

WRITTEN QUESTION P-4503/05

by Lilli Gruber (PSE)

to the Commission

Subject: Use of white phosphorous weapons in Falluja in 2004

There have been various media reports - the first of them coming from the Italian television channel RaiNews24 and some of them backed up by footage and by statements by US soldiers - of chemical agents such as white phosphorous being used by the US army in the battle for Falluja in November 2004. The official reaction from the United States sparked alarm in the media around the world, including the US, protests from the UN and the opening of an inquiry in Bagdad. During the debate on the post-referendum situation in Iraq held by Parliament in Strasbourg on 16 November 2005, a number of Members sought to draw attention to the issue, but the Commission representative chose not to go into the matter.

Is the Commission aware of these reports and would it agree that any use of white phosphorous as a weapon against civilians should be roundly condemned?

Would it agree that it should help to shed full light on the matter with a view to preventing the Iraqi population's already fragile confidence in the international community from being further damaged?

Does it consider that a United Nations commission of inquiry should be set up in order to establish the truth in this matter?

What approaches does it intend to make to the United States with a view to ensuring that its own commitment to providing economic and other support for the reconstruction and democratisation process in Iraq is not seriously undermined by this and any other breach of international law and international agreements in this area?