

TESTIMONY SUPPORTING H.B. 2076 RELATING TO DEPLETED URANIUM
BY BEVERLY ANN DEEPE KEEVER, PH.D. BEFORE
THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY & MILITARY AFFAIRS,
COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND
COMMITTEE ON ENERGY & ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION
FEBRUARY 14, 2008, 11 A.M., CAPITOL ROOM 309

STATE TESTIMONY

I support this urgently needed bill. It is prudent for the Legislature to ensure the health of Hawaii's people by mandating the state Department of Health to collect data on depleted uranium contamination independent of pronouncements from U.S. government officials at any level.

In supporting this bill, I would like to share with the committees the results of my published research written as a professor of journalism at the University of Hawaii in a book titled *News Zero: The New York Times and The Bomb*.

In a first-of-its-kind, across-time investigation, my book found that the U.S. government at the beginning of the atomic-bomb age had omitted or obscured the defining-and deadly-feature of atomic weapons: radiation and radioactivity. Complicit with the U.S. government was the nation's leading newspaper, *The New York Times*. This omission about radiation and radioactivity, which I call News Zero, kept in the dark for years the unsuspecting lay public, out-of-the-loop opinion leaders, at-risk production workers, U.S. servicemen and Pacific Islanders. This omission may be continuing today in the case of depleted uranium.

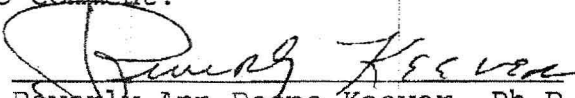
Moreover, at the dawn of the atomic-bomb age, air sampling stations like those called for in this bill were established by the U.S. government worldwide so as to monitor the radioactivity resulting from nuclear weapons testing in the Pacific. This air sampling monitoring was effective. Within days after a Pacific weapons test, radioactivity was measured over San Francisco.

The 86 Pacific tests surveyed in my book account for 73.5 percent of the yield of all 1,054 nuclear tests conducted by the U.S. government worldwide through 1992, when it ceased all nuclear testing. These Pacific tests over the 16-year period from 1946-1962 totaled up to at least 128,704 kilotons—or the equivalent of 10.31 Hiroshima-size bombs per week or 1.47 per day.

Results of the state's monitoring called for in this bill will add to the growing body of knowledge about the health and environmental effects of depleted uranium. Even now, within 0.06 seconds, Google Scholar turns up links to 10,600 academic articles and some discuss adverse impacts

I will take the liberty of including on the two pages that follow a flier about my book.

Thank you for holding hearings on this significant bill and permitting me to comment.


Beverly Ann Deepe Keever, Ph.D.

LATE TESTIMONY

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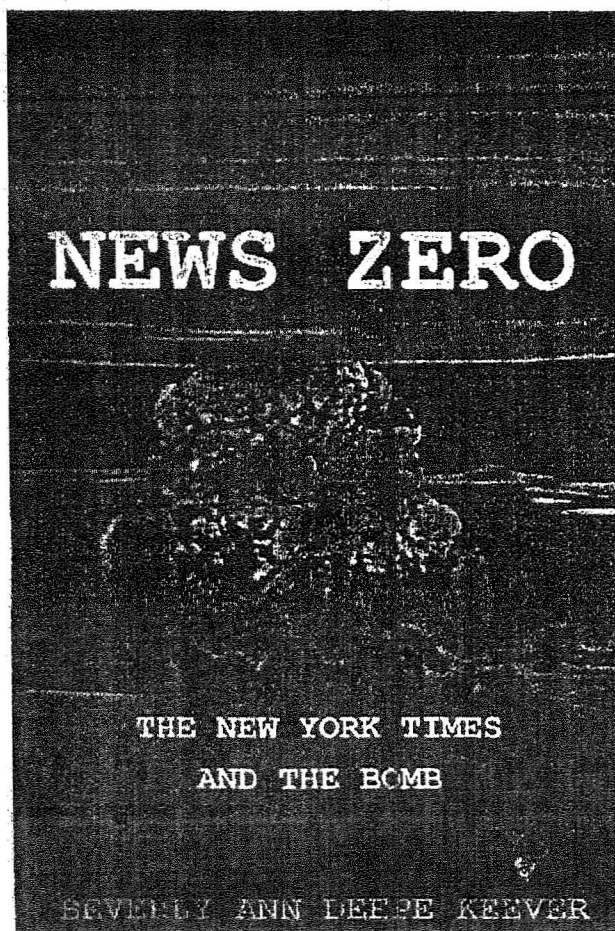
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NEWS ZERO: The New York Times® AND THE BOMB

