

The Hypocrisy of a Killer : Veterans Today

April 15, 2010

Danang, Vietnam

Chuck Palazzo

The Hypocrisy of a Killer

Hypocrisy is defined as “the act of persistently professing beliefs, opinions, virtues, feelings, qualities, or standards that are inconsistent with one’s actions. Hypocrisy is thus a lie”.

On April 18, 2010, The Dow Live Earth Run for Water will take place. This is a series of 6km runs and walks that are to simultaneously take place over the course of 24 hours in 150 countries and according to its primary sponsor and namesake, Dow, *“these activities will ignite a massive global movement to help solve the water crisis”*.

Dow Chemical was one of several and the second largest producer of Agent Orange before and during the Vietnam War. According to a statement on their own website, *“U.S. military research developed Agent Orange, and the product was formulated based on exacting military specifications.”* They further go on to state, *“Today, the scientific consensus is that when the collective human evidence is reviewed, it doesn’t show that Agent Orange caused veteran’s illnesses.”* This lie and the placement of guilt remain today. The “concern” of this, one of the largest corporations in the world today, is in its own corporate earnings – they could care less about the victims of Agent Orange. They have done zero research to substantiate this outlandish claim. The last time this statement was update was on June 21, 2007 – almost 3 years ago.

<http://www.dow.com/commitments/debates/agentorange/>

What is an interesting and very disturbing observation from Dow’s so-called Sustainability statement I reference is that there are 10 languages this statement is available in – none of which is Vietnamese. It was Vietnam, whose country was sprayed with Agent Orange and the other so called rainbow herbicides which exposed 4.8 million Vietnamese people, resulting in 400,000 deaths and disabilities PLUS over 500,000 children born with birth defects. During the Vietnam War, between 1962 and 1971, the United States military sprayed over 77,000,000 litres (20,000,000 gallons) of chemical defoliants in South Vietnam – 20 percent of South Vietnam’s jungles were sprayed over a 9 year period. 12% of the country.

In 1963, the United States (suspecting the negative effects) initiated a study on the health effects of Agent Orange that by 1967 confirmed that the chemical caused cancer, birth defects and other serious health problems. The outcome of the study had no affect whatsoever on the use of Agent Orange. The spraying continued, and the chemical companies, namely Dow and Monsanto, reaped millions upon millions of dollars in profits knowing that this chemical that they produced was killing, maiming and genetically altering human lives, for generations upon generations yet to come. In fact, Agent Orange was widely used by the US Military from the late 1940’s through the 1970’s in our own United States, Korea, Canada, Australia, and Brazil and throughout Southeast Asia. The American veteran and our offspring continue to die, have children who are adversely affected, and now, 3 generations after the war, continue to experience grossly negative effects from this poison. Yes, several lawsuits were filed against the companies responsible and yes a \$180 million settlement was reached in 1984 – with most affected veterans receiving a one-time lump sum payment of \$1,200. A slap in the face, a pittance – barely enough money to cover the travel back and forth to the DVA to file claims, receive medical attention, maintain some semblance to life. What is the value of a human life? \$1,200? The Vietnamese have received nothing. On March 10, 2005, Judge Jack B. Weinstein of the United States District Court for the Eastern District of New York dismissed the lawsuit filed by the Vietnamese victims of Agent Orange against the chemical companies which produced the defoliants and herbicides.

The case was appealed and heard by the Second Circuit Court of Appeals on June 18, 2007. The Court of Appeals upheld the dismissal of the case stating that the herbicides used during the war were not intended to be used to poison humans and therefore did not violate international law.

On March 10, 2005, Judge Jack B. Weinstein – dismissed the suit which was filed on behalf of the Vietnamese victims, ruling that there was no legal basis for the plaintiffs’ claims. The judge concluded that Agent Orange was not

considered a poison under international law at the time of its use by the U.S.; that the U.S. was not prohibited from using it as an herbicide; and that the companies which produced the substance were not liable for the method of its use by the government. The U.S. government is not a party in the lawsuit, claiming sovereign immunity.

Sovereign immunity? Murderers – of our own US Veteran, victims of the other countries mentioned, and of course, the Vietnamese.

Dow and Monsanto are indeed 2 of, if not the worst of the world's most irresponsible companies. Dow Chemical (along with Monsanto) will never escape the shadow of Agent Orange, the chemical used by the U.S. military during the Vietnam War during the 'Herbicidal Warfare' program, which led to 400,000 deaths and disabilities and 500,000 children born with birth defects. But even with this evil legacy – and that of Napalm, which it also produced – Dow is not contrite. This corporation continues to pollute the earth without apology.

Two rivers downstream of Dow's plant in Midland, Michigan are polluted with chlorinated furans and dioxins from the company's past operations. Despite the fact that these chemicals are linked to cancer and other health issues, Dow maintains that the contamination is not a public health threat and has been fighting with the EPA over cleanup for years. Many people in the area aren't even aware of the extent of the dioxin contamination, and Dow has refused to put up warning signs. Just recently, Dow Chemical sponsored a fishing event in a waterway it polluted with dioxin, never even acknowledging the contamination and its possible effects.

Furthermore, following the purchase of Union Carbide – the company responsible for the Bhopal gas disaster which left nearly 20,000 people dead and hundreds of thousands disabled – Dow has refused to take responsibility for the health and environmental effects of the incident.

In Dow's own words “ Bhopal was a terrible tragedy that none of us will ever forget. However, it is important to note that Dow never owned or operated the plant, which today is under the control of the Madhya Pradesh state government.”

<http://www.dow.com/commitments/debates/bhopal/>

Fast forward to this weekend. Run for Water? As participants naively walk and run in this event, Dow, Monsanto and the others continue to run from their own responsibility from not only the ever present deadly pollution they created, but from the murders, birth defects and incredible agony the human race continues to have to endure – because of Dow's and Monsanto's profit seeking.

Related Products & Services: