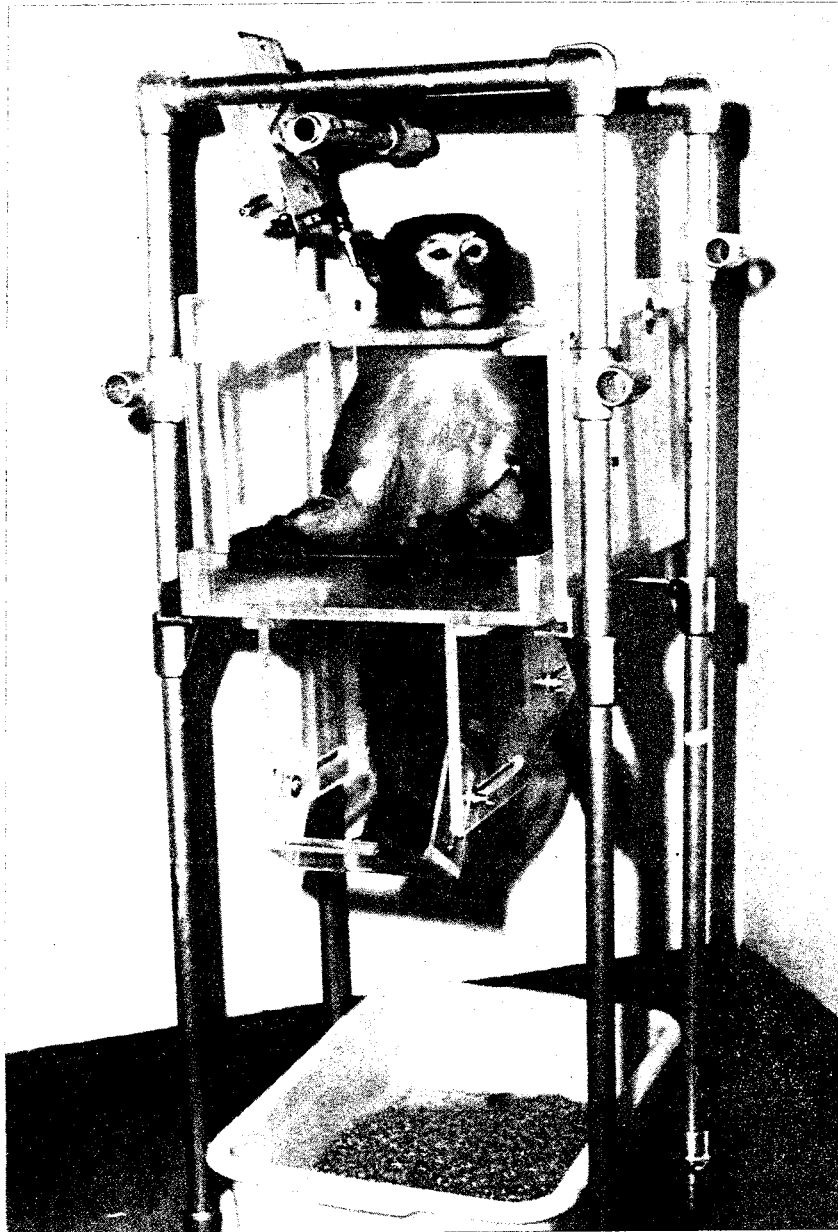


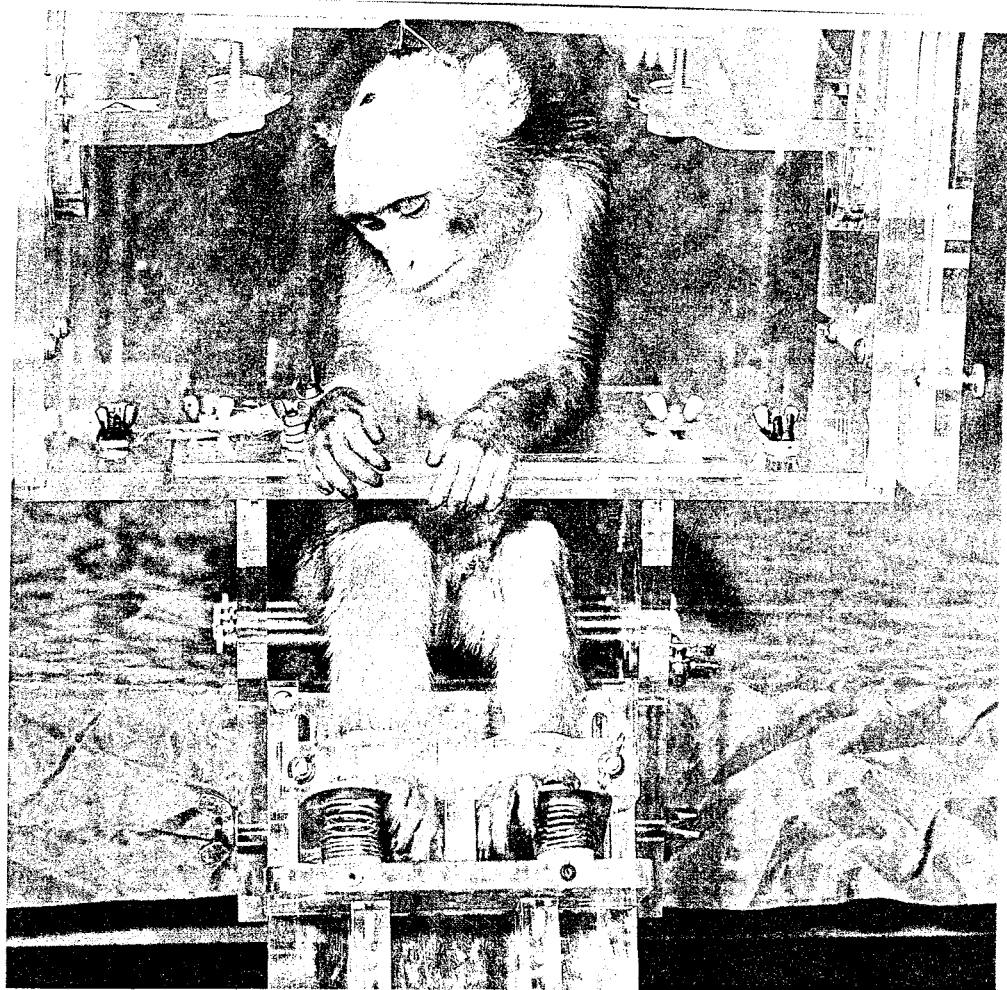
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MONKEYS GO TO WAR



MAINSTREAM/Winter 1981



MONKEYS GO TO WAR

by Shirley McGreal *Co-Chairwoman of the International Primate Protection League (IPPL)*

Thousands of monkeys have died in experiments designed to help prepare the United States for World War III. The animals, brought in from countries like India, Bangladesh, Malaysia, Indonesia, Kenya and Bolivia, have been used to study the effects of atomic blast and fallout, the effects of the radiation that a neutron bomb would produce, the effects of beams on the human body, and the toxicity of various chemical warfare agents.

Monkeys have been used in this type of experimentation because of their overall physiological and psychological resemblance to humans.

The first use of monkeys in military radiation experiments appears to have occurred in 1957-58. Dr. J.C. Pickering of the School of Aerospace Medicine, Brooks Air Force Base, San Antonio, Texas, informed me in the

course of my August 1979 visit to the facility that monkeys were placed at atomic test sites in 1957-58, some as part of the Operation PLUMBBOB test series. Ten tubes, each containing eight monkeys, would be placed at varying distances from Ground Zero; some of the monkeys in the outer tubes survived, and were subsequently transferred to the Yerkes Primate Center, Atlanta, Georgia, where many have since developed various cancers.

The School of Aerospace Medicine has continued to perform radiation experiments on monkeys to the present day. Numbers of monkeys involved are unclear, but it is known that the School has killed over 4000 monkeys, although no breakdown of the deaths has been published. Some of the studies involved generalized radiation; others involved localized radiation. Some of the most painful experiments were performed by the