by Beverly Ann Deepe Keever

LATE TESTIMONY



U.S. Department of Energy courtesy of Dorar Z. Pevec

reporter William Laurence working for the atom bomb-building endeavor, the Manhattan Project—while continuing being paid by *The Times*! It was Laurence, it turns out, who wrote the government's press statement lying about the first A-bomb test. And ever since, *The Times*—as an institution—has worked, she shows, to keep people in the dark about nuclear dangers.”

--Karl Grossman,
Professor of Journalism,
State University of New
York/College at Old
Westbury, Author, *Cover
Up: What You Are Not
Supposed To Know About
Nuclear Power and The
Wrong Stuff: The Space
Program's Nuclear Threat
To Our Planet*

“*News Zero* provides a disturbing account of the *The New York Times*' failure to fulfill its function as the public's watchdog on a literally life-and-death issue: the continuing catastrophic impact of nuclear radiation and radioactivity. In her

The Times' sins of omission in its reporting on nuclear arms since the dawn of the Atomic Age in WWII but illustrates a pattern of complicity in government secrecy about the devastating effects of radiation on public health and the environment. One comes away from this indictment of the nation's most influential newspaper wondering if its motto should be revised from *All the News That's Fit to Print* to *All the News About Nuclearization That the Government Thinks Is Fit to Print.*”

--Erna Smith,
Professor, Journalism,
San Francisco State University,
Senior Director, Center for
Integration and Improvement
of Journalism

“Beverly Keever skillfully reveals how *The New York Times* served as an instrument of outrageous government cover-up in the early years of the Cold War. By exposing the undemocratic and darkly misinformational role of our supposedly ‘free and independent press,’ this book makes a vital contribution to both political and journalistic history.”

Michael Parenti, author of

This flashback to the dawn of the atomic-bomb age arrives as the

U.S. government moves toward nuclearization.

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and of the advent of nuclear terror.

In a first-of-its-kind, across-time investigation, this case study documents how *The New York Times* almost singlehandedly shaped news and public perceptions beginning 60 years ago that helped the U.S. government birth the acceptance of the most destructive man-made force ever created.

The award-winning science writer of *The Times*, William L. Laurence, was handpicked exclusively and paid by the U.S. Army to chronicle the birth, testing and first use of atomic bombs; he spun government propaganda that this self-advertised newspaper-of-record passed off as news to the nation's other media.

Yet, in what the author calls "News Zero," this world-class newspaper omitted or obscured the defining—and deadly—feature of atomic bombs: radiation and radioactivity. News Zero about radiation and radioactivity kept in the dark for years the unsuspecting lay public, out-of-the-loop opinion leaders, at-risk production workers, U.S. servicemen and Pacific Islanders.

Failing to challenge secrecy and echoing the government's spin, *The Times* helped U.S. officials to hide from public consciousness nearly half of the 86 atmospheric tests and their yield that from 1946 to 1962 in U.S.-administered atolls and international waters convulsed the Pacific region once described as paradise.

By doing so, *The Times* provided distorted coverage that predated by more than 40 years its recent crisis of made-up stories by its reporter Jayson Blair. The people of Enewetak, displaced for 33 years from their home atoll and some still exiled because of radioactivity, have much to tell the Iraqis about the sad history of U.S. governance abroad. The Marshallese used secretly as human radiation subjects without their informed consent foreshadowed by exactly 50 years the electrifying abuses in Abu Ghraib prison.

An epilogue from 1980 to 2004 details that *The Times* is still offering warped coverage. It hides from the world the bitter legacy after 60 years of disease and despair from the Pacific experimental grounds used to launch the United States to its supreme military superpower status today.



