



P R E S S R E L E A S E

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REAL RISK FROM DEPLETED URANIUM LESS THAN ONE IN TEN MILLION

Westlakes Research Institute (WRI) in West Cumbria has calculated the risk to the local population from the testing of depleted uranium shells at the MOD's Eskmeals firing range 15 miles away.

When a depleted Uranium (DU) shell hits a target a proportion of the uranium forms an aerosol. Over the 15 years of testing at Eskmeals, which finished in 1995, approximately 12 tonnes of DU was fired and environmental monitoring failed to detect any abnormal concentrations in the locality

WRI, using its expertise in modelling aerial dispersion, and making "worst case assumptions" has estimated the risk at varying distances from the target.

- ◆ An unprotected operator standing within 50 metres of the target for a whole year would be exposed to a one in a million chance of developing a fatal cancer.
- ◆ At the nearest homes (500 metres) the effect would be reduced to less than 2 microSieverts of exposure per year. This translates into *a one in ten million chance of developing a fatal cancer.*
There is the same risk of that of death by a lightning strike.

- ◆ At Whitehaven and Workington, approx. 25 km away from Eskmeals, the risk is one in a billion.

Dr John Lackie, the new Principal and Chief Executive of the Westlakes Research Institute said “Westlakes is uniquely well placed in the UK to provide an independent scientific input to the current controversy. Not only does Westlakes have extensive experience with environmental modelling of aerosol dispersion, but also with occupational health monitoring and long term epidemiology. We have much experience with radiological protection matters and with heavy metal toxicity that is the main risk associated with DU. Never having had funding from the MOD we would be more than happy to provide an independent but critical analysis of the realities of the situation”.

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For further information please contact WRI through Cath Giel – details above.