

# Depleted Uranium, Diabetes, Cancer And You

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Theme: [Militarization and WMD](#), [Science and Medicine](#)

In-depth Report: [Depleted Uranium](#)

Recently, I received an intriguing email claiming that the rapidly increasing worldwide epidemic of diabetes was caused by depleted uranium (DU). As a medical doctor I never heard of such an idea. Every physician knows that radiation can lead to cancer, but the DU and diabetes connection seemed ludicrous. Nevertheless, I thought it would be interesting to check it out on the Internet.

The best tool for medical research on the Net is the PubMed website sponsored by the US National Library of Medicine. I typed in the keywords: depleted uranium and diabetes. No citations to scientific papers in the medical journals appeared on my computer screen, which further assured me there was no scientific connection. Even when I used key words – depleted uranium and human disease – only a mere 16 papers were cited on the subject from 1994 to 2005; and only half these papers addressed the medical problems of soldiers exposed to DU in the Gulf War.

What was revealed is that DU accumulates in lymph nodes, brain, testicles, and other organs, and the short term and long term effects of DU were not known. There was a definite increase of birth defects in the offspring of persons exposed to DU; and Gulf War vets who inhaled DU were still excreting abnormal amounts of uranium in the urine 10 years later.

Why was there so little written about DU and its effects on the human body? Having written extensively on the man-made epidemic of AIDS and its cover-up for two decades, I was not surprised. I strongly suspected research into the health effects of DU on Gulf War veterans was “politically incorrect.” On the other hand, a quick Google Internet search of – “side effects” + “depleted uranium” – referred me to 71,000 English pages on the web. When I added the key word “diabetes” there were 22,000 pages.

I also discovered that articles about the health dangers of DU rarely, if ever, appear in the major media. In a January 2001 press release FAIR (Fairness & Accuracy in Reporting) accused the media of “depleted coverage of depleted uranium weapons.” Nevertheless, a great deal of information on DU can be found on the Internet.

DU was first used by the US in the 1991 Gulf War, then in the Balkans in the late 1990s, in Kosovo in 2000, in the war against Afghanistan, in Iraq in 2003, and also by the Israelis in the 2006 war with Lebanon. Needless to say, US military and government officials totally deny any health danger from DU. A reassuring New York Times article of 9 January 2001 entitled “1999 U.S. document warned of depleted uranium in Kosovo” by Marlise Simons, noted “while acknowledging the hazards, both the Pentagon and NATO, pointing to medical experts, have denied any links could exist between exposure to depleted uranium and the illness and deaths of veterans.”

DU weapons were developed by the US Navy in 1968, and were first given to Israel by the US in the 1973 Arab-Israeli war. Since then, the US has tested, manufactured and sold DU weapons systems to 29 countries. Vieques Island, a testing site in Puerto Rico, was repeatedly bombarded with DU in 1999 prior to its use in Kosovo.

DU is a byproduct of the enriching of natural uranium for use in nuclear reactors. As nuclear waste, DU is costly to keep but relatively inexpensive to obtain. Due to their tank armour-piercing capabilities, DU weapons are extremely effective and the reason why the military is so enthralled with them.

### Depleted Uranium Whistleblowers

Major Doug Rokke is a leading DU expert who has become a whistleblower against its use. He claims each tank round is composed of 10 pounds of solid uranium-238 contaminated with plutonium, neptunium, and americium. The round is pyrophoric, meaning it generates intense heat on impact, easily penetrating a tank because of the heavy weight of the metal. When DU munitions hit, they produce a firestorm inside any vehicle or structure, resulting in devastating burns and injuries to those who escape immediate death and incineration.

On impact, DU produces uranium oxide dust and pieces of uranium explode all over the place. Once inside the body the tiny nanoparticles enter the lungs and blood stream and are carried throughout the body. When Rokke and his team were assigned to “clean up” the DU after the first Gulf War, all his men got ill within 72 hours with respiratory problems, rashes, bleeding, and open sores. In an Australian interview with Gay Alcorn in 2003, Rokke admitted: “After everything I’ve seen, everything I’ve done, it became very clear to me that you can’t take radioactive wastes from one nation and just throw it into another nation. It’s wrong. It’s simply wrong.”

