

# D&SCRN ELECTRONIC NEWSLETTER

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## D&SCRN REPORT

**Helsinki sessions.** The D&SCRN is proceeding full speed with the implementation of the six sessions that were allotted to us (See previous Electronic Newsletter, [www.anglia.ac.uk/geography/d&scrn](http://www.anglia.ac.uk/geography/d&scrn) and Conference webpage: [www.valt.helsinki.fi/esa/](http://www.valt.helsinki.fi/esa/)), although we also anticipate some withdrawals due primarily to the costs. Within the next two to three weeks, we hope to inform the session participants, regarding withdrawals, in order to make for a more rational allocation of presentation time at the conference. Meanwhile, session participants are urged to send - if they have not already done it - their papers to the Session Coordinators and/or the Discussants. Session Coordinators should in turn send all the papers they receive to the other participants in their session in order to create more favorable conditions for active participation and discussion during the conference.

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**Editor's Note:** All “signed” texts express the opinions of the authors and not necessarily those of the D&SCRN, the Anglia Polytechnic University or ERC of Athens.

**Membership Report.** Nine new regular and associate members have been added to our membership list since the last issue of the EN. These are Robert Fink (Germany), Kathleen Hollingsworth (USA), Ray Pepa (USA), Lynne Alice (New Zealand), Chris Carson (Australia), Josi Rodriguez dos Santos (Portugal), Servet Ebrinc (Turkey), Engin Yildirim (Turkey) and Robert James Beckett (Saudi Arabia). Our new members represent a diversity of professional interests: psychosocial and linguistic aspects of crisis/disasters, Yellowstone National Park and Japanese Earthquakes, emergency management, the Kosovo crisis, technological disasters, construction of crisis models, emergency workers stress and social construction of earthquakes. We welcome these new members to our network.

We also urge all participants in the D&SCRN sessions, who meet the qualifications for membership in ESA and who have not yet become members of our Network to join us.

**Business Meeting.** On Friday, August 31, 2001 and 14:00 o' clock, the D&SCRN will have its business meeting. The agenda will include a report by the coordinator on the status of the Network, a discussion of membership and organizational issues, New Board Elections and Programming for the next two years.

**Call for newsletter materials.** Readers of the D&SCRN are requested to submit relevant materials (e.g. conference reportage, book reviews, country disaster diaries, examples of good practices, brief reports of research activities, announcements of future conferences etc.) for publication in the Network electronic newsletter. The availability of these materials will not only help in the more regular and timely publication of the newsletter, it will also hopefully increase collaborative efforts and contribute to an upgrading of civil protection. Contributors should also provide electronic addresses in case the readers would like further information.

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## **Community Based Disaster Preparedness in India: The "Orissa Disaster Mitigation Programme" (ODMP)**

**Hanna Schmuck**

Orissa has a 480 kilometres long coast stretching over the six districts Balasore, Bhadrak, Kendrapara, Jagatsinghpur, Puri and Ganjam along the Bay of Bengal. On the average every five years a cyclone hits the coast accompanied by high winds, tidal waves and floods. The most devastating cyclone in living memory occurred in October 1999 with wind speeds around 300 km/h and a seven metres high tidal wave flooding up to 20 km inland. According to Government sources, the so-called super cyclone killed 10,000 people, devastated the lives of millions and uprooted 90 million trees. However, aid agencies working along the coast estimate a higher death-toll. The cyclone had also a disastrous impact on the infrastructure and thus on the overall economy of Orissa, which is the poorest state of India.

When the super cyclone hit Orissa, there were only 23 cyclone shelters of the Red Cross under the Orissa Disaster Mitigation Programme (ODMP) where people could seek rescue. While each is designed for about 1,500 people, they were occupied by about 2,000. Thus, according to the Orissa governments' new Relief Commissioner, the Red Cross shelters saved around 40,000 lives. Equipment of the shelters such as megaphones, red blinking lights, generators, First Aid kits, water containers etc. insured that at least none of the persons staying there died. Rather, several deliveries took place, one of the children even being given the name "Red Cross".



