

PM: US Moral Authority

By Polly Mann

Those people who support a policy of having the United States supply military aid and weapons to Syria need only look at Iraq and the medical effects of the intervention there for a glimpse of what kind of humanitarian assistance Syria may be in for. In a March 15 Guardian Weekly article Dr. Jawad Al-Ali, a cancer specialist at the Sadr teaching hospital in Basra, Iraq, stated that prior to the Gulf War he saw two to three cancer patients a month, but “now we have 30 to 35 dying every month. Our studies indicate that 40 to 48 percent of the population in this area will get cancer in five years’ time to begin with, then long after. . . Most of my family have it, and we have no history of the disease.”

Along the corridor of the hospital, pediatrician Dr. Ginan Ghalib Hassen has posted photos of the children she was trying to save. Many had neuroblastoma. “Before the war we saw only one case of this unusual tumor in two years. Now we have many cases, mostly with no family history. I have studied what happened in Hiroshima. The sudden increase of such congenital malformations is the same.”



Art on a metro station, Omonia Square, Athens

Renowned journalist John Pilger, who wrote the Guardian article, found agreement among several doctors at the hospital about the effects of depleted uranium shells used by the Americans and British in the Gulf War. A U.S. military physicist interviewed by Pilger said: "Each round fired by an A-10 Warhog attack aircraft carried over 4,500 grams of solid uranium. . . It was a form of nuclear warfare."

Hans von Sponeck, former assistant secretary general of the United Nations and senior UN humanitarian official in Iraq in a letter to Pilger said, "The U.S. government sought to prevent the World Health Organization (WHO) from surveying areas in southern Iraq where depleted uranium had been used and caused serious health and environmental dangers." A WHO report, the result of a landmark study conducted with the Iraqi Ministry of Health, has been "delayed." Covering 10,800 households, it contains "damning evidence," says a ministry official, and according to one of its researchers remains "top secret." However, news of the report is out. It says birth defects have risen to a "crisis" across Iraq where depleted

uranium and other toxic heavy metals used by the U.S. and Britain have produced multiple cancers in entire families.

It is also known that white phosphorus, an advanced form of napalm, was used on Fallujah.

Now the Iraqi Ministry of Social Affairs has estimated that 4.5 MILLION children have lost one or both parents. Fourteen percent of Iraq's population are orphans.

We can but hope that Syria will not go the way of Iraq.

Polly Mann is cofounder of Women Against Military Madness, continues to be active with WAMM and is a regular contributor to the newsletter.