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We Must Demand the Elimination of Our Whole Secret Military System

Excerpts from Oral Testimony (beginning on the next page) of Dr. Rosalie Bertell before the Saturday Tribunal Session of the World Women's Congress for a Healthy Planet held in Miami last November on our military economy:

> We have had a massive brain-drain into the production of biological, atomic and chemical warfare agents. This is the secretive part of our society. We have a civil society and we try to solve all our problems in the civil society. But we have a runaway, rampant militaristic sector which is secret, and which is causing the majority of the problems. . . .
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> Our universities would not teach nuclear physics or nuclear engineering if the only jobs were producing weapons of mass destruction. So there *has to be*, from the military viewpoint, some commercial, legitimating industries, or they cannot get the support of ordinary people. . . .
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> You probably have not heard of the effect in the atmosphere of nuclear weapon testing. Even nine space shots of nuclear bombs set off in the upper atmosphere and also leaked to space, to outer space, by the U.S. It is the only country that ever set off the so-called "rainbow test" which set fire to the Van Allen belts—the outer magnetic force of the earth—that dumped radioactive material at the magnetic North Pole, and has polluted very much of the Arctic.
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> You probably have not heard of chemical-release modules in the space program that are set up that dump things like beryllium and radioactive materials into the upper atmosphere *just* to see where they go.
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> You probably have not heard of secret shuttle shots that deliberately cause holes in the ionisphere.
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> These are what are destroying our earth and we're being told that it's under-arm deodorant. [much applause] That's the truth. It's ludicrous and I'm glad we can laugh because if we don't laugh we'll cry. It's our earth; it's all we have. It's our air, it's our water, it's our food, it's babies, it's the future. And it has been seriously damaged and seriously jeopardized, which is why we are here.
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> . . . the way we unmask the wolf in sheep's clothing is to find if they bring us poison; to find if they bring us sickness; to find if they bring us death. And we must uncover it. And we must demand accountability and destruction and elimination of this whole secret military system which destroys our earth and its livability.

A clear sign of decline in our culture is the consistent lack of attention, given in major media, to the issues and long-term costs arising from the continued promulgation of "our" plutonium economy. Continued creation of man-made high-level and low-level radioactive waste, with half-lives ranging up to 240,000 years, consigns all future generations to the task of **every generation** repackaging the waste being generated in our lifetime alone. Present-day mythologies of creating "permanent" and "safe" nuclear waste disposal facilities are pie-in-the-sky intellectual masturbation by unaccountable "experts" fronting for nuclear industry moguls who have hidden behind "national security" balderdash ever since the Manhattan Project—itself something Congress was never told about, much less consulted on—commenced.

Those of us who are able to leverage our own awarenesses out ahead of the Denial Fog don't-worry,-trust-the-experts cloud all of us are daily subjected to, **must** use all our wits and creative energies to reverse this death-producing annihilation agenda of plutonium/tritum/thorium/radon gas/cesium 137/iodine 131/radiactive lead, bismuth, polonium/et.al-induced death of all life on earth sacrified on the altar of the god of profit and "control." We **must** break this death-producing cycle for our great-grandchildren's great grandchildren's sake.

—ratitor

Oral Testimony of Rosalie Bertell, Ph.D., GNSH
World Women's Congress for a Healthy Planet
Miami, Florida, USA
Saturday, November 9, 1991, Tribunal Session

Doctor Rosalie Bertell is the President of the International Institute of Concern for Public Health, in Toronto, Canada. She is a Doctor of Biometrics, and a researcher on cancer, leukemia, and mortality among people exposed to nuclear power plants. Dr. Bertell electrified the audience with her quiet recitation of military assault on the environment from supersonic flights to nuclear testing.

What I would like to try to do this morning is both contribute to the macro analysis of what has been happening to us and at the same time capture what we can do on the grassroots level to move the sanity agenda. I think much of our environmental degradation, or much of the escalation of it, has occurred since World War II.

It's rather mind-boggling to realize that in that period of time, between 70,000 and 100,000 new toxic chemicals have been dumped into our air and water and land. It's also mind-boggling to realize that the majority of these were deliberately created to kill the earth and to do mass destruction of people. They come to us from the military sector.

We have had a massive brain-drain into the production of biological, atomic and chemical warfare agents. This is the secretive part of our society. We have a civil society and we try to solve all our problems in the civil society. But we have a runaway, rampant militaristic sector which is secret, and which is causing the majority of the problems.

I would like to turn the spotlight on this militaristic sector and I would like to make a connection in terms of the multinational corporations, to say that they work in both sectors. They create these military horrors, and at the same time they try to find spinoffs for commercial consumption which they then push on the unsuspecting public to cheapen the price for the military. This has occurred in many sectors.

The most obvious is the nuclear and this has involved the uranium mining and milling on the area of the indigenous people in Australia, in Namibia, in Zaire, in the native land of North and South America. This production of uranium would *not take place,* if the only outcome were nuclear bombs. But there is a myth out there that there is a "peaceful atom," and this industry is foisted on people for the little civilian, commercial payoff in terms of electricity which is also extremely polluting.