Oculothermal Burns Section. A medical doctor who used to be involved in these experiments once contacted the International Primate Protection League to explain how cruel — and useless — these experiments were. The actual irradiation of the eyes did not hurt; it took 2 weeks for the monkeys' agony to start. Acute irritation and discomfort would last for several months. Eventually, cataracts and blindness would result.

Most of the radiation experiments at the School of Aerospace Medicine were concerned with the study of the effects of radiation on human performance, including that of irradiated, dying pilots. Monkeys would be taught to fly "Primate Equilibrium Platforms" to determine how an irradiated pilot would be able to fly a plane. After training, the monkey would be irradiated and tested for his ability to keep his "plane" level, while suffering from radiation sickness.

In February 1979, Dr. Donald Barnes, a researcher who had lost his position at the Base for questioning the necessity of a projected monkey experiment, contacted the International Primate Protection League. His statement to IPPL revealed the full horror of the life of the "military monkeys." Extracts follow:

I can no longer perform experiments with animals doomed, by virtue of their participation in such experiments, to a very early death, if not to pain and suffering, during the final weeks and months of their existence. From 1966 to mid-1978, I performed innumerable experiments with Rhesus monkeys, and 2 or 3 such experiments with baboons. In each experiment, 6 to 12 subjects were trained by the use of electric shock to perform a task of human design... the shock generators deliver at least 50 ma at 1200 volts. I couldn't guess the number of times I've seen these units used at full power to punish a slow learner: well into the thousands... Frustration leads to self-destructive behaviors, e.g., biting hunks of meat from an arm or hand.

