

Celebration of a spineless Nation

by finch *Sunday, May 18 2008, 10:28am*

international / injustice/law / other press

When our previous colonial overlord, Britain, required a site to test its nuclear weapons, Australia was chosen; the then conservative Australian government was only too happy to accommodate England and poison/irradiate South Australia. Scant regard was given to our service personnel and the local Aborigines, as the many resulting deaths from cancer testify.

When giant American pharmaceutical corporations, Dow Chemical and Dupont required a site to test their new defoliant for the Vietnam war, Australia was chosen again but this time by our new colonial overlord, America -- doesn't it fill you with pride to be a spineless, cringing, servile nation led by lackeys and cowards? When the world needs somewhere to shit, our leadership falls over itself screaming, 'shit here, shit here, shit in OUR faces!'

If anyone imagines we have come of age since the fifties and sixties think again. I would ask the very pertinent question, what the hell is Australia doing accommodating America yet again and fighting on the other side of the globe in Iraq and Afghanistan? Answer that and cringe some more!

When America required support for its illegal appropriation of Kosovo, Australia jumped on request and recognised the breakaway province. Our current Foreign Minister walks on his knees and our Prime Minister has custard on his face. However, what our leaders and the population fail to realise is that cowardice comes at a price. Recent investigations of defoliant testing in Queensland display a thorough contempt for the lives of average Aussies.

The following investigative report is extremely damning. Think of it every time you see the faces of Prime Minister, Rudd, and Foreign Minister, Smith:

Chemical weapons testing blamed for Innisfail cancer deaths

by Peter Michael for the Courier Mail

INNISFAIL residents have demanded a top-level probe into claims the army secretly tested chemical weapons on at least five sites near their town.

Premier Anna Bligh yesterday ordered an investigation into concerns that cancer deaths in the far north Queensland sugar town were up to 10 times higher than the state average near where the army tested the toxic defoliant Agent Orange around Innisfail.

Details of the tests marked "sensitive" and revealed for the first time yesterday, were uncovered by researcher Jean Williams at the Australian War Memorial archives.

Documents claimed Australian military scientists sprayed Agent Orange on a house-block-sized patch of jungle in 1966.

A "missing document" talked about a wider spraying program called "Operation Desert".

Locals, farmers and ex-military figures yesterday said it was believed the army also operated covert chemical testing at another site close to Innisfail and at nearby Cowley Beach, Tully and the Barnard Island group.

The Defence Department said it would review the allegations but Queensland Health officials strongly denied reports that the cancer rate in the town was "astronomical".

Its figures showed 76 people died from cancer in the town of almost 12,000 in 2005, 10 times the state average and four times the national average.

Tropical Health director Brad McCulloch said there was no data to show the people of Innisfail faced an increased risk of cancer as a result of exposure to the toxic after-effects of Agent Orange.

Despite that, Ms Bligh promised a "thorough" investigation.

"I would encourage these residents who have any concerns to talk to the Environmental Protection Agency," she said.

The health concerns were raised after Ms Williams found three boxes of files in the archives. One file allegedly contained evidence of the chemicals 2,4-D, Diquat, Tordon and dimethyl sulphoxide being sprayed on rainforest.

The only surviving witness of the testing, 86-year-old former army staff sergeant Ted Bosworth, said the potent mix annihilated the jungle.

"Within four weeks there was nothing left, only sticks and branches, it was pretty vicious stuff.

"Nothing has grown there since," he said.

Alan Wakeham, who owns one of the former test sites, said there were anecdotal reports of at least 11 neighbours in the Fisher Creek catchment dying of cancer-related illness.

© 2008 Queensland Newspapers.

Wars can be stopped by refusal to participate or by litigation. America imagines it is above the law and that it is able to commit the most heinous crimes with impunity. The response of our politicians to the Courier Mail report would indicate the current degree of influence American multinationals have over our politicians.

India remembers Bhopal we remember Maralinga and now Innisfail. The critical question is, should we remain a convenient face for the world to shit on or should we demand justice?

<http://www.news.com.au/couriermail/story/0,23739,23718609-3102,00.html>

Cleaves Alternative News. <http://cleaves.lingama.net/news/story-1064.html>