BEVERLY ANN DEEPE KEEVER, Ph.D.,

a professor of journalism at the University of Hawai'i, covered the Vietnam War for seven years for *Newsweek*, the *New York Herald Tribune* and the *Christian Science Monitor*. Her reporting for the *Christian Science Monitor* about the embattled outpost of Khe Sanh was nominated in 1969 for a Pulitzer Prize. She is a co-editor of *U.S. News Coverage of Racial Minorities: A Sourcebook, 1934-1996* (Greenwood, 1997).

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PART 1: 1945-1962

INTRODUCTION

Chain Reaction: Neutrons, News, News Zero

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The New York Times as Propaganda Organ: What Made It the Ideal Outlet

CHAPTER 2

Conflict of Interest Behind and Beyond the "Atomic Curtain"

CHAPTER 3

News Zero from the First Ground Zeroes

CHAPTER 4

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"Standing at the Gates of Hell Looking into Eternity"

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Americans "Are Smart At Doing Stupid Things": H-Bomb's Biggest Fallout in U.S. History (But Not in *The Times*)

PART 2: 1980-2004

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"The Only Victims Of U.S. Nuclear Arms Since World War II Have Been Our Own People"

CHAPTER 11

Conclusion: News Zero and the Next Rough Drafts of History

LATE TESTIMONY



February 14, 2008 11:00 a.m. room 309

Aloha Chairpersons Evans, Morita, and Green, and all the Representatives of the Public Safety, Environmental Protection, and Health Committees,

KAHEA strongly supports the intent of **H.B. 2076** to establish air sampling stations that monitor for depleted uranium (DU) contamination. **KAHEA: The Hawaiian-Environmental Alliance supports every effort to protect Hawai'i from the harms of military contamination.**

KAHEA: The Hawaiian-Environmental Alliance is an islands-wide network of over 2,000 people, including Native Hawaiian cultural practitioners, conservationists, and concerned community members, working to protect Hawai'i's unique natural and cultural resources.

MILITARY CONTAMINATION IS IN OUR COMMUNITIES

Despite the military's repeated assurances to the contrary, military bases in Hawai'i are contaminated by a wide range of toxins. In fact, the military has failed to properly clean up the over 190 contaminated sites in Hawai'i.

After years of denying that DU was used in Hawai'i, the Army confirmed that DU was discovered at Schofield Barracks when concerned citizens confronted military officials. In the year since those first DU rounds were discovered, little has been done to protect the affected communities and clean up the contamination. In fact, more DU has been found and detonated on-site without any attempt to prevent spreading the contamination.

THE PUBLIC'S HEALTH IS AT RISK

According to the International Atomic Energy Agency, DU left in the environment breaks down and enters the food chain and drinking water. DU poses the greatest risk to human health when it is inhaled. The open-air detonation of DU rounds and controlled burns at Schofield and other military bases exacerbate the spread of DU.

Because DU causes mutation of genes, the health risks are significant. DU is suspected to be linked to extreme and debilitating birth defects, nervous system disorders, terminal kidney disease, and many types of cancer.

TAKE THE LEAD IN PROTECTING THE PUBLIC'S HEALTH

The "surprise" discovery of DU at Schofield Barracks is alarming because it confirms that the U.S. Army's assurances that it can protect the public's health from its harmful activities are dubious, at best. The military has failed to protect our health and our environment from its toxic materials.

We turn to you now, and ask that you please take the lead in protecting our health. The Hawai'i Constitution requires the State to protect and promote the public's health (Article IX, §§ 1, 8). For far too long, the state has abdicated this responsibility to the military.

This bill represents a good first step towards fulfilling the State's responsibility to every resident of Hawai'i. Only monitoring the air for DU, however, may not reflect the full extent of contamination in our environment. DU is just one of many military-toxins threatening the public's health. To accurately assess the threat to the public's health, the bill should be expanded to provide for comprehensive environmental monitoring. Tests should at least include TCE, lead, and perchlorate, in addition to DU.

Mahalo,

Marti Townsend
Program Director

LIFE OF THE LAND

Ua Mau Ke Ea O Ka Aina I Ka Pono

The Sovereignty of the Land is Perpetuated in Righteousness

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LIFE TESTIMONY

COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY & MILITARY AFFAIRS

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COMMITTEE ON ENERGY & ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Rep. Hermina Morita, Chair
Rep. Mele Carroll, Vice Chair

Thursday, February 12, 2008

11:09 a.m.