*One out of the 23 Indian Red Cross cyclone shelters, constructed with support from the KfW and German Red Cross*

The ODMP is funded by the German Red Cross (GRC) and the KfW (Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau/German Bank for Reconstruction) and started in 1994 with social

mobilisation and training, followed by the construction of 23 multipurpose cyclone shelters between 1996 and 1999.

Since the cyclone of 1999, several development agencies and also the government of Orissa and of other states of India have started to construct cyclone shelters. However, except for the ODMP project, only in few cases the programmes are based on community mobilisation and training of the villagers in Disaster Preparedness, First Aid, Search and Rescue etc..

### **The concept of community mobilisation**

To ensure that the vulnerable take shelter during the cyclone, that they are prepared to face a cyclone and get back to normal life soon afterward, and that the shelters are properly used and maintained during normal times, community mobilisation is a core component of the ODMP. Therefore, a 12-member Disaster Preparedness Committee (DPC) has been formed for each cyclone shelter; this Committee is responsible for the proper use and maintenance of the shelter. In addition, the DPC has generated a fund at the community level for shelter maintenance and minor repairs and is recruiting about 25 people with good physical condition between 18 and 35 years old as a Task Force (TF). The TF members are trained on Disaster Preparedness and Management, First Aid, and Search and Rescue at the shelter sites or at the Disaster Preparedness Training Centre in Bhubaneswar, which was inaugurated in early 2000. By June 2001, 2,319 people had been trained in Disaster Preparedness and Management. Among these are also women, to whom special attention is paid. They are encouraged to form Self-Help Groups (SHGs). At present, there are 73 SHG groups with 1,978 members in total.

The ODMP project is in a consolidation phase and aims to gradually withdraw from the sites by March 2003 so that the community takes the full responsibility of the proper use and maintenance of the shelters and the disaster preparedness of the community. However, due to its success, the German Red Cross and the German Bank for Reconstruction have already announced their interest to support a second Phase of the ODMP, which includes the construction of another 30 shelters. Community participation and social mobilisation will again be a core component of the project.

Dr. Hanna Schmuck is working as a Disaster Preparedness Delegate for the German Red Cross in India and Bangladesh. She is in charge of the ODMP and a similar project in Bangladesh, the Community Based Disaster Preparedness Programme (CBDPP) in Cox's Bazar District.

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## **Natural Disasters and "Meteorological War"? (The Yugoslav Complex Disaster Diary)**

**Vera Vratusa(-Zunjic)**

As meteorologists and other experts announce that the high temperatures followed by avalanches, rain and floods might continue in the summer of 2001 to cause catastrophic degradation of the life conditions of people and the organic life in Yugoslavia and other Balkan countries, the question as to what extent these natural disasters are caused by human activity remains open.

The experience of the mass air bombardment by NATO forces in Spring and early Summer of 1999, encouraged the so-called ordinary citizens without sufficient relevant scientific background, to notice that an interesting question would be to research the contribution made by the exhaust gases and war activities of the army planes to the deterioration of the main factors of climatic changes and natural catastrophes –the long-term global warming of the troposphere, the depletion of the stratospheric ozone layer and the "green house" effect. From a few hundred planes at the beginning, to more than a thousand toward the end, altogether NATO made around 36,000 flights during 78 days and nights of devastating bombardment, primarily of civilian targets in Serbia and Montenegro, and dropped 23,000 tons of explosives contained in forbidden cassette bombs and radioactive and toxic nuclear waste "enriched" projectiles (Vratusa (-Zunjic), Vera, 2000) Periodically intensified over-flight activity of NATO planes in the region still continues, contributing to further pollution of life environment and to forming of rain clouds containing nitric acid that do not stop at state borders.