According to Asaf Durakovic MD of the Uranium Medical Research Centre in Washington DC, the term “depleted uranium” is a misnomer. Both “depleted” and “natural” uranium are over 99% composed of uranium 238. DU is almost as highly concentrated as pure uranium and may contain plutonium (a deadly element) in trace amounts.

Leuren Moret is an independent American scientist who works on radiation and health issues with communities around the world. At age 61, she is the leading activist against the use of DU, having worked in two nuclear weapons labs, including the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory in Berkeley, California, run by the US Department of Energy. She is the ultimate antigovernment whistleblower on DU, along with Rokke and Durakovic, and all three have personally suffered (including death threats) for their anti-DU views.

In her article “Depleted uranium: The Trojan Horse of nuclear war,” which appeared in the June 2004 World Affairs Journal, Moret claims: “The use of DU weaponry by the US, defying all international treaties, will slowly annihilate all species on Earth including the human species, and yet this country continues to do so with full knowledge of its destructive potential.”

DU travels. DU radioactive particles are picked up by the atmosphere and are transferred by wind storms and air currents. They permanently contaminate vast regions and slowly destroy the genetic future of populations living in those areas. As the Trojan Horse of nuclear war, Moret calls DU “the weapon that keeps on killing.” There is no way to turn it off – and no way to clean it up. It meets the US government’s own definition of “weapons of

mass destruction.”

## Depleted Uranium over the United Kingdom

DU has a very high affinity for cellular DNA and permanently damages it. DU is the “fourth generation” of nuclear weapons. First came the atomic bomb, then the hydrogen bomb, then neutron bombs, and now DU. Moret claims the contaminated DU-dust from the Middle East gets absorbed into the atmosphere. Via dust storms and air currents it ends up in Europe and Britain. Eventually it spreads and get absorbed into the atmosphere globally. There is no safe place; no possible way to escape it.

Moret’s concerns are confirmed by a 2006 report from England by Chris Busby and Saoirse Morgan, appearing in *European Biology and Bioelectromagnetics* and titled “Did the use of Uranium weapons in Gulf War 2 result in contamination of Europe?” Data (obtained with the help of the Freedom of Information Act) from the Atomic Weapons Establishment at Aldermaston, Berkshire, UK, revealed that after nine days of the “shock and awe” start of the Iraq war on 19 March 2003, much higher levels of uranium were picked up on five sites in Berkshire. On two occasions, levels exceeded the threshold at which the Environment Agency must be informed, though still within safety limits. These levels were the highest levels of depleted uranium ever measured in the atmosphere in Britain. The report also confirmed weather conditions over this war period, which showed a consistent flow of air from Iraq northwards.

Not surprisingly this research was vigorously denied as “uranium of natural origin” by various government officials. However, Busby and Morgan insist the findings are the first evidence that DU particles were able to travel thousands of miles from Baghdad to England. Their report can be found on the Internet.

## Gulf War Syndrome

About 300 tons of DU were dispersed over Iraq in 1991. Yet the US Department of Defense (DoD) has found little health risk to soldiers who inhaled DU and continues to claim exposure to DU is safe. Nearly 580,000 soldiers were deployed in the war. 294 soldiers died and 400 were wounded or became ill. As of year 2000, there were 325,000 on permanent medical disability, and over 11,000 have died. Obviously something serious happened to the health of these men and women who served in the Gulf.

DU is known to be neurotoxic. Gulf War vets are twice as likely to come down with ALS (Lou Gehrig’s disease) than vets who did not serve in Iraq. ALS, a fatal neuromuscular disease, is now considered a “service-connected” disease and vets can get disability. Gulf War vets have nearly twice the prevalence of “chronic multi-system disease” than soldiers who served elsewhere at the same time. But so called “Gulf War Syndrome” continues to be denied as a specific illness. The Department of Defense’s evaluation does not consider GWS as a unique syndrome, unique illness, or unique symptom complex in deployed Gulf War vets. The Worldwide Diabetes Epidemic

A half century ago, during the early years of the Cold War when I went to medical school, diabetes was not a common disease. Now in the 21st century it is common to hear of diabetes as an impending epidemic. Certainly the statistics bear this out.

