The National Board

Organizations listed for identification only.

* indicates Care Group Member.

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**The Vietnam Agent Orange Relief and Responsibility Campaign**

**Contributions by check are tax deductible, payable to越南美軍受害者鼻血基金會 (Vietnam Agent Orange Relief and Responsibility Campaign) and sent to:**

Vietnam Agent Orange Relief & Responsibility Campaign

P. O. BOX 303, PRINCE STATION

NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10012-0006

Email: info@vn-agentorange.org

Website: www.vn-agentorange.org

—— forwarding to our colleagues and the

**1. Organizing to achieve justice for Vietnamese victims:**

Our government has a moral and legal obligation, and responsibility to compensate the Vietnamese victims of Agent Orange. We are also mindful of the peoples of Laos and Cambodia, whose lands were poisoned by the same chemical weapons.

These victims were not only the soldiers and civilians of Vietnam, but also the millions of Vietnamese refugees who have been forced to flee their homeland. Today, three million Vietnamese suffer the effects of Agent Orange in the land and in the minds and bodies of the affected population.

Wars do not end when the bombs stop falling and the fires熄灭. To this day, it is estimated that Agent Orange continues to affect the children of those exposed, as well as their children.

**2. Economic, political, and social stability:**

People are forever affected by Agent Orange. Their suffering is exacerbated by poverty, hunger, and lack of access to health care. The war was not only fought with weapons, it was fought with the weapons of terror.

**3. Health on all levels:**

The consequences of Agent Orange are far reaching, and are felt across generations. In particular, the health of children is severely impacted.

The Vietnamese people and all Vietnam war veterans.

Thank you for your participation and support.

Together, we can make a difference.

www.petitiononline.com/AOVN/petition-sign.html

— Signing the petition to Congress and the State Department —

Published by Trolley Books.

Website: http://www.vn-agentorange.org


**AGENT ORANGE AND THE VIETNAM WAR: MAGNITUDE AND CONSEQUENCES**

**BACKGROUND**

- In 1961, as part of America’s escalating war of counter-insurgency in Vietnam, President Kennedy approved military plans to use toxic herbicides in Vietnam. Planes and helicopters from the U.S. military, under the code name “Operation Ranch Hand,” sprayed toxic chemicals throughout southern Vietnam. The spraying was intended to kill foliage to deny cover to the guerrillas and to destroy crops that could be used to supply the insurgency. The spraying was also intended to make whole areas uninhabitable so that villagers would be driven into “pacified” areas and “strategic hamlets.”

- The main victims were civilians in the villages who were repeatedly contaminated when they ate crops and drank ground water that had been sprayed.

- The most commonly used spray was dubbed “Agent Orange” because it was shipped in barrels with an orange stripe.

- The 2,4,5-T herbicide is contaminated with trace amounts of TCD D dioxin, the most toxic chemical known to science. Lab animals exposed to minute quantities of dioxin (in parts per billion) have suffered increased rates of birth defects. The FDA withdrew approval for the use of 2,4,5-T in the United States in 1970. Dioxin has a half-life of about 10 years (i.e., after 10 years 50% of dioxin is still present in the soil).

- The chemicals used during the Vietnam War were produced by Dow, Monsanto, Diamond Shamrock, Hercules, United Papers, Thomson Chemicals, etc. In March 1965, Dow Chemical called all the manufacturers to a secret meeting at Dow Headquarters in Midland, MI. Dow scientists complained that producers were making very “dirty” 2,4,5-T, containing as much as 50 parts per million of TCDD dioxin. They warned that if the offenders didn’t “clean up their act” by improving product quality, it could eventually bring the entire herbicide program down. The chemical companies ignored this warning and kept the deadly dioxin in Agent Orange.

**WHAT DID THE US MILITARY KNOW?**

- Dr. James R. Clary, a former senior scientist at the Chemical Weapons Branch (Air Force Armament Development Lab in Florida) writes: “When we initiated the herbicide program in the 1960s, we were aware of the potential for damage to dioxin contamination in the herbicide. We were even aware that the military formulation had a higher dioxin concentration than the civilian version due to the lower cost and speed of manufacture. However, because the material was to be used on the enemy, none of us were overly concerned.” This statement illustrates the racism underlying the continuing use of Agent Orange against the Vietnamese people and the failure to compensate them.

**MAGNITUDE OF THE PROBLEM**

- After visiting Vietnam in 1969, two U.S. zoologists wrote: “The chemical weapons of a technologically advanced society are being used massively for the first time in a guerrilla war. [Our] military efforts are aimed at increasing the toll of fatalities, denying food to the enemy and depriving him of the concealment provided by natural growth. This type of warfare, to therefore, enormously destructive, both of human life and the environment.”