The beginning of the new millennium was marked by the publishing of the first expert answers to the question whether there existed any connection between the war activities of NATO aviation and the natural disasters that followed.

Michel Chossudovsky gave one conditionally positive answer to this question. According to him, the latest scientific evidence indicates that USA military researchers have developed a technology that is capable of potentially triggering targeted floods, droughts, hurricanes and earthquakes, by diverting of vapor rivers in the Earth's atmosphere; however, he adds that there is no evidence that this potential weapon of mass destruction has already been used (Chossudovsky, Michel, 2001).

Chosudovsky reminds us that already in the seventies the counselor for the national security at the time, Zbigniew Brzezinski, predicted in his book *Between Two Ages*, that the new technology would make the techniques for conducting secret warfare, among which he mentions techniques of weather modification and instigation of prolonged periods of drought or storm, available to the leaders of major nations. On the basis of the report published in the *Intelligence Newsletter* (1999), Chossudovsky points to the clarification made by Marc Filterman, a former French military officer: that one type of "unconventional weapons" for "weather war" triggers atmospheric disturbances through the use of Extremely Low Frequency (ELF) radars.

Citing a *London Times* report (23 November 2000), Chossudovsky informs further that the US Air Force Research Laboratory's Space Vehicles Directorate is improving the new generation of technologies for weather manipulation within the High-frequency Active Aural Research Program (HAARP) located at Gokoma, Alaska. HAARP constitutes a system of powerful antennas capable of creating "controlled local modifications of the ionosphere", and presents in fact a part of the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI), popularly known as "Star Wars". Chossudovsky quotes Nicholas Begich, who depicts HAARP as "a super-powerful radio wave-beaming technology that lifts areas of the ionosphere (upper layer of the atmosphere) by focusing a beam on them and then heating them. Electromagnetic waves then bounce back onto earth and penetrate everything - living and dead".

New electronic "non-lethal" technology for weather manipulation presents a potential means of aggression and conquest capable of selectively destabilizing agricultural and ecological systems and disrupting the entire national economy of a state that is "unfriendly" or "rogue" from the USA and other NATO member states' point of view. These electronic weather manipulation weapons could contribute not only to a dramatic change of world climate, but could, according to Begich, also influence the human brain, even tectonic movements. Chossudovsky cites Dr Rosalie Bertell who warns that HAARP as "a gigantic heater" can create "long incisions in the protective layer of the atmosphere that keeps deadly radiation from bombarding the planet" and thus have catastrophic environmental effects. Especially alarming are the possibilities of a combination of HAARP with the space laboratory and rockets within the integrated weapons' system for the delivery of great amounts of energy comparable to nuclear bombs at any point on earth by the way of laser and particle beams. Meanwhile the public could be told that a space shield against incoming weapons is being constructed, or a device for repairing the ozone layer.

An unconditionally positive answer, to the question as to whether or not the new weapon for the weather modification was already used, was offered by professor Dimitrije Stevanovic of the Electronic Faculty in Nis in the interview given to "*People's Paper*" (Stefanovic, Dimitrije, 2001). According to him, "meteorological war" began eight years ago in Bosnia and Herzegovina, when NATO forces first used the "meteorological bombs" containing chemicals able to disperse thick clouds over Tuzla, to make the bombing possible. The same activity was implemented in the skies over Vrnjacka Banja and Nis in 1999. He warns that this kind of warfare "is an even more morbid addition than uranium bombing, since uranium can be gathered and stored, while chemicals that were thrown into the atmosphere can be removed from it only through rain". According to prof. Stefanovic, the catastrophic effects of the "meteorological war" manifested themselves immediately after the bombardment and during the last year, when the temperature, like never before, oscillated around 40 degrees Celsius. Stefanovic further underlines that such chemical weather manipulation can cause damages that last for more than 100 years, depending on the chemicals used (e.g. silver bromide, liquid hydrocarbures). The appearance of "horizontal lightning, that never existed in our country" presents, according to Prof. Stefanovic, reliable indicator for the prediction that "great droughts can still be expected".

