



POSTSECONDARY LESSON PLAN

WAR AND THE NATURAL WORLD

Discussion questions for “Scarred Lands and Wounded Lives: The Environmental Footprint of War” by Alice and Lincoln Day and related sources.

1. What is the authors’ main thesis in “Scarred Lands and Wounded Lives”?



White phosphorus in use in the Gaza strip (2008)

2. Name three of the supporting facts or examples which they use to prove their thesis.

3. Name three experts whom they quote in support their argument. Which did you find most convincing?

4. Read the poem by Robert Frost below. What is the point or theme of this poem? How does Frost use images to make his point? What is the double meaning of its title?

Range-Finding

*The battle rent a cobweb diamond-strung
And cut a flower beside a ground bird's nest
Before it stained a single human breast.
The stricken flower bent double and so hung.
And still the bird revisited her young.
A butterfly its fall had dispossessed
A moment sought in air his flower of rest,
Then lightly stooped to it and fluttering clung.*

*On the bare upland pasture there had spread
O'ernight 'twixt mullein stalks a wheel of thread
And straining cables wet with silver dew.
A sudden passing bullet shook it dry.
The indwelling spider ran to greet the fly,
But finding nothing, sullenly withdrew.*

5. What do the authors say the future holds? Are there more threats or opportunities regarding the legacy of war in the natural world?

6. Read Crispin Tickell's review of *Mao's War against Nature* here: www.crispintickell.com. How would this example fit in with the Days' thesis? Is it the same as the other examples they give,

or different? When did this “war” take place? Whose idea was it? Does it compare with anything that happened in America?

7. Science and warfare often intersect in curious ways. Please read this short article about the brilliant chemist Fritz Haber, whose work took an unexpected turn: www.chemheritage.org. Why did Haber’s wife commit suicide? Why did Haber die “a broken man”? What would Haber think about the use of chemicals in combat today?

8. A new war is on the horizon. Iran is building its nuclear arsenal and is reluctant to give it up, while Western nations suspect Iran will construct and use a nuclear weapon. What is the potential risk of “scarred lands and wounded lives” and damage to the ecology from a war with Iran? Who will bear the costs? How can such a war be averted? Is there any way?