- Between 1962 and 1971 the United States sprayed an estimated twenty million gallons of herbicide (of which thirteen million gallons were Agent Orange) over a tenth of the total land area of southern Vietnam. The Agent Orange used is estimated to have contained over 500 parts per million of TCDD dioxin! Over 5.6 million acres of southern Vietnam were eventually sprayed, with over 90% of the sprayed areas being hit at least twice. An estimated 11% of the areas were hit as many as ten times. Further records show that the Air Force used 2,4,5-T herbicide in concentrations that were as much as thirteen times higher than that recommended by the manufacturers for domestic use in the U.S.

Vietnamese scientists have estimated that as many as 4.8 million Vietnamese citizens were directly exposed to these herbicides.

**EFFECTS ON PEOPLE’S HEALTH**

- An estimated 50,000 deformed children have been born to parents who were directly sprayed or were exposed through the consumption of food and/or water.

- The risk of death from cancer among men and women exposed to dioxin increased by 30%.

- Parents exposed to Agent Orange were 2.2 times more likely to have a deformed child than non-exposed parents.

- The Veterans Administration now automatically awards service-connected disability to Vietnam veterans for thirteen different health conditions. Conditions include soft tissue cancer, Non Hodgkin’s lymphoma, Hodgkin’s Disease, chronic lymphocytic leukemia, cancer of the prostate, larynx, and trachea, multiple myeloma, acute and subacute transient peripheral neuropathy, Type II diabetes, spina bifida and chloracne.

- Exposure to Agent Orange/dioxin is also associated with disorders of the endocrine system (e.g., decreased sexual desire, gynecomastia), cardiovascular system (e.g. increased blood pressure, blood deficiency), gastrointestinal system (e.g., nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, gastric ulcer, constipation, yellowing of eyes, abdominal pain), metabolic system (e.g. fatigue, rapid weight loss, spontaneous fever, chilli), neurological system (e.g. numbness, dizziness, headaches, tingling), respiratory system (e.g. shortness of breath), and skin disorders such as rash, loss of hair, brittle nails, altered skin color.

- Dioxin from Agent Orange still contaminates the soil and natural environment in many “hot spots” in central and southern Vietnam such as Da Nang, Bien Hoa, and A Luoi Valley.

**IS IT A WAR CRIME?**

The chemical campaign mounted by the US military is arguably in violation of the following international treaties:

- The 1907 Hague Convention (IV) which prohibits the use of poison or poisoned weapons or the use of materials calculated to cause unnecessary suffering.

- The Geneva Protocol of 1925 which bans the use of asphyxiating, poisonous or other gases, usually referred to as chemical weapons.

- The Rome Statute for the International Criminal Court which prohibits the use of “weapons … or methods of warfare which are of a nature to cause superfluous injury to the personal or material elements of the infrastructure of the target.”

- In 1975, President Gerald Ford signed an Executive Order, which renounced “first use” of herbicides in warfare. At almost the same time, the U.S. Senate formally ratified the 1925 Geneva Protocol, which banned chemical weapons.

**THE PRESENT SITUATION: WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT NOW?**

- In 1973, the U.S. government signed the Paris Peace Accords with Vietnam. One article contains an explicit American promise to help heal the wounds of war in Vietnam. The U.S. initially committed $3.25 billion to be provided over a five year period. It later promised to provide an additional $1.5 billion in other forms of aid. None of these commitments have ever been honored.

- A federal class action lawsuit filed on behalf of U.S. Vietnam veterans against the chemical manufacturers was settled in 1984 for $180 million. Unfortunately since there were ten times more claims against this fund than had been predicted, veterans received only token amounts of compensation.

- In 1991, following years of organizing and lobbying by Vietnam veterans, Congress ordered the Veterans Administration to provide disability benefits to Vietnam veterans who suffered from certain illnesses determined to be causally linked to Agent Orange exposure by a federal scientific panel.

- In 2004, Vietnamese victims of Agent Orange filed a lawsuit against the herbicide manufacturers in federal court in New York. The lawsuit was dismissed on March 10, 2005 by Judge Jack Weinstein on the grounds that Agent Orange was not used as a chemical weapon. The Vietnamese plaintiffs have appealed to have their case reinstated for trial.

- International public opinion and new scientific studies correlating Agent Orange and illnesses have caused New Zealand and England to compensate their Agent Orange victims and Australia to offer compensation. Dioxin affected Vietnam Veterans in South Korea have won a lawsuit against Dow and Monsanto, and Canadian dioxin fighting for compensation for citizens injured during testing of Agent Orange.

- Since Vietnam, the American military has continued to use toxic weapons. For example, the Pentagon is making heavy use of radioactive “depleted uranium” shells, napalm and phosphorus bombs in its struggle to occupy Iraq. To date, it has refused to acknowledge that these weapons present a health hazard to either civilians or soldiers.

To date, not a single Vietnamese victim of Agent Orange has ever received a penny in compensation for the injuries they have suffered.

**VIETNAM AGENT ORANGE RELIEF & RESPONSIBILITY CAMPAIGN**

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- Website: www.vn-agentorange.org