Our universities would not teach nuclear physics or nuclear engineering if the only jobs were producing weapons of mass destruction. So there *has to be,* from the military viewpoint, some commercial, legitimating industries, or they cannot get the support of ordinary people.

Now these are wolves in sheep's clothing. The pesticides, herbicides, defoliants used to kill the jungle in Vietnam so that you could *see* the enemy—so that you could fight in a jungle—have been sold all over the world to destroy agriculture as if they were wonderful new products of our culture. Again, they are wolves in sheep's clothing and how can we recognize them?

I would like to point out an area that you might not have heard of because the nuclear industry in particular is the solution to every problem you have. In the seventies they were the solution to the OPEC oil crises. They were also the solution to acid rain problem. And right now they are the solution to the greenhouse effect.

However you have probably not heard of the effect on the atmosphere of supersonic flight—this is almost all military. There's a few commercial sources, but most originates from the military.

You probably have not heard of the effect in the atmosphere of nuclear weapon testing. Even nine space shots of nuclear bombs set off in the upper atmosphere and also leaked to space, to outer space, by the U.S. It is the only country that ever set off the so-called "rainbow test" which set fire to the Van Allen belts—the outer magnetic force of the earth—that dumped radioactive material at the magnetic North Pole, and has polluted very much of the Arctic.

You probably have not heard of chemical-release modules in the space program that are set up that dump things like beryllium and radioactive materials into the upper atmosphere *just* to see where they go.

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These are what are destroying our earth and we're being told that it's under-arm deodorant. [much applause] That's the truth. It's ludicrous and I'm glad we can laugh because if we don't laugh we'll cry. It's our earth; it's all we have. It's our air, it's our water, it's our food, it's babies, it's the future. And it has been seriously damaged and seriously jeopardized, which is why we are here.

I like the analogy of the bathtub; I'd like to put the plug in because we can't keep running the water and having it run out. The plug is the military. We have to deal with that.

We have already heard that there are two analyses—there are probably as many as there are people in this room but there seem to be two analyses of our situation and of the way to form the global village.

I think one analysis says that that global village has to be based on justice, equitable distribution of goods and service, and cooperative agreements between the nations. I would go further and say that that analysis says that there are no nations in the world that deserve the punishment that was meted out to Iraq. The only purpose of such a war is to buy us a peace negotiation and a biased peace negotiation will set the foundation for the next war, and that's what's going on now.

The alternative view of the world is the view that it can only be gotten together through violence. This new world order promised by President Bush is a violent world order. It is kept in line by war and by "structural accommodation" or whatever they want to call it. It's economic war or physical war.

I want to speak to what we see as a result of this because it's only through what we see that we are able to detect the phoney from the real. I come out of my own background as a cancer research scientist, one who has worked with reproductive problems—birth defects, still births, spontaneous abortions, so-called jellyfish babies in the Marshall islands—these are hyditetiform [sp?] molds; they are blighted pregnancies; it is fetal material that becomes a tumor instead of a baby. It never develops. It's a runaway growth in a woman's uterus which is delivered after seven or eight months— just a living blob of tissue. Women had never seen such things before.

From the point-of-view of economic and military warfare, only certain health affects are counted. They're literally considered health "costs," and a health cost means there is money involved. And you will find very gross statements such as "Embryonic and fetal wastage is of no concern either to the individual or society." It does not cost money. You will find gross statements regarding cancers and the dominant cancers caused by radiation. More will be caused in women than in men because women have high-risk breast and uterine tissue. But cancer such as non-invasive uterine cancer, or breast cancer, or skin cancer, or thyroid cancer, has a very low cost because you don't usually die from it. Therefore it is devalued. It does not enter into our concerns. It does not enter into the risk/benefit tradeoff.

I think women are going to have to take the initiative and women's groups are going to have to take the initiative to look at their own nation and to begin to issue report cards. To begin to say "Are we going in the right direction or are we deteriorating, and if we are deteriorating, why?" So one of the things that we're calling for, for political action, is to begin to critically rate our own nations in terms of five things:

- one is the health of the natural environment;
- the second thing we'd like to look at is the health of the value-system which is motivating and driving our nation;
- the third thing is the health of the political system and the participatory nature of our nations—what kind of marks would they get?
- the fourth is the health of resource distribution, and the households of our nation;
- and the last and fifth is the health of our human development systems.

And I think the things we care about fall into all five categories. There will be a workshop on Monday afternoon which will elaborate on all of this. And I must thank Eva Nordland from Norway for pulling together the report card system and giving it life and bringing it to this conference.

I must ask women to find out about this and please help us. Because the way we unmask the wolf in sheep's clothing is to find if they bring us poison; to find if they bring us sickness; to find if they bring us death. And we must uncover it. And we must demand accountability and destruction and elimination of this whole secret military system which destroys our earth and its livability. Thank you.

To find out more, please contact:

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KOYAANISQATSI

ko.yaa.nis.qatsi (from the Hopi Language) n. 1. crazy life. 2. life in turmoil. 3. life out of balance. 4. life disintegrating. 5. a state of life that calls for another way of living.