Competent authors will probably soon publish more data on "meteorological war" that will offer answers to possible additional questions of the sceptical readers: (1) was the new electro-magnetic and chemical technology for the weather modification really

applied already during the NATO aggression in the Balkans? (2) does NATO still use it in this and other regions? (3) why do not the US and other NATO member states' army forces use this technology, or do not use it more successfully, for prevention of the more elementary types of disasters at home?

Even the most sceptical readers, however, just on the basis of the available published data, should take seriously the dangers posed to the elementary conditions of planetary survival by the refusal of the US military-industrial complex leadership to reduce the emission of gasses causing the ozone- layer depletion, by their intensified use of the fuel exhaust by NATO planes, and by the exploitation “ of the ionosphere for Department of Defense purposes" as suggested in the report of Air University of the US Air Force, in order to dominate global communications and space. Like in the fairy tale of the magician's lazy and insufficiently knowledgeable apprentice, such "tailoring of natural weather patterns" to fit the particular interests of transnational financial capital, could get out of control, causing climatic and tectonic disturbances of catastrophic proportions that would endanger in the last resort the apprentices of meteorological warfare technology themselves.

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Vratusa(-Zunjic), Vera, 2000: "Power Shortages and DU Debris", D&SCRN Newsletter, No. 4, December, <http://www.anglia.ac.uk/geography/d&scrn>

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## **Syndrome of Uranium: From the Gulf to the Balkans**

### **A Book Review**

P. Karafotias

The book, *Syndrome of Uranium: From the Gulf to the Balkans (135pp)* was published in Greece by the “Hellenica Grammata” in Spring 2001 and consists of articles and reports by prominent Greek and foreign scientists dealing with nuclear weapons and particularly depleted uranium. The book constitutes a strong, well-documented case against the use of nuclear weapons and the use of depleted uranium.

The authors of the book are the following in alphabetical order:

- **Dr. Rosalie Bartel** (Canada) President of the International Institute for Public Health. She reviews the use of depleted uranium since 1943, reveals a secret US Armed Forces document of 1943 concerning the military use of radioactive material and cites several cases of use of depleted uranium, particularly in Kosovo. She also reviews UNEP’s related report. In another chapter, she deals with the repercussions of depleted uranium in the Gulf and Chernobyl. Finally, she deals with a case of depleted uranium in Oklahoma which had tragic effects on the population.
- **Mrs. Helen Caldicott** (MD, Australia), founder of the Association, Physicians for Social Responsibility”, and “Women’s Action for Nuclear Disarmament”. She deals with the military use of depleted uranium by the U.S. in 1945 and 1991 and its negative repercussions.
- **Mr. Ramsey Clark** (former US Attorney General) who speaks strongly in favor of the abolition of nuclear weapons and criticizes the US military leaders’ policy on that issue.
- **Mrs. Carol Picou**, former Master Sergeant in the US army, who served in the Gulf. She describes the tragic consequences of depleted uranium on the war veterans.
- **Mr. Victor Sidel** (MD, USA) co-founder of the Association “Physicians for Social Responsibility” who deals with the role of MDs in the abolition of nuclear weapons and more specifically with the role of PSR and IPPNW.

On the Greek side, the authors are the following:

- **Dr. Maria Arvanitis-Sotiropoulou**, MD, writer, President of the “Panhellenic Association for the Protection of the Environment against Nuclear Weapons”. She deals with nuclear tests and their tragic impact on health, and cites statistical figures from IAEA and ICRP.
- **Dr. Theofilos Geranios**, Associate Professor, University of Athens, who elaborates on depleted uranium-radioactive weapons and their impact on health.
- **Mr. Panagiotis Karafotias**, writer, former UN staff member, who deals with the UN efforts and achievements in the field of nuclear disarmament.
- **Mr. Michael Probonas**, Dr. of Nuclear Physics, and an Environmentalist, who deals with the “nuclear heritage of the Cold War”, and the nuclear tests.
- **Dr. Andreas Theofilou**, expert on Nuclear Physics at the Research Nuclear Center “Democritos”, who also elaborates on the dispersion and the repercussions of depleted uranium.

