

DDP ARIZONA NEWSLETTER **Doctors for Disaster Preparedness**

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NUCLEAR TEST MORATORIUM: WHY NOW?

Until recently, discussions about underground nuclear weapons tests were focused on alleged Soviet violations of the Threshold Test Ban Treaty, which prohibits the testing of weapons with a yield greater than 150 kilotons. Allegations were based on data from seismic monitoring. The evidence was inconclusive, due to the uncertainties inherent in the method. (See Science 220:695, 1983).

In August, 1981, Gorbachev announced a moratorium on nuclear arms testing. Various groups, including Physicians for Social Responsibility, have urged the U.S. government to follow suit. Among the reasons for concern (mentioned, for example, in the film "Preventing Nuclear War: the First Essential Step," starring Paul Newman, shown at the Campus Christian Center 12/9/85) is the fact that the U.S. is testing the x-ray laser.

The x-ray laser is sometimes referred to as "a third generation nuclear weapon." It does in fact make use of a nuclear device to generate beams of intense x-rays. These serve as directed energy weapons, as distinct from weapons of mass destruction. Some believe that one x-ray laser the size of a small packing crate could destroy the entire Soviet ICBM arsenal if the missiles were launched simultaneously in a massive attack -- and without causing damage on the ground. Because it does use nuclear energy, some proponents of strategic defense (such as High Frontier) have reservations about the x-ray laser. One of its strongest advocates is Edward Teller. At the annual meeting of The American Civil Defense Association (TACDA) in Los Angeles, October, 1985, Dr. Teller stated that the U.S. has made encouraging progress in research on x-ray lasers. But he believes the Soviets are a decade ahead of us in strategic defenses.

DDP SUPPORTS STRATEGIC DEFENSE

As a matter of policy, DDP does not take a stand on specific weapons proposals (such as the MX missile, B-1 bomber, or cruise missile) or arms control proposals (such as the nuclear freeze). However, the concept of Mutual Assured Destruction is incompatible with the objective of humanitarian aid to survivors. Therefore, at the annual meeting in Los Angeles, DDP members proposed a resolution favoring the concept of strategic defense. It was passed without dissent:

Whereas: DDP's overall purpose is to save lives and alleviate suffering, and

Whereas: One of DDP's specific objectives is to foster a non-threatening and sound homeland defense, and

Whereas: Defensive technology, capable of disarming weapons of mass destruction (including nuclear and chem-bio warheads delivered by ballistic missiles), shows great promise, and

Whereas: Active defenses would complement passive measures of disaster preparedness in preventing deaths and injuries in the event of war or terrorism,

BE IT RESOLVED:

That Doctors for Disaster Preparedness supports the concept of strategic defense.

CHEM - BIO WARFARE REPORTS

The curriculum of the top Soviet war college includes the use of chemical and toxin weapons, as well as Soviet strategy for space based offensive weapons, according to Ghulen Wardar, who studied there for five years. His own nation, Afghanistan, has been the scene of indiscriminate attacks on civilians with chemical weapons sprayed from MIG fighters. Wardar, now a brigadier in the Afghan resistance, spoke at the recent meeting of The American Civil Defense Association (TACDA) in Los Angeles.

Tucson physician assistant Craig Oliver, founder of the Refugee Educational Organization, has witnessed the spraying of colorless gases from a Soviet attack helicopter in Cambodia, followed by reports of illness and death. Victims of gas attacks have been treated in his hospital. One young man presented with a bloody nose, saying that his village had been gassed. As the medic looked for some wadding to pack his nose, the patient collapsed, coughed up blood, and died. No photomicrographs were obtained, and the victim did not complete a questionnaire validated by Harvard sociologists and administered by a trained unbiased observer. For these reasons, the evidence would be dismissed as unreliable by Chemical and Engineering News.

Harvard biochemist Matthew Meselson has proved that "yellow rain" from Southeast Asia contains pollen that once passed through the digestive tract of bees (see The Atlantic, October, 1985, and Scientific American, September, 1985.) Although he identified the plant species from which the bees had collected pollen, he did not discuss the suitability of bee feces as a culture medium for Fusaria, a mold that produces trichothecenes. Meselson notes that these toxins were not found in many of the specimens (just as occult blood may not be found in all the stool specimens). He makes no attempt to explain refugee reports, and proposes no alternate use for trichothecenes. Mass production methods for these poisons are described in the Soviet literature.

The development and stockpiling of toxin weapons is forbidden by the Biological Weapons Convention of 1972. This treaty was signed by the Soviets, after unilateral disarmament by the United States in 1969. There are no provisions for verification. Matthew Meselson played a crucial role in this disarmament gesture, as recounted by Freeman Dyson in his book Disturbing the Universe.

Victims of Soviet warfare are in desperate need of medical assistance. You can help them through the International Medical Corps, P.O. Box 49525, Los Angeles, CA 90049 and the Refugee Educational Organization, 2102 S. Magnolia, Tucson, AZ 85711. The REO -- when funds are available -- provides an opportunity for volunteer physicians to serve in Southeast Asia for 60 days.

IS ANYBODY THERE?

I am happy to continue sending you this newsletter, if you care enough to return this form to 1601 N. Tucson Blvd. Suite 9, Tucson, AZ 85716. Please consider supporting national DDP as well. (If you wish, I'll save you a stamp by sending your check to DDP to national headquarters, PO Box 1057, Starke, FL 32091.) In The Medical Tribune (Oct. 23), Erwin Redlener, President of PSR, claims that his anti-civil defense group, rather than DDP, has the support of American physicians, based on the membership numbers. But the numbers may have something to do with 60 PR people in Cambridge.

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