Barnes described the gruesome restraint devices used to hold the animals still for their "training sessions."

The restraint devices are barbaric in themselves: e.g., metal couches with metal neck, belly, and ankle restraints. As the animal struggles

to free itself, it often loses its teeth to the neck-bar, gains abrasions on the abdomen (often wearing entirely through the abdominal wall) or so severely chafes its ankles that they bleed and become infected.

The worst part of his duties was, for Barnes, the death-watch on the dying irradiated monkeys:

In years past, I was ordered to keep a death watch on these irradiated monkeys, which meant, simply, to see what happened until they died of radiation injury. Do you have any idea how miserable it is to die from radiation injury? I do, I've seen so many monkeys go through it.

Barnes saw the experiments as basically useless and a waste of money:

As I became familiar with the use of the data gained from these experiments, I discovered that the data was not used to help Man in the struggle against his environment. The data was, and is, used to generate more worthless experiments, thereby killing and crippling more animals.

Other experiments at the School of Aerospace Medicine have included administration of laser beam damage to monkeys' eyes, and use of monkeys to study the effects of possible antidotes to chemical warfare agents.

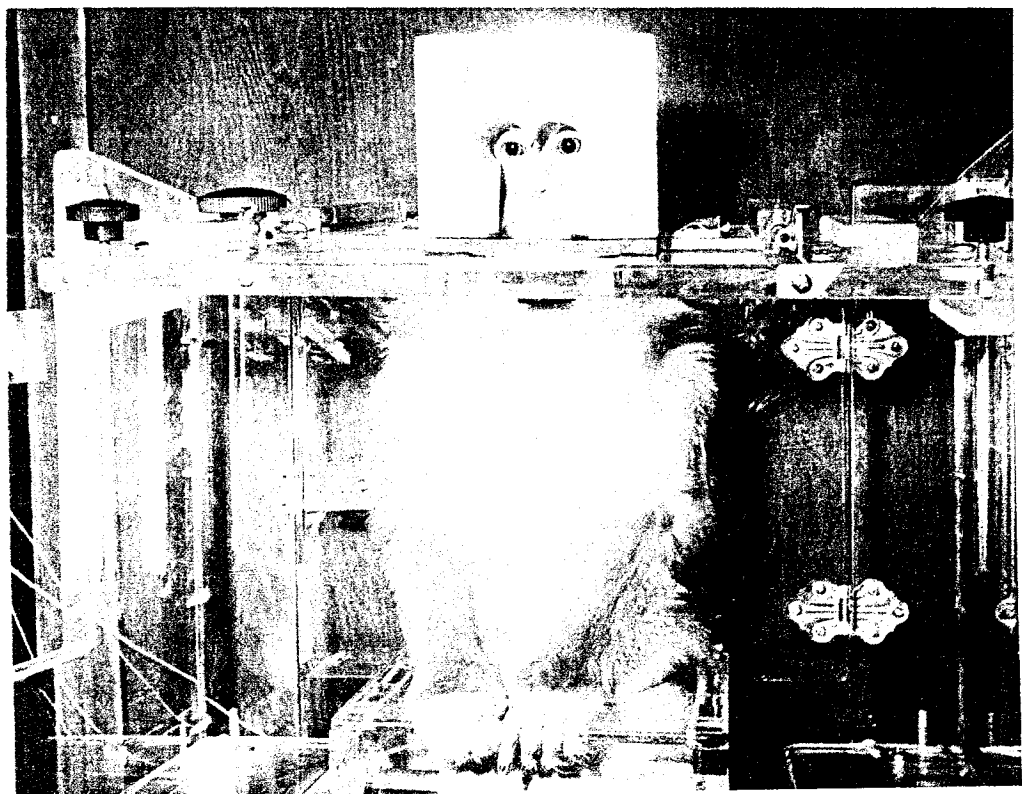
The School claims that it does not actually expose monkeys to chemical agents. However, exposure is known to occur at the Chemical Systems Laboratory in Aberdeen, Maryland. The laboratory is part of the U.S. Army Armament Research and Development Command. The International Primate Protection League has used the Freedom of Information Act to learn more about these experiments, but only gained limited information. Basically, two types of agents are tested on monkeys: incapacitants or "knockdown agents;" and lethal agents such as the nerve gas SOMAN, an organophosphate or "human insecticide." The papers obtained by IPPL included references to an agent called HS-6 and a study called "Project Cyanide." The pain suffered by the monkeys used at the Chemical Systems Laboratory must be unbearable. Recently, the CBS program "Sixty Minutes" included an episode about chemical warfare, and a scientist from the Chemical Systems Laboratory was interviewed. Mike Wallace did not even mention the

monkey experiments on "Sixty Minutes," and IPPL's statement on the subject for the "Viewers' Opinion" segment the following week was not used. It might be that film of monkeys dying agonizing deaths might not have been in keeping with the segment's apparent bias toward development of chemical warfare agents.

