Uranium Weapons to Poison Ukraine?

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The military calls the DU munitions “armor piercing cartridges” avoiding the taint of the word “uranium.” As Nukewatch reported in the 2000s, when DU smashes through tank armor, it becomes an aerosol of dust or gas-like particles that can be inhaled and carried long distances on the wind, contaminating soil and water.

In 1991, between 300 and 800 tons of DU munitions were blasted into Iraq, Saudi Arabia, and Kuwait by U.S. forces. The Pentagon says the U.S. military fired about 10,800 DU rounds — about three tons — into Bosnia in 1994 and 1995. Over 31,000 DU rounds — about ten tons — were shot into Kosovo in 1999, according to the U.S. authorities, in the number of birth abnormalities skyrocketed following the massive use of DU in the Persian Gulf War.

The U.S. Department of Energy admitted in January 2000 that the metal in DU shells is often contaminated with plutonium, neptunium, and americium, long-lived, highly radioactive isotopes, much more hazardous than DU, or uranium-238.

While the U.S. military repeatedly declares that its uranium weapons contain only uranium-238, and that its DU shells “are less radioactive than natural uranium,” the United Nations Environment Program and others proved that uranium shells used by the U.S. and the U.K. were spiked with fission products including plutonium. In Plutonium: Deadly Gold of the Nuclear Age (International Physicians Press, 1992), the authors say “a safe conclusion is that plutonium is probably the most carcinogenic substance known.

Nukewatch Staffer Appeals to European Court, Claims Unfair Trial Court Decisions in Germany

By Nukewatch Staff

Nukewatch co-director John LaForge has appealed to a European human rights court claiming that his criminal trespass convictions stemming from two nuclear weapons protests in Germany were based on unfair judicial errors.

LaForge was convicted of two charges of trespass at Germany’s Büchel Air Force Base, 80 miles southeast of Cologne. The base stations approximate 20 U.S. hydrogen bombs, that German pilots trained to use in attacks on Russia, as part of a controversial campaign against “nuclear sharing” and the threatened use of the U.S. nuclear weapons at Büchel.

LaForge was sent to Glassmoor prison near Hamburg for 50 days, and was released February 28. A second U.S. citizen, Dennis DeVall, a member of Veterans for Peace who now lives in Germany, finished a 60-day sentence on April 19, 2023 for a similar charge.

In the appeal, filed by attorney Anna Busl of Bonn, LaForge argues that the ECHR’s refusal to consider expert witness testimony, which he says would have corroborated his defense of “crime prevention.” In particular, the courts refused to hear from University of Illinois Professor of International Law Francis A. Boyle, author of Plutonium: Deadly Gold of the Nuclear Age, and many other books. “The courts mistakenly neglected to consider international law, binding on the United States and Germany, that criminalizes planning and preparation of nuclear weapons attacks, and which forbid the threatened use of nuclear weapons from the United States to Germany,” LaForge said.

The appeal to the ECHR is not altogether new in the campaign to end the U.S. weapons. In April 2022, Stefanie Augustin and Marion Küpper of Germany’s campaign “Büchel is Everywhere: Nuclear Weapons Free!” filed an appeal that has not yet been answered. In addition, Johanna Adickes of Germany filed an appeal April 26, and two other resisters, Ariane Dettloff of Germany, and Susan Crane of California, intend to appeal later this year.

In a related initiative, while nuclear resisters were facing trial prison sentences in Germany, Oscar Arias, the former president of Costa Rica and Nobel Peace Prize laureate, and Jonathan Granoff, president of the Global Security Institute, recommended in July 2022 that the U.S. withdraw all its nuclear weapons from Europe as a demonstration of good will and trust building that they said could move Russian President Putin to support negotiations leading to a cease fire and eventually an end to the war in Ukraine.