Currently, 7% of Americans have diabetes (17 million). In addition, a Los Angeles Times

front-page report on 16 September 2006, claims that there are more than 41 million Americans with abnormal blood glucose abnormalities, "that indicate they may soon develop diabetes." In Puerto Rico (where DU was tested) 10% of the population has diabetes.

The Centres of Disease Control (CDC) in Atlanta declares that "unless Americans change their ways," 33% of the babies born this year will be diabetic by the year 2050. Also by 2050 there are expected to be 45 million diabetics in the US. A vet support group, Veterans with Diabetes International, says there are 143 million people worldwide with the disease, and 300 million people are expected to have diabetes in 2025.

Type 1 diabetes, most often seen in children and young adults, comprises 5-10% of the cases. Type 2, a metabolic disorder resulting from the body's inability to make enough or properly use insulin, frequently strikes adults, especially obese adults. This group comprises 90% or more of diabetics. The CDC predicts that Type 2 diabetes will increase 165% by 2050. People with Type 2 diabetes are also twice as likely to get pancreatic cancer.

Thirty-four years after the Vietnam war ended, the DoD finally presented the "strongest evidence" that Type 2 diabetes can be connected to Agent Orange. Eighteen million gallons of this plant defoliant and poison was sprayed over Vietnam by the US military. It is now known to cause cancer and birth defects. Starting in the year 2002 diabetes is now recognised as a "service-connected" disease for all Vietnam vets. At present, diabetes is not service-connected for Gulf War vets.

Nine percent of Vietnam vets have Type 2 diabetes. There is no current evidence that Gulf War vets have a heightened incidence of diabetes, but I could find no solid research to confirm or deny this. Perhaps in one or two more decades government scientists will discover a connection to DU.

The common causes of diabetes are thought to be obesity, poor diet and lack of exercise. Leuren Moret believes the cause of the new epidemic is more sinister: namely the increasing levels worldwide of depleted uranium in the atmosphere, combined with emissions from the proliferation of nuclear power plants.

Unlike government scientists, Moret says DU is very, very, very nasty stuff; and that diabetes is an immediate response to DU, in contrast to the decades it can take for uranium to produce radiation-induced cancer. Although she cannot prove it, she is the first scientist to strongly suggest a connection between the new worldwide diabetes epidemic and DU.

Moret insists the medical profession has been active in the cover-up of low level radiation from atmospheric testing and nuclear power plants. I have been unable to verify this, but it is consistent with the passive role the health profession took during the Cold War nuclear testing in the US (more later). She has also spoken about medical professionals in hospitals who were threatened by government officials with \$10,000 fines and jail time if they talked openly about the returning Iraq war soldiers and their medical problems. This could explain the paucity of reports in the scientific literature regarding vets exposed to DU and their war-associated illnesses.

Moret also says reporters have been prevented access to more than 14,000 medically evacuated soldiers from the current Iraq War, brought back to Walter Reed Hospital near Washington, DC. To learn more about Leuren Moret and her research, Google: Leuren Moret

+ videos. In addition, she appears in the recent documentary film *Beyond Treason*, detailing the horrific effects of depleted uranium exposure on American troops and Iraqi civilians in the Gulf region in 1991. Is Depleted Uranium Safe?

Ronald L. Kathren is Professor Emeritus at Washington State University and a leading authority vouching for the safety of DU. Unlike Major Rokke, he does not appear to have ever served in the military or to have come in contact with DU on a battlefield. Nevertheless, his opinions carry a lot of weight in the scientific world.

Kathren does not dispute the fact that military personnel who may have had contact with DU are suffering from various illnesses, but he believes that exposure to uranium is very unlikely to be the cause.