Room 309

SUPPORT HB 2076 – DEPLETED URANIUM

Aloha Chairs Evans, Green, and Morita and Members of the Committees!

Life of the Land, Hawai'i's own environmental and community action group advocating for the people and the `aina since 1970. Our mission is to preserve and protect the life of the land through sustainable land use and energy policies and by promoting open government through research, education, advocacy, and litigation.

HB 2076 requires the department of health to establish air monitoring sampling stations to monitor for levels of depleted uranium.

Life of the Land supports this measure. We have served on military restoration advisory boards (RABs) for 10 years, including

- Army Schofield Barracks Technical Review Committee
- Air Force Hickam Restoration Advisory Board
- Air Force Central O`ahu Restoration Advisory Board
- Navy Pearl Harbor Restoration Advisory Board

We know something about the impact the military has had on Hawai'i and the contamination that they have left behind.

Why are people worried about depleted uranium? Well, below is a short explanation of what it is, what it does and how it spreads. Life of the Land's interest was heightened when we received resistance to the questions we asked at the RAB meetings. There is plenty of contamination that we don't know about...and plenty the military doesn't know about either...and you can bet that there is plenty that they're just not talking about.

To quote the poet Arundhati Roy:

*"I think my eyes were knocked open and they don't close.
I sometimes wish I could close them and look away...
But once you've seen certain things, you can't un-see them,
and seeing nothing is as political an act as seeing something."*

Below is a short primer on depleted uranium – which has a radioactive half life of 4.7 billion years. Yes that was **BILLION**. (Source: http://seattlepi.nwsource.com/national/133581_du04.html)

WHAT IT IS:

Depleted uranium is a highly dense, toxic and radioactive metal that is the byproduct of the process during which fissionable uranium used to make nuclear bombs and reactor fuel is separated from natural uranium. The U.S. uses it for bullets and shells.

WHAT IT DOES:

Depleted uranium contains the highly toxic U-238 isotope, which has a radioactive half-life of about 4.5 billion years. As U-238 breaks down, an ongoing process, it creates protactinium-234, which radiates potent beta particles that may cause cancer as well as mutations in body cells that could lead to birth defects.

HOW IT SPREADS:

When a depleted uranium round hits a hard target, as much as 70 percent of the projectile can burn on impact, creating a firestorm of depleted uranium particles. The toxic residue of this firestorm is an extremely fine insoluble uranium dust that can be spread by the wind, inhaled and absorbed into the human body and absorbed by plants and animals, becoming part of the food chain. Once in the soil, it can pollute the environment and create up to a hundredfold increase in uranium levels in ground water, according to the U.N. Environmental Program.

Life of the Land and many people in Hawai'i are concerned that the Army is working on the largest military build-up since World War II. For years they have ignored the environment and dumped their ordnance and who knows what else – toxic and nontoxic - into our gulches.

The Army, even today, has a policy not to clean up ranges – where live fire is used in practice. In fact, in the 2004 Environmental Impact Statement for the Stryker Brigade, they actually said that if a range become too contaminated, they would find other land. What about the people of this land – the ones who will be here when they leave? What about our children?

So experience has taught us that depleted uranium is an issue that the military does not want to address. In fact, the military has consistently insisted that depleted uranium has never been used in Hawai'i.

In an e-mail reply from the Army, when questioned by a resident asking if depleted uranium was ever used in Hawai'i:

In a message dated 5/26/04 1:45:22 PM Hawaiian Standard Time,

Cindy.S.Barger@poh01.usace.army.mil writes:

Subj: RE: Army announces the release of the SBCT Final EIS :

Date: 5/26/04 1:45:22 PM Hawaiian Standard Time

From: Cindy.S.Barger@poh01.usace.army.mil (Barger, Cindy S POH) :

To:

CC: WilliamsJC@schofield.army.mil (LTC John Williams)

I checked with one of our specialists on unexploded ordinance and depleted uranium. He informed me that **there is no record of depleted uranium being used in Hawai'i**. Interesting fact I just learned, I guess there were only something like 1,000 DU ordnances ever made and they weren't typically used for training activities because they were so destructive (can only train in an area once) so they usually used "duds" of some sort instead.

Hope that helps.

