
SEARCH FOR THE TRUTH ABOUT THE NATO USE OF DEPLETED URANIUM IN THE WAR AGAINST YUGOSLAVIA - TRUTH UNDER THE DU CARPET

*Vladimir Ajdačić and Predrag Jakšić**

*VINČA Institute of Nuclear Sciences (former member),
Belgrade, Yugoslavia (vlajda@yubc.net),*

**Faculty of Natural Sciences, University of Priština, Kruševac, Yugoslavia*

ABSTRACT

Having produced thousands atomic, hydrogen and neutron bombs USA and other members of NATO possess large amount of nuclear waste, which also includes depleted uranium. Depleted uranium is natural uranium out of which 0.5% of Uranium-235 isotope is removed to be used for atomic bombs and nuclear fuel. Produced in this way, “depleted uranium” is still highly radioactive. In one kilogram of such uranium 25 million radioactive decays take place in one second. During the NATO war against Yugoslavia in 1999 their planes A-10 fired the shells containing 272 grams of depleted uranium as they did previously in the Gulf war with Iraq and in 1995 against the Serbs in former Bosnia and Herzegovina. The effects of this “dirty weapon”, forbidden by international conventions, have been already known as disastrous, causing not only human but ecological consequences as well. That is why depleted uranium got the name: **metal of dishonor**. After long denial, on May the 3rd American General Chuck Weld has confessed that NATO aviation is using ammunition with depleted uranium in the war against Yugoslavia in Kosovo and Metohija. Number of the locations under the fire of depleted uranium after the war was rising with time. At the beginning NATO information contained small number of such “targets”, 20-30. When the soldiers of the UN peacekeeping forces at Kosovo became ill, NATO was forced to reveal the new data of the used depleted uranium. In their report from January 24, 2001 (Updated on February 8 same year) they claim that 112 locations in Kosovo and Montenegro were exposed to depleted uranium rounds fired from the guns GAU-8 of A-10 planes. According to this report one can estimate the use of about 9 tons of depleted uranium. Our careful analysis points to many mistakes, lack of data, misleading conclusions and contradictions. At least 115 locations were contaminated by depleted uranium. The minimal number of rounds could be close to 43,300, e.g. minimum 12 tons of depleted uranium has been used. Our analysis of

published NATO's map of locations – targets of depleted uranium - shows that besides Yugoslavia, two other independent countries: Albania and Former Yugoslav Republic Macedonia, got their share of radioactive depleted uranium material. Definitely, new data have to be made public by NATO or independent scientific survey of Balkan territory should be made. Search for the truth must continue.

Key words: depleted uranium, ammunition, locations, data comparison

On the 24th of March 1999 NATO attacked Yugoslavia by planes and rockets. According to the Yugoslav army sources depleted uranium ammunition (rounds of 297 grams) for the first time was used on the 30th of March near the city Prizren. American general Chuck Welsh on the 6th of April confessed the use of DU in undeclared war that ended on the 10th of June 1999.

For the long time after the end of this war NATO tried to minimize the use of DU ammunition in Yugoslavia. First NATO maps of locations that were under the fire of A-10 planes, which used dangerous DU shells, had only 25-35 "hot spots". The picture has changed after the arrival of UN peacekeeping forces to Kosovo. When the soldiers of this forces started becoming ill and dying many of the NATO countries wanted to know the full truth about the sites contaminated by DU. Finally, on the 24th of January 2001 NATO released the information (updated: 08-Feb-2001): *Data concerning the locations of depleted uranium ordnance during Operation Allied Force*. It contains the list of grid locations where NATO aircrafts engaged targets. This NATO list presents data for 112 air strikes with DU. However, while the attack numbered 101 includes 2 locations; one can take that NATO delivered DU to 113 locations. NATO claims that the first use of DU was on the 6th of April and the last one on the 11th of June 1999, day after the end of the war!

Careful analysis of NATO data (used in our map for presenting DU locations) shows some surprising, unbelievable results. Besides Yugoslavia, two other sovereign countries of Balkan (collaborators of NATO in the war) were exposed to DU. In Albania 16 locations and in FRY Macedonia 26 locations got their shares of DU. Altogether this makes 37.2% of all locations cited by NATO, more than one third of total number! Up to now, according to our knowledge, not a single NATO or UNEP map or written information reveals this fact. Self-contradictory NATO data are full of mistakes, which mostly are not of technical but of political nature. From the list of 112 (read 113) locations under the name Kosovo and two other lists: FRY(Serbia) and FRY (Montenegro), one can conclude that FR Yugoslavia is a part of Kosovo! Twelve locations from Kosovo list appear in FRY(Serbia) list and 2 in FRY(Montenegro) list. But now we come to even greater surprise - only 2 of the first mentioned 12 "Serbian locations" are in Serbia, the other 10 are in FRY Macedonia! NATO data do not contain 3 undisputed DU locations: peninsula Luštica in FRY (Montenegro), Reljan, site east of Preševo FRY(Serbia), and one location close to the city Vranje, FRY (Serbia), which are characterized by reach collection of DU rounds found by Yugoslav Army.