The Armed Forces Radiobiology Research Institute (AFRRI) in Bethesda, Maryland, specializes in

high-dosage radiation studies and has killed over 2000 monkeys in its experiments since 1965. AFRRI monkeys have received massive doses. No therapy is ever attempted on them, as it would be useless. The point of the experiments is the death-watch. In a typical experiment, monkeys would be taught to run in a treadwheel. A monkey could avoid shock only by continuing to run. Once a monkey had learned to run for several hours (alternating 10 minutes

Page 20: Dejected Rhesus monkey sits in restraint chair. Top: multiple wounds are evident. Rhesus monkey flying "Primate Equilibrium Platform." Postirradiation vomit runs over platform at right. Bottom: monkey in eye-burn experiment: head is held rigid to assure correct burn.



of running with 5 minutes of rest), he would be irradiated, and put back in the treadwheel, to run his way into eternity. A watching psychologist would count the number and duration of each monkey's "incapacitations" (periods during which the hapless monkey would crumple into a vomiting mass of misery on the floor of the treadwheel, accepting repeated shocks rather than trying to continue running for his Human Masters).

I visited AFRRRI in December 1978. The dignity of the pathetic monkeys contrasted with the mentality of the people involved in inflicting such abuse on their bodies. One "veterinarian" had a photo of his children on his desk — but had no qualms about the agony he inflicted on his monkey "children."

Ironically, the suffering of the military monkeys has saved other monkeys' lives. India and Bangladesh

both banned export of monkeys for ANY experimentation as a result of public and government outrage at the suffering inflicted on the monkeys they had exported to the United States. Malaysia has also restricted exports. In addition, a U.S.-sponsored resolution before the World Health Assembly calling on monkey habitat countries to export animals to Western research facilities, was withdrawn when African nations threatened to denounce military experimentation on monkeys on the World Health Assembly floor.

If you're one of those people who had trouble reading this article or looking at the pictures, remember that your pain is nothing compared to what these innocent primates snatched from their homelands have suffered — so that the human race can "perfect" methods of warfare which may put an end to all of us . . . and the

monkeys . . . and all other life on earth.

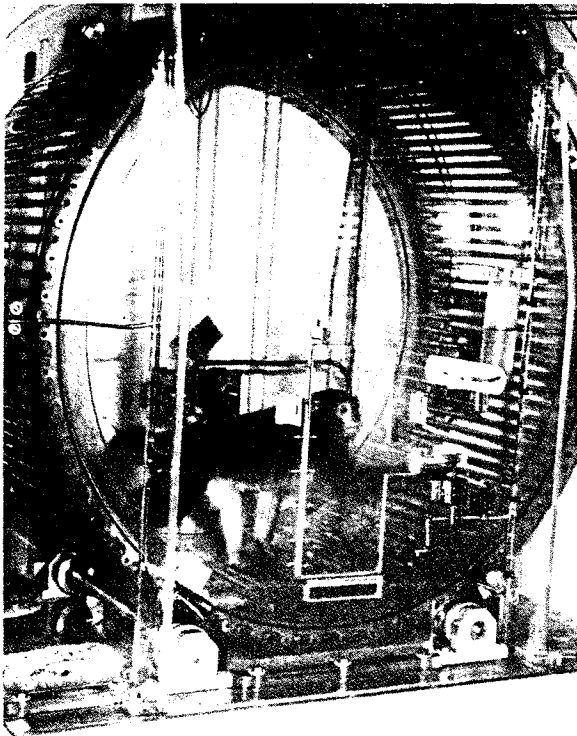
What You Can Do

1) Write to the Secretary of Defense, Washington, D.C. 20301, asking that the use of primates in military experiments be stopped.

2) Write a letter to Mrs. Gandhi, Prime Minister's Office, New Delhi, India, expressing your appreciation for the Indian ban on export of primates and asking that it be maintained.

3) Write a similar letter to Major-General Ziaur Rahman, President of Bangladesh, Ramna, Bangladesh, asking that Bangladesh continue its primate export ban.

4) The International Primate Protection League is leading the opposition to the use of monkeys in military experimentation. Interested people can contact us at PO Drawer X, Summerville, SC 29483.

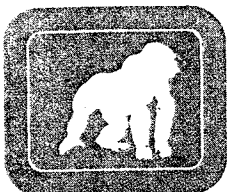


Front cover: Monkey in restraint chair.

Left: Monkey in treadwheel for neutron bomb tests.

Photos courtesy of Armed Forces Radiobiology Research Institute.

Above: Rhesus monkey whose eyes were burned in radiation experiments. Courtesy of International Primate Protection League.



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