- Mr. **Panos Trigazis**, writer, economist, who stresses that there is no such thing as a humanitarian war.

The book was published in 1000 copies and was presented with big success in Athens and various other cities by distinguished political and other personalities.

P. Karafotias

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**XV ISA WORLD CONGRESS OF SOCIOLOGY, BRISBANE,  
AUSTRALIA, JULY 7-13, 2002**

**A Call for Papers by the ISA Research Committee on Sociology of  
Disasters (RC39)**

The Research Committee on Sociology of Disasters invites proposals for the following sessions:

1. Disaster-Globalization-Environment. Chair: to be confirmed. Send abstracts to Dr. Maureen Fordham. Anglia Polytechnic University, UK ([m.h.fordham@anglia.ac.uk](mailto:m.h.fordham@anglia.ac.uk)).
2. Deconstructing the Concept of Community in Disaster Management  
Chairs: Philip Buckle (RMIT University, Australia) [p-buckle@msn.com.au](mailto:p-buckle@msn.com.au) and  
Graham Marsh [graham.marsh@rmit.edu.au](mailto:graham.marsh@rmit.edu.au) (RMIT University, Australia)
3. Disaster and Development - Theoretical and Practical Linkages  
Chairs: Jesus Manuel Macias (CIESAS, Mexico) [macserr@att.net.mx](mailto:macserr@att.net.mx) and Maureen  
Fordham (Anglia Polytechnic University, UK) [m.h.fordham@anglia.ac.uk](mailto:m.h.fordham@anglia.ac.uk)
4. The Future of Emergency Management. Chairs: Andrew Coghlan and Joe Scanlon  
(Carleton University, Canada). [Andrew.Coghlan@defence.gov.au](mailto:Andrew.Coghlan@defence.gov.au) and  
[jscanlon@ccs.carleton.ca](mailto:jscanlon@ccs.carleton.ca)
5. Disasters, Inequity and Exclusion. Chair: Betty Hearn Morrow (Florida  
International University, USA), [morrowb@fiu.edu](mailto:morrowb@fiu.edu) .
6. European Integration, Sociocultural Change and Nativistic Movements  
Chair: Nikos Petropoulos (ERC/KEREA, Greece) [erc@otenet.gr](mailto:erc@otenet.gr)
7. Round Table/Author Meets their Critics session: Author: Ben Wisner, "At  
Risk: Natural Hazards, People's Vulnerability, and Disasters", Routledge  
(joint author of the forthcoming second edition with Piers Blaikie, Terry  
Cannon, Ian Davis, and Ken Westgate).
8. Business Meeting

Please send abstracts by e-mail to the chair of the appropriate session as soon as possible. Abstracts should be 200-300 words long and contain name(s), affiliation and contact details of the author(s). The deadline for the submission of abstracts is October 31, 2001. Notification of acceptance: 30 November 2001. Submission of full paper: 1 April 2002.

You can find the RC39 details here and links to the rest of the conference information. <http://www.ucm.es/info/isa/congress2002/rc/rc39.htm>

If you are not sure which session might be appropriate for a proposed submission, please contact the RC39 Program Coordinator, Dr Maureen Fordham, [m.h.fordham@anglia.ac.uk](mailto:m.h.fordham@anglia.ac.uk), telephone: 01223 363271 extension 2177, fax: 01223 417726

## **SOUTHCOM and Latin America: Structural and Organizational Changes Post-Mitch**

**Scott D. Welch**

Hurricane Mitch, striking several Latin American countries in November 1998, was one of the most destructive hurricanes in Latin American history. Mitch's destruction and attendant after-effects necessitated a United States strategic response from a U.S. military regional command -- U.S. Southern Command (SOUTHCOM). This response was due to 1) previous U.S. military disaster relief operations in the region and, 2) SOUTHCOM's employment of disaster relief as a critical instrument, within the framework of the command's Theater Engagement plans, to promote U.S. interests and regional goodwill.