Writing for the Portland Independent Media Centre on 3 July 2005, he declares: "Health physicists are deeply concerned with the public health and welfare, and as experts in radiation and its effects on people and the environment, are quite aware that something other than exposure to uranium is the cause of the illnesses suffered by those who have had contact with depleted uranium from munitions. A truly enormous body of scientific data shows that it is virtually impossible for uranium to be the cause of their illnesses. Despite this body of scientific data to the contrary, misguided or unknowing people continue to allege that the depleted uranium, and specifically the radioactivity associated with the depleted uranium is the cause of these illness. This is indeed unfortunate, for health physicists and other scientists and physicians already know that depleted uranium is not the cause of these illnesses and thus any investigations into the cause of these illnesses should focus on other possible causes. If we are to offer any measure of relief or solace to these suffering people, and to gain some important additional knowledge of the cause of their illness, we should not waste our valuable and limited energies, resources and time attempting to point the finger at depleted uranium as the culprit, when it is already known that uranium is almost certainly not the cause of the problem." (<http://portland.indymedia.org/en/2005/07/320739.shtml>) "No Level of Radiation is Safe for Humans"

As a physician it is inconceivable to me that government-approved experts like Kathren can so quickly dismiss DU as safe and harmless, particularly when on 29 June 2005, a National Academy of Sciences panel in Washington DC has found that no level of radiation is safe for humans.

The panel concluded that "any dose of radiation, no matter how small, can induce cancer. Exposure to radiation is becoming more and more likely for most people because of the growing use of radiation in medicine. The new findings could lead to changes in medical practices and the levels of radiation allowed at former nuclear sites." The panel also contradicted the often heard dictum of some government pro-nuclear scientists that "a little radiation is good for you."

The idea that low doses of radiation are safe is the myth that allowed extensive nuclear testing during the Cold War without a huge protest from every member of the human race. It is this myth that still allows DU weapons to be used on battlefields against "terrorists."

Historically, the proof of the danger of nuclear warfare was provided a decade ago by the publication of a US Congressional committee report authorised by President Bill Clinton and entitled, *The Human Radiation Experiments*. The report showed clearly that government



scientists and physicians could not be trusted in their pronouncements regarding the safety of nuclear weapons. Even worse was the documentation of countless covert and secret radiation experiments conducted on unsuspecting citizens during the Cold War “in the name of science.” Unfortunately, this horrific 1996 report did not deter Clinton from allowing DU weapons in Kosovo in 1999, nor did it deter President George W. Bush, who authorised their use again in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Anyone with Internet access can simply Google “the human radiation experiments” for details of the shameful science surrounding nuclear testing and the disastrous health effects on unsuspecting American citizens.

In 2001, a half century after extensive nuclear weapons testing in the American West, the US National Cancer Institute was finally forced to reveal its finding that bomb testing in Nevada, which spread radioactive fallout across every state of the Union, has caused at least 15,000 cancer deaths and up to 212,000 non-fatal thyroid cancers. John LaForge of Nukewatch.com reminds us that “the 67 bomb tests blown off between 1946 and 1958 were said at the time to be safe.” Money, Power and Depleted Uranium

Who is profiting from this global uranium nightmare? In *The Enemy Within* (1996) Jay Gould reveals that the British Royal family privately owns investments in uranium holdings worth over \$6 billion through Rio Tinto Mines, an Anglo-Australian company, which is the world’s largest mining company with more than 60 operations in 40 countries. Africa and Australia are two of the main sources of uranium in the world; and the Rothschilds control uranium supplies and prices globally.

Gould notes that nuclear radiation has brought dramatic increases in breast cancer mortality, especially in communities 50 to 100 miles downwind from nuclear reactors. Book reviewer Donna Lee writes: “*The Enemy Within* has enough scientific data to address those bureaucrats who deny that living near a nuclear reactor is a hazard to one’s health. It also includes enough direct, clear prose to convince me, a breast cancer survivor, that I grew up during the Cold War as an unknowing guinea pig, further victimised by the politics of suppression and denial.”

Lee continues: “After reading the book, however, I am bothered by one persistent question. I was born and raised and continue to live in San Francisco, California, which has the highest incidence of breast cancer in the world. *The Enemy Within* concerns itself with breast cancer mortality rates, which are highest in the communities around New York City. San Francisco isn’t within 100 miles of a nuclear reactor and it isn’t even mentioned in the book. If low level radiation explains clusters of breast cancer throughout the US, what explains us?”

Actually there was a nuclear power plant located in Sacramento, less than 100 miles from San Francisco, which became active in 1975. Gould probably did not include this in his 1996 book because the Rancho Seco Nuclear Power Plant was forced to shut down its operations in 1989, due to a public outcry and a referendum.

