

Gases and Germs -- Sheep or People?



Drew Pearson

Today's column is by Drew Pearson and Jack Anderson

THE INCIDENT of the 6000 dead sheep in Western Utah has raised the ominous possibility that people, too, may be in danger from chemical and germ warfare experiments.

This column has learned, for example, that the veterinarians who examined the dead sheep have complained of strange symptoms themselves. The Basque sheepherder who had been tending the ill-fated flock also suffered from nausea, headaches, dizziness and diarrhea.

The sheep had been grazing near the army's Dugway Proving Grounds, where the army has been testing nerve gas. The suspicion is that the sheep got a whiff of the deadly gas, which somehow seeped out of the test area.

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THIS HAS caused an urgent reappraisal of the safeguards at other chemical and biological warfare centers. For it is known that the army is experimenting with paralyzing, odorless gases and deadly mutant microbes in more populated places than the sagebrush country of Western Utah.

There are no known antidotes for some of the gases and germs that have been developed. At the Pine Bluff laboratories, for example, bacterial strains have been

developed that could cause a national disaster.

In the case of the sheep, the Agriculture Department sent two veterinarians from the Utah State Agricultural College to determine the cause of the mysterious deaths. They performed several autopsies which indicated the sheep had died from disorders of the central nervous system.

Not long afterward, both veterinarians came down with the same symptoms that had afflicted the sheepherder. This startling development was immediately hushed by the federal officials in charge of the investigation.

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MEANWHILE, Brigadier General William W. Stone of the army materiel command acknowledged to the Utah congressional delegation that the death of the sheep "right on our doorstep and probably involving a chemical similar to materials we have been testing . . . (makes us) highly suspect."

However, he argued that if it was a nerve gas that caused the death of the sheep it should have affected people as well. He neglected to tell the congressmen that the sheepherder and veterinarians had, in fact, been affected.

The question remains whether the next seepage could leave dead people instead of sheep.

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