



Legislation Text

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Res. No. 1085

Resolution calling upon the United States Congress to launch an immediate investigation into the use of Depleted Uranium by the United States Department of Defense and the serious health risks such use poses to civilians and troops.

By Council Members Monserrate and Gerson

Whereas, According to the Federation of American Scientists (FAS) Military Analysis Network fact sheet (the “FAS fact sheet”), natural uranium consists of two isotopes: U-235, which is utilized to facilitate nuclear reactions, and U-238, which is referred to as Depleted Uranium (DU); and

Whereas, Despite the common belief that DU is not highly radioactive, the Campaign Against Depleted Uranium (the “Campaign”) has found that DU is radiologically toxic; and

Whereas, The International Depleted Uranium Study team reports that when all radioactive decay products including beta and gamma radiation that are released by DU are analyzed, DU has been found to contain 75 percent of the radioactivity found in natural uranium; and

Whereas, The FAS fact sheet states that DU has a half-life of 4.5 billion years, which means that there is very little decay of DU in areas that have been exposed to this material; and

Whereas, The Federation of American Scientists, in their Review of the Scientific Literature as it Pertains to Gulf War Illness, echoes the broad consensus that DU’s toxological adverse effects are just as serious as those that result from exposure to natural uranium; and

Whereas, According to Dr. Helen Caldicott, the internationally renowned expert on the health impacts posed by nuclear weapons and nuclear materials, DU is pyrophoric, which signifies that when DU hits a tank it

bursts into flames, producing aerosolized particles that are less than five microns in diameter; and

Whereas, Dr. Caldicott states that DU is also a potent radioactive carcinogen, emitting a relatively heavy alpha particle of two protons and two neutrons that either through direct exposure or as a result of the ingestion of DU contaminated food or water can produce cancer in the lungs, bones, blood or kidneys; and

Whereas, According to the Campaign, DU was first used in large scale military operations by the United States in the 1991 Gulf War and was subsequently used in Bosnia and the Balkans War of 1999; and

Whereas, Dr. Jawad Al-Ali, Director of the Oncology Center in Basra Iraq, has reported that the U.S. and its allies used over 800 tons of DU during the Gulf War and have extensively used DU weapons during the present Iraq war, targeting the heavily populated cities of Baghdad, Babylon, Karbala and Najaf; and

Whereas, Dr. Caldicott found that the American military's own studies prior to Desert Storm warned that aerosol DU exposure under battlefield conditions may lead to cancers of the lung and bone, kidney damage, non-malignant lung disease, neurocognitive disorders, chromosomal damage and birth defects; and

Whereas, Dr. Caldicott has stated that after the Gulf War, pediatricians in the Iraqi City of Basra, a town that was bombed by DU munitions, reported an increase of six to 12 times the incidence of childhood leukemia and cancer; and

Whereas, According to Dr. Caldicott, at least one medical researcher has reported that some Gulf War veterans exposed to DU are excreting uranium in their urine a decade later; and

Whereas, Dr. Caldicott states that nearly one-third of the American tanks used in the Desert Storm theatre were armed with munitions made with DU, thereby exposing their crews to whole body gamma radiation; and

Whereas, The International Depleted Uranium Study Team, in an article entitled "MoD Accept DU has the Potential to Cause Ill Health", reported that British troops serving in Iraq are being issued a "warning card" that states that soldiers deployed in Iraq are serving in a theatre where DU munitions have been used, that these soldiers may have been exposed to dust containing DU during their deployment and that they are eligible for a

urine test to measure uranium; and

Whereas, No similar warning has been issued to U.S. troops; and

Whereas, In response to the above-mentioned ill effects that result from exposure to DU, the State of Louisiana has past legislation that gives all returning veterans the right to receive a best practices DU exposure screening test; and

Whereas, Though no international treaty currently bans the production or use of DU weapons, a sub-commission of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights has passed a resolution that categorizes DU weapons alongside nuclear, chemical, biological, napalm and cluster bombs as “weapons of mass destruction and indiscriminate effect”; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York calls upon the United States Congress to launch an immediate investigation into the use of Depleted Uranium by the United States Department of Defense and the serious health risks such use poses to civilians and troops.