



SPECIAL ASSISTANT
FOR
GULF WAR ILLNESSES

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
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WASHINGTON, DC 20301-1 000

JUL 0 2 1999



Mr. Michael E. Naylon
Presidential Special Oversight Board
1401 Wilson Boulevard, Suite 401
Arlington, Virginia 22209

Dear Mr. Naylon:

Based on our recent meeting on the PSOB staff's comments on our Environmental Exposure Report on depleted uranium, it is my understanding that:

We agree with the Board Staff on the following points:

- Rationale for classifying exposure scenarios needs further explanation.
- Additional information is needed regarding the levels of uranium that will cause kidney damage.
- The discussion on the non-kidney health effects needs to be expanded.
- The description of the preliminary results of Dr. McDiarmid's study was approved by Dr. McDiarmid herself. OSAGWI should continue to use her own words to describe her program.
- The rationale for OSAGWI not using information from certain preliminary studies is sound and references to OSAGWI selectively choosing studies for inclusion in its reports will be stricken from the Staffs report.
- The discussion on the role of standards for soldiers and other military personnel during operations needs to be expanded.

We continue to disagree with the Board Staff on the following point:

- OSAGWI reports need to be scientifically peer reviewed. Since these reports are not scientific papers, we believe that the interagency coordination process is the appropriate means to ensure that we provide accurate information. The review of the scientific literature is being done for us by RAND and their work is appropriately peer reviewed.

A copy of Colonel Abreu's Memorandum for the Record on our May 27th meeting is enclosed.

Sincerely,

Bernard Rostker

Enclosure





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MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

SUBJECT: Meeting with the Presidential Special Oversight Board (PSOB) Staff May 27, 1999
Meeting Notes.

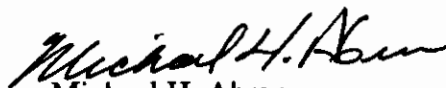
On May 27, 1999, members of OSAGWI including Dr. Rostker, General Vesser, Capt. Wellock, Col. Abreu, Dee Morris, Col. O'Donnell, Dr. Case, Jeff Prather, Pat Williams, Steve King, and Dr. Brix met with members of the PSOB staff to discuss their comments on our DU Environmental Exposure Report. Attendees for the PSOB staff included Mike Naylor, Bill Taylor, Eric Ishii, and Roger Kaplan.

The meeting began with general comments from Mike Naylor expressing the PSOB staff position that OSAGWI should scientifically peer review its papers. We had a short discussion concerning what was meant by peer review and Dr. Rostker reiterated his position on the matter. He said that when we re-publish the DU paper it will include a much stronger connection to the peer reviewed RAND paper. We will continue to have our papers reviewed externally by appropriate governmental organizations. On the subject of their February 19th comments on the DU EER, Mike Naylor agreed that there were many unnecessary pejorative comments that added nothing to a professional dialogue. The purpose of the PSOB staff meeting with us was to discuss the comments in order to decide which had merit for inclusion in the Board's final paper. Dr. Rostker expressed his hope that the Board is very careful in crafting this final report, as certain individuals would quote pieces out of context. After these general comments, we discussed the points raised in the PSOB's May 27, 1999, document titled: "PSOB Staff's Response to OSAGWI's Comments on PSOB's Analysis of OSAGWI's DU Environmental Exposure Report." The following are the main points of this discussion:

- The PSOB staff commented that OSAGWI developed exposure levels without discussing the basis for classifying various exposure scenarios in each level. They made it clear that they did not disagree with the levels, but felt that we should more completely explain our rationale in the EER. After much discussion, we decided we would provide an expanded discussion on the assumptions supporting the definitions of these levels. In particular, the PSOB staff stated that the reasons why the highest exposures would occur in Level I need to be made more explicit. For example, someone who was performing maintenance in a damaged tank for several hours (i.e. BDAT or LAR staff) would be placed in Level II. Why would it be assumed that someone in a friendly fire incident for a few minutes (Level I) had a higher exposure than the maintenance worker?



- The PSOB staff commented that information regarding the levels of uranium that will cause kidney damage was omitted. It was agreed that more information was currently available about the potential effects related to the chemical toxicity of depleted uranium than was available at the time of the EER publication. Key events that have occurred include publication of the RAND report, as well as additional research being performed by the Armed Forces Radiobiology Research Institute and reported results from the medical follow-up. These will be referenced in the next version of the DU EER. We also agreed to expand our discussion of the chemical toxicology associated with DU exposures in the Gulf.
- There was a discussion about the description in the DU EER report regarding the preliminary results of Dr. McDiarmid's study. OSAGWI staff explained the consultations that they had with Dr. McDiarmid to attempt to obtain the most appropriate language to describe her results. The PSOB staff stated that they will probably not criticize OSAGWI on this particular issue in their Interim Report.
- The PSOB staff stated that its comment that OSAGWI "selectively chose what preliminary studies it included in its report, and eliminated information detrimental to its conclusions" would not be included in their final report. These comments referred to semen uranium levels and neurocognitive testing which had not been publicly released prior to release of the EER. Though aware of this preliminary information, OSAGWI was asked by the primary researcher not to present it until it was finalized and peer reviewed. OSAGWI did use some preliminary research in its DU EER, specifically the AFRRRI rat studies, but only after receiving expressed permission from the lead AFRRRI scientist.
- We agreed to expand our discussion of the non-kidney health effects. The PSOB staff expressed interest in elaboration on the effects on the lungs and bone, especially since the CHPPM report brings this up. For example, more details are needed on the effects on inhalation of uranium, including whether this could cause fibrotic lung disease.
- We agreed to expand our discussion on the role of standards with respect to soldiers and other military personnel during operations. This will include information and recommendations from the recent report published by the Institute of Medicine on guidelines for battlefield exposure to ionizing radiation.



Michael H. Abreu
Colonel, U.S. Army
Director, Investigation and Analysis