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DEPLETED URANIUM IN USE IN IRAQ—THE UNTOLD STORY

“The amount of information that is kept ‘hidden’ from the American public is really disgraceful,” said Dr. Steven Porter, Democratic candidate for Congress running in the 3rd district of Pennsylvania against incumbent conservative Republican Phil English. “It has recently come to my attention that we are using depleted uranium in the Iraq war and that the consequences of that use are pretty terrible.”

Referring to the fact that depleted uranium is a waste by-product from the process of uranium enrichment, Porter went on to describe how it is being used in current weaponry. “Apparently, depleted uranium is used in the casings of bombs and bullets to give them the hardness necessary to pierce armor. The problem is that the stuff is flammable, explodes on contact and spreads radioactive dust.

“There are many physicians who have linked it to the illnesses and deaths of our troops in the Gulf Region and to a skyrocketing increase in birth defects among the babies born in Iraq. When the dust settles onto the soil or lingers in the air it can be inhaled directly or absorbed through the water and food chain.”

In 2003, Congressman Jim McDermott (Dem.-WA), a physician, introduced HR 1483 to study the effects of depleted uranium. The bill died in committee. However, with the help of Congressman Shays, a Connecticut Republican, McDermott recently succeeded in passing an amendment to HR 5122, a defense appropriations bill, to mandate the study of the use of depleted uranium.

“I find it pretty horrible that we have used such weaponry routinely in Iraq,” concluded Porter. “It certainly reduces our moral clout with countries like Iran and North Korea, not to mention the danger it poses for our own troops. I can only hope that the American media and other members of Congress will have the courage which both Mr. McDermott and Mr. Shays have shown. I am sure that the American people do not want to be associated with the indiscriminate use of nuclear weaponry.”