There are great doubts about the quantity of used DU ammunition in some air strikes. It is well known that A-10 plane gun GAU-7 delivers 3,900 bullets per minute (65 bull./sec). So, it is hardly believable that NATO planes in their actions used only 50, 65 or 70 bullets (e.g. "fired" less than 1.5 seconds). There are 38 cases in the NATO list in which shooting lasted less than 3 or only 3 seconds. In 83 air strikes numbers of fired bullets represent round figures (given in tenths). There is only one case with "no round number" (907) in which the gun counter of fired bullets was working! It is highly unrealistic that the NATO planes would fly from Aviano, Italy, to the southern part of Yugoslavia in order to deliver a negligible part of their DU ammunition in one or two seconds.

It astonishes that in 3 cases the dates of actions and numbers of used bullets are not known, while the locations of actions are known. In two of them they were defined with the precision of 1 meter! Another wonder is that one location in international water of Adriatic sea was twice targeted by DU with the precision of 10 meters!

Dilemma about the NATO data even grows up after comparing "NATO map" with the UNEP map. UNEP is giving 72 DU "hot spots" (locations) in province Kosovo, while NATO is listing only 51! Whom to believe: NATO or UNEP? And how UNEP came in possession of so different result. Who was the source of UNEP information - NATO or Yugoslav Army!?

Summing up available data leads to inevitable conclusion that we are far from the truth about NATO destructive use of DU ammunition in Balkan. Taking into account "unknown" fired bullets (using average values for them), we get the figure of 13 tons of DU as the minimum which NATO used in this area. Search for the truth should continue. We cannot accept that anyone has the right to bury the truth under the carpet of DU.

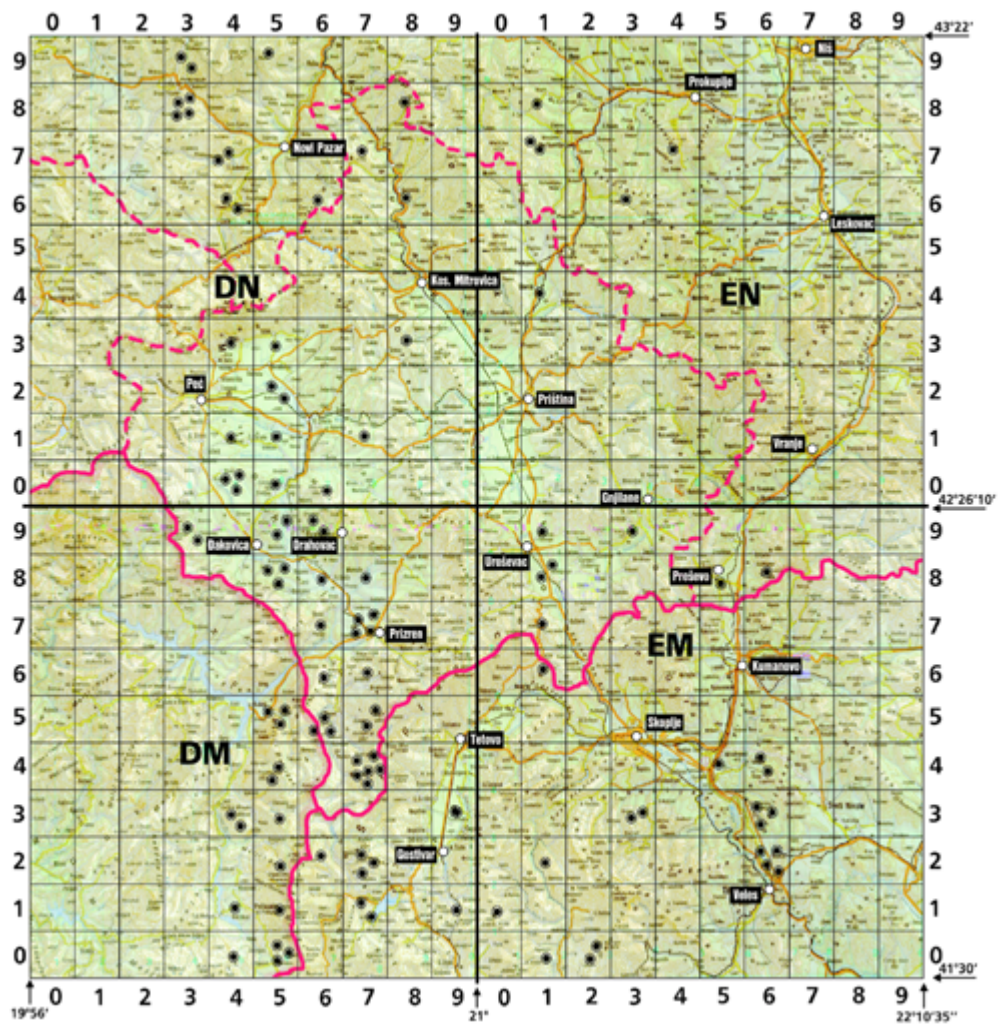


Figure 1. Our map of DU locations based on NATO data (Kosovo - central part of the map, Albania - lower left corner, FRY Macedonia lower right corner)



Figure 2. UNEP Map