Cindy

The March 2005 Draft Environmental Impact Statement for Makua denies the use of depleted uranium weapons in Hawai'i.

But recent discoveries have proven this to be untrue.

A January 6, 2006 Honolulu Advertiser Article entitled, "Schofield uranium find prompts call for probe" reported, A Sept. 19 e-mail message from Samuel P. McManus of the U.S. Army Engineering and Support Center in Huntsville, Ala., to Ronald Borne, an Army employee involved with preparations for the Stryker brigade at Schofield Barracks. The e-mail involved the high cost of unexploded ordnance removal in preparation for the construction of a new Stryker brigade battle area complex at Schofield. In the e-mail, McManus noted, *"We have found much that we did not expect, including the recent find of depleted uranium."*

The article went on to say, The Army confirmed yesterday that in August, 15 tail assemblies from spotting rounds made of D-38 uranium alloy, also called depleted uranium, were found by Zapata Engineering while the contractor was clearing a range area of unexploded ordnance and scrap metal. The tail assemblies are remnants from training rounds associated with an obsolete weapon system that was on O'ahu in the 1960s, and their low-level radioactivity represents no danger, the Army said.

The Army also stated that other than the armor-piercing rounds for the Abrams tank and Bradley fighting vehicle, there are no other weapons in its current stockpile that use depleted uranium. "There is no record of the Abrams and Bradley DU rounds ever being stockpiled in Hawai'i or being fired on Army ranges in Hawai'i," the statement said.

The 15 tail assemblies recovered have been triple-bagged, stored in metal containers and secured pending disposition instructions, the Army said.

The Army statement was issued several hours after a DMZ Hawai'i/Aloha 'Aina news conference announcing the e-mail findings, which was attended by representatives of six groups and concerned residents.

Depleted uranium munitions have raised concerns because they generate aerosolized particles on impact that can lead to lung cancer, kidney damage and other health problems.

Committee members, more and more research is coming out on depleted uranium and its long term effects on people. Think of our soldiers breathing in the dust, think of the Iraqi people, whose water, air and soil is contaminated with tons of depleted uranium stockpiles left by the U.S. military, think of the children of returning soldiers, think of Iraqi mothers giving birth to children with severe deformities.

The testing asked for in this bill is to protect the health and safety of the people of Hawai'i. We know that it is impossible to comprehend 4.7 BILLION YEARS. But we are asking that you good people err on the side of caution. The Army has repeatedly said that they have no record of depleted uranium being used in Hawai'i. Well, we know that myth has been blown out of the water.

At an informational briefing on January 17, 2008, the Army said they were concerned about the 'speculation' and 'misinformation' about DU. They said that the Army has not been permitted to use DU since 1996 (new story) and they have no intention of using it now. They confirmed what the community reported in January 2006 from filing a Freedom of Information Act request - that the DU at Schofield and Pohakuloa was from the Davey Crockett munitions.

Army records show that 714 rounds containing DU were shipped to the islands in 1962. A little under 300 pounds of DU is at Schofield and Pohakuloa.

The Army is taking this seriously and Tad Davis has put together a 'First class strategy' with the goals of being transparent and accountable. The strategy is:

1. Archival research (500 pages confirmed 714 rounds shipped to Islands)
2. Scoping survey
3. Characterization survey to determine the scope of the problem
4. Baseline human health risk assessment
5. Remediation plan

DU found in 2 areas of Schofield and 4 areas at Pohakuloa. The field work is wrapped up, the labs are producing reports, involved agencies are doing their reports and the Army wants to get the results to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission for risk assessment.

Ken Rubin, a Volcanologist at UH Dept. of Geochemistry is doing report.

The Army is working on a plan for persistent monitoring at Pohakuloa. They want an integrated system to address concerns.

The Army reiterated that they do NOT currently use DU weapons.

This statement is important to remember in light of the numerous denials over the years that DU was ever used in Hawai'i.

The community's concerns are heightened by the construction at both Schofield and Pohakuloa as well as the ongoing bombing at Pohakuloa and the threat of toxic fugitive dust being inhaled. What is all this new activity stirring up?

The citizens of Hawai'i earnestly hope that the Legislature will hold the Army to their word to be 'transparent and accountable'.

Mahalo for allowing us to submit testimony supporting HB 2076.

LATE TESTIMONY