Washington's Warmongering Keeps Claiming New Victims

According to the data presented in a number of American media sources, a total of 6,979 US servicemen perished in the so-called Global War on Terror that was launched back in 2001 and lasted up until 2018. Over the same time span, the number of civilian casualties that became victims of US-led wars in the Middle East and other regions of the world reached hundreds of thousands. As it's been revealed by the UN, in Afghanistan alone some 32 thousand civilians died in the course of US-led air strikes and ground operations over the last decade.

However, nobody seems to be willing to acknowledge that various weapons research programs can be as lethal to the civil population as military conflicts are. Nothing is ever being said about the countless nuclear weapons tests that Washington conducted in the second half of the 20th century that keep claiming human lives to this day.

Back in 1986, in the aftermath of the horrendous Chernobyl nuclear disaster, the US would launch a media campaign against the USSR, saying that the radioactive contamination of Europe that followed the disaster was unacceptable. At the same time, Washington chose to conceal the truth about the damage it inflicted upon this planet through a series of nuclear weapon tests on the Marshall Islands.

Against this backdrop, it's particularly revealing that the recent piece run by the Business Insider states that the contaminated zone of alienation around Chernobyl is less radioactive than the above mentioned islands that were known for their idyllic landscapes prior to a series of nuclear weapon tests. In total, the United States conducted 67 of those in a time span from 1946 to 1958 on the once pristine Marshall Islands.

Less than three years after its atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Washington started conducting nuclear weapon tests, with the most powerful of them being the "Bravo" hydrogen bomb in 1954, which was 1,000 times more powerful than the bomb dropped on Hiroshima. It’s been pointed out that the total explosive yield of American nuclear militarism in the Marshall Islands was 93 times that of all US atmospheric tests in Nevada, and more than 7,000 Hiroshima bombs.

Recent studies show that the seabed around the islands, and their soil upon which fruit bearing trees grow have been accumulating radioactive particles at rates that far exceeds any safety standards. Upon testing the soil of Bikini and Enewetok atolls, scientists came to a conclusion that the nuclear weapon tests must have produced a more lasting damage to the environment than was originally anticipated.

As it’s been revealed by Monica Rouco, who was deputy director of Project K = 1, the center of nuclear studies at Columbia University, there has been no independent investigations of radioactive contamination levels and the possible consequences of those on the Marshall Islands prior to 2015, says El Pais. According to this publication, Monica led a group of K=1 scientists that carried out a series of tests on the Marshall between 2015 and 2018. Prior to those tests, the only tests carried out across this former Spanish colony were conducted by the US military personnel from the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, that had no interest in telling the rest of the world the truth about the contamination levels.

Against this backdrop, a recent study published by the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences reveals that the lasting effect of a series of US nuclear weapon tests in the Marshall Islands lies in the contaminated soil. It states specifically that:

We were not able to detect any 37Cs contamination in fruits from Enewetak and Utirik Atolls. However,
Bikini and Rongelap Atolls have 137Cs levels in fruits that exceed action limits set by IPPNW in 2016, and the governments of Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, and Japan, in response to nuclear disasters in those countries. Additionally, they exceed values found near Fukushima in February 2018 and values measured from 2011 to 2015 in areas near the Chernobyl accident.

Against this backdrop, it's particularly telling that back in 1968 Washington announced that the Bikini atoll was perfectly safe for humans and announced that the indigenous population may return to their homes, if they choose to do so. When we know that even fifty years after the tests this area remains contaminated, it's hardly a surprise that some 840 inhabitants of the Bikini atoll died from cancer and other illnesses associated with radioactive poisoning over this period of time. However, nobody wants to speak about these facts in the West.

According to Barbara Rose Johnston, an anthropologist and senior research fellow at the Center for Political Ecology, it wasn't reported to an interested world public that the heavily exposed people of Rongelap, once evacuated, were immediately enrolled as human subjects in a top-secret study, Project 4.1, which documented the array of health outcomes from their acute exposures, but did not treat the pain or discomfort of radiation burns, nor utilize antibiotics to offset any potential infection.

There's no public discussion of the fact that in 1977 the United States used a crater from an especially large nuclear bomb test on Runit Island to stash away the radioactive soil. The 328-foot crater from a May 1958 test was designated the dumping ground. It means that the radioactive isotope plutonium-239, a byproduct of nuclear bombs that decays with a half-life of 24,100 years may be leaking into the Pacific Ocean.

Yet, there's no strict control over weapons tests that are being carried on in utmost secrecy in various parts of the world today, and it's safe to say that should something go wrong in one of such tests, we, just like the inhabitants of the Bikini atoll, will be the last to learn about that.

Grete Mautner is an independent researcher and journalist from Germany, exclusively for the online magazine “New Eastern Outlook.”