sent to the UK Government, selected MP's, UN agencies and the Afghan Embassy in Geneva earlier this year. It is available on the Internet at <http://www.eoslifework.co.uk/du2012.htm> and in hard copy or CD-ROM format.

The first report identified **two warhead technologies** that appeared to use **Depleted Uranium (DU)** to increase **penetration effects** on hard or deeply buried targets, and **incendiary effects** to neutralise chemical or biological warfare agents. These are 1) large explosive warheads using 'dense metal' **unitary** or **advanced penetrators**, and 2) a range of warheads and sub-munitions using **shaped charge** technology. Advanced R & D into use of Uranium in both types of warhead is now confirmed. **How many Uranium weapons have been used since 1985 and where?**

This new report asks parliaments and media to question the role of governments, UN agencies and the validity of past research and policy advice concerning the health and environmental effects of Uranium weapons. It is relevant to negotiations with US representatives regarding a United Nations resolution to permit or restrain the US Government from **a major military offensive on Iraq** on the pretext of destroying weapons of mass destruction. Such an attack will rely primarily on **hard target guided weapons**. **If Uranium warheads are used then the proposed war could add 1,500+ tons of Uranium dust to existing contamination in Iraq creating another radiological warfare disaster.**

The situation in **Afghanistan** is still unclear. Despite my warnings in January environmental monitoring for potential Uranium contamination by the UN Environment Programme (**UNEP**) has not happened. The lives of thousands of people who may have been exposed to, or be living in, areas heavily contaminated by Uranium weapons are at risk. Reports from the Balkans war and new evidence of seriously ill civilians with severe Uranium contamination in Afghanistan suggest that US guided weapons have been using **undepleted Uranium**. This would confuse medical and environmental testing and explain official denials about the use of *depleted* Uranium weapons.

The **global proliferation of Uranium munitions as weapons of indiscriminate effect** is a vital arms control issue. Their use constitutes **radiological warfare**. It is vital for the health and safety of troops and civilians that the use of suspected Uranium weapons in Afghanistan and the Iraq no-fly zones is suspended, and that they are rigorously investigated before further use in Iraq.

The existence and use of weapons with large uranium warheads - **radiological bombs** - remains a closely guarded military secret. Their use and hazards have been the subject of systematic misinformation by NATO and other sources. The use of small (less than 5 kg) Depleted Uranium anti-tank penetrators has deflected public and media concern away the use of far larger weapons e.g. the GBU-24 and 28 that may contain 500-1500 kg of Uranium.

This secrecy and deception may have misled UN agencies and other research organisations to seriously under-estimate the potential humanitarian and environmental impacts of radiological weapons and the development of radiological warfare using "conventional" Uranium weapons made from nuclear waste since 1985, possibly even back to the Yom Kippur War in 1973.

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20 October 2002

These documents are also available on the Internet at <http://www.eoslifework.co.uk/u23.htm>

Hazards of Uranium weapons for Afghanistan and Iraq

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Note: The CD-ROM version **Uranium weapons 2001-2003** (October 2002) contains the first report **Depleted Uranium weapons 2001-2002, Mystery metal nightmare in Afghanistan?** (January 2002) and this update **Hazards of Uranium weapons for Afghanistan and Iraq**.