

The radiation hazard caused by DU munitions is a subject of unresolved controversy, but when we compare locations in the US with overseas radioactive combat sites, we find that DU hazards are managed in starkly different fashion, in these two fields.

It seems clear to me that DU may cause local contamination which compels extensive quarantine and cleanup measures under Occupational Health and Safety regimes in developed countries such as the US, UK and Australia.

On the other hand, DU hazards appear all but ignored in urban and rural areas of Iraq.

Arguing about the nature and extent of the health hazard does not address the inconsistency in practice implicit in the 5 photos overleaf. The workers involved in the cleanup of Building 502, in Arden Hills, Minnesota, are in protective clothing. Compare this with the photo of journalist Scott Peterson, with a radiation monitor, at a Baghdad combat site, or the photo of a cardboard notice in Arabic, stuck on the windscreen area of a burnt-out and contaminated vehicle in a populated area.

I am concerned about such contamination and its effect on Iraqis, as well as others exposed to radioactive remnants of war.

Because we who live in Australia provide military force for the current war in Iraq, we are arguably responsible for combat-related contamination incidents which have occurred there, and may still be occurring. We are arguably responsible for their cleanup and we are arguably responsible for the consequences of a failure to address the problem of DU weapons contamination at any and all points in the product cycle of these munitions.

Photos, clockwise from upper left, centre last:

1. **Cleanup** at Building 502 at the Twin City Army Ammunition Plant (TCAAP) in New Brighton/Arden Hills, Minnesota. Suited individuals are employees of the Safety and Ecology Corporation, of Knoxville, Tennessee
<http://www.circlevision.org/alliantaction/atk/scoop/du/tcaap.html>
 2. **Cover illustration** from Desk Study on the Environment in Iraq
First published in Switzerland in 2003 by the United Nations Environment Programme.
Copyright © 2003, United Nations Environment Programme.
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Cover Design and Layout: Matija Potocnik
http://www.unep.org/pdf/iraq_ds_lowres.pdf
 3. **"A WARNING:** American troops left a sign in Arabic on a truck destroyed when the ammunition on board - including DU rounds - exploded. The sign says: "Danger - Get away from this area." "
SCOTT PETERSON/GETTY IMAGES <http://www.csmonitor.com/2003/0515/p01s02a-woiq.htm>
- "These were the only warnings seen by this reporter among dozens of destroyed Iraqi armored vehicles littering the city."
4. **"CONTAMINATED SITES:** Monitor correspondent Scott Peterson uses a radiation detector to test contamination levels of an Iraqi tank destroyed by US depleted uranium bullets."
SCOTT PETERSON/GETTY IMAGES <http://www.csmonitor.com/2003/0515/p01s02-woiq.html>
 5. **"DU munitions** bound for Australia on US warship", taking part in Talisman Sabre 2005 military exercises photographed May 5th, obtained by a Shoalwater Bay resident, but photo provenance not confirmed.
Photo named: -web_050505-N-8146B-003.jpeg from email forwarded to R Rands.

DU: Us and Them



A matter of inconsistency ?

By Robert Rands