The United States government and SOUTHCOM are currently examining lessons identified and derived from Hurricane Mitch, as are Latin American countries and non-governmental relief institutions. Consequently, these entities (to various degrees) are attempting to strengthen, through pre-disaster activities and engagement strategies, the operational effectiveness of various Central American governments and institutions to respond to future natural disasters in the Central American region. **This is the subject matter of the research.**

The research will first develop and identify a pre-Hurricane Mitch disaster response **capability description** for SOUTHCOM and certain Latin American countries (primarily Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras). The research would then identify changes made in key emergency management and disaster response **capabilities** and **relationships** by these Central American countries and SOUTHCOM post-Hurricane Mitch. The research's focus would then center on an assessment of the **effectiveness** of current communication and coordination **between** these **Central American governments** (and supporting non-governmental entities) **and SOUTHCOM** in planning for future major natural disasters (and operational responses) in Central America.

The research will be conducted in Washington D.C, Miami and in Latin America. The research will aim to gather primary documents and conduct on-site interviews. These research activities will be conducted at SOUTHCOM, the U.S. Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance, the Pentagon, and the U.S. State Department. The research will also be supported by on-site interviews and professional interactions in the Latin American region.

The results of this research will hopefully lead to a better understanding of SOUTHCOM's cooperative plans and capabilities with various Latin American institutions in order to respond to future natural disasters in Central America.

**Key Words and Phrases:** Organizational change, U.S. military, disaster relief, Central America, hurricanes, SOUTHCOM, Honduras, Guatemala, El Salvador, Theater Engagement, U.S. military operations other than war, Hurricane Mitch, El Salvador earthquakes (2001).

## **The Parnitha Project: A Progress Report and a Call for Best Practice Materials**

**N. Petropoulos**

Progress is being made in the implementation of the Project, “The Parnitha Earthquake: Self-Evaluation and Proposals of Groups for the Organization of Civil Protection” which was awarded to the Emergencies Research Center by the Earthquake Planning and Protection Organization. We have completed the bibliographic review and also the determination of the various samples.

During the months of September and October (two years after the EQ struck the Athens area), we plan to do the field work. Interviews and/or questionnaires will be administered to the following groups: Emergency managers (N = 75), municipal administrators (N = 100), Scientists (Seismologists, geologists, geophysicists, civil engineers, sociologists, psychiatrists) (N=50-75), domestic rescue workers (N =120), foreign rescue teams (N=10), and journalists (N=25-50).

The aim of the research project is to study the management of the EQ emergency in all its aspects and phases (e.g. immediate response, rescue operations, distribution of relief, management of aftershock public information, restoration of services, psychosocial impact on rescue workers, temporary and long-term sheltering, long-term reconstruction, mitigation proposals etc.).

Besides the field data, the research team will also base its final report on best practice materials collected from other countries. In this sense, we would like to be apprised about the existence and/or receive best practice materials, which have been tried and found effective and efficient, regarding emergency plans on all levels of social organization (e.g. organizational, city, country, state, region, federal system), codes of conduct for earth scientists and /or journalists with regard to transmission of EQ relevant information during the crisis, procedures for emergency warning, public information campaigns, insurance systems for mass emergencies, relief distribution systems, SOP for Emergency Operation Centers, the management of foreign rescue missions, reconstruction and mitigation planning etc.).

These materials may be sent to the Emergency Research Center, Varvogli 7, Athens, 11361, Greece, FAX: 301-8256-266 and e-mail: [erc@otenet.gr](mailto:erc@otenet.gr) ).