David Bradbury says child cancer rates on Vieques Island have soared 250% above the Puerto Rican national average in the last thirty years. In his 2005 documentary film, *Blowin’ in the Wind*, the provocative Australian filmmaker and two-time Academy Award nominee also provides some answers regarding the huge financial interests involved in uranium production and DU weapons. Australia provides one-third of the world’s uranium supply, and Bradbury reveals a secret treaty that allows the US military to train and test its DU

weaponry on Australian soil. He exposes plans to extract over \$36 billion from uranium mines over the next six years, and shows the finished construction of a 1,000 mile railway from the mining area to a port on the north coast of Australia to transport the ore.

The railway project was built by Texas-based Halliburton Company. In 1995 US Vice President Dick Cheney was CEO of that company. The film maker says, "The Queen's favourite American buccaneers, Cheney, Halliburton, and the Bush family, are tied to her through uranium mining and the shared use of illegal depleted uranium munitions in the Middle East, Central Asia and Kosovo/Bosnia. The major roles that such diverse individuals and groups as the Carlyle Group, George Herbert Walker Bush, former Carlyle CEO Frank Calucci, the University of California managed nuclear weapons labs at Los Alamos and Livermore, and US and international pension fund investments have played in proliferating depleted uranium weapons is not well known or in most instances even recognised, inside or outside Australia. God Save The Queen from the guilt of her complicity in turning Planet Earth into a 'Death Star'."

### Depleted Uranium and the War on Terror

There is nothing more terrifying than the thought of exposing all life forms on the planet to DNA-altering radiation in order to provide us with "safety" and "democracy." It is truly diabolic to think that the destruction of the planet is now occurring with so few people comprehending what is going on – and still fewer people taking an active stand against this tragedy. It is apparent that most of the world's political and spiritual leaders, as well as scientists, physicians, lawyers, and health professionals do not care about the dangers of DU weapons and other forms of nuclear energy. If they cared we would certainly be hearing and reading about it on television and in the major media.

As a researcher and writer over the past few decades, I have focused on the man-made origin of AIDS and the little-known bacterial cause of cancer, paying little attention to nuclear radiation. However, in 2001 I wrote an article entitled "The Human Radiation Experiments: How Scientists Secretly Used US Citizens as Guinea Pigs During the Cold War", which was published in the September-October 2001 issue of New Dawn, and is posted on several websites. But I must admit I was unaware of the serious planetary problems posed by DU. I simply assumed that no civilised and peace-loving country would ever be reckless and heartless enough to use these radioactive weapons. How wrong I was!

What I find most pathetic and inconceivable is that we have learned nothing from the detrimental health effects unleashed by the atomic bombing of Japan – and nothing from the nuclear testing horrors of the last half of the 20th century. Instead we continue to contaminate vast areas of the world with radiation we don't know how to get rid of.

I remember as an eleven year-old boy how jubilant everyone was by the atomic attack on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945, which brought the war to a rapid end. A half century later my Caucasian niece married a Japanese-American man. Shortly after the wedding she noticed a lump in his neck, which proved to be thyroid cancer. His mother was a child when she lived 50 miles outside of Hiroshima when the bomb was dropped. Decades later, in her forties, she was diagnosed with thyroid cancer, undoubtedly due to the radiation fallout. The doctors considered the possibility that my niece's husband might have developed thyroid cancer because of radiation-altered and thyroid cancer-causing genes passed on to him by his mother. Of course the family wonders if their two young children will eventually also get thyroid cancer. Who would have thought that the atomic bombing of

Japan in 1945 would have a cancerous effect five decades later on my family living in California?

A few years ago I developed a thyroid nodule, which was biopsied and proved non-cancerous. As a teenager in the 1950s I received "superficial" radiation treatments for acne at the recommendation of a well-known New York dermatologist, a treatment that was later banned because of its potential to cause thyroid cancer.

It is almost a cliché to remind people that "all of us are connected." The fallout from DU and nuclear energy now binds us all together in an increasingly radioactive planet. No one is immune from the deleterious effects of radiation, and no one knows how to clean it up.

What can we do about it? The only thing we can do is to stop the madness immediately. However, power and greed and politics and religion make that highly unlikely.

We have met the perpetrators of the new radiation-induced "war on terror." And, sadly, it is us.

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