

Bio Terror Bible

EXPOSING THE COMING BIO-TERROR PANDEMIC

BIO TERROR BIBLE.COM: The following state/government sponsored bio-terror operations (attacks) occurred in Columbia and other nations around the world from 2000 until an unknown date. The operations in question used "[Agent Green](#)", a deadly [herbicidal bio-weapon](#) that was first used in the Vietnam War. The historical record of state sponsored bio-terror is littered with unprovoked attacks on unsuspecting soldiers and citizens alike. The fact that state sponsored bio-terror tests (attacks) exist in mass confirms not only that government is the serial bio-terrorist, but that it will strike again in the near future.

Currently, Israel is the only modern nation that has **not signed** the 1972 [Biological Weapons Convention](#) (refusal to engage in offensive biological warfare, stockpiling, and use of biological weapons). Also, Israel is the only modern nation that has **signed but not ratified** the 1993 [Chemical Weapons Convention](#) (refusal to produce, stockpile and use chemical weapons). Should the world suffer a major bio-terror attack or pandemic, Israel will be the #1 suspect.

Access Bio-Terror Agent Green [here](#)

Title: Report Calls On The UN Biodiversity Convention To Stop Dangerous US Fungus Experiments

Date: May 2, 2000

Source: [Sunshine Project](#)

Abstract: In a detailed report released today, the Sunshine Project, a new international non-profit dedicated to exposing abuses of biotechnology, calls on the upcoming Nairobi meeting of the UN Biodiversity Convention to halt the USA's dangerous experiments with fungi designed to kill narcotic crops.

TARGETED AT DEVELOPING COUNTRIES OF ASIA AND THE AMERICAS

Intended to kill opium poppy, coca, and cannabis plants, the microbes present risks to human health and biodiversity. There is imminent danger that a highly infectious fungus will be deliberately released in Andean and Amazonian centres of diversity. The US-backed fungi have already been used experimentally on opium poppy and cannabis in the US and in Central Asia.

Fungus targets include hundreds of thousands of cultivated hectares in narcotic crop-producing countries in South, Southeast, and Central Asia, along with Mexico, Central, and South American countries. Thirty years after the heavy use of toxic herbicides (Agent Orange) in the Vietnam War, the USA is planning the use of a biological agent ("Agent Green") in the Drug War.

ENVIRONMENTALLY UNSOUND - THREAT TO ENDANGERED SPECIES

The strains of the fungi *Fusarium oxysporum* and *Pleospora papveraceae* might infect and kill plants other than coca, poppy, and cannabis in ecologically sensitive areas of Asia and the Americas.

US Department of Agriculture researchers have never tested the host range of Agent Green on plant species native to target countries, including Colombia, which is currently number one on the USA's list of places to use the fungi. Only a limited range of commercial crops were tested, which is little indication of how the fungi will behave in the varied and poorly-understood real-world ecologies where they might be used.

"The USA is playing roulette with irreplaceable biological diversity" says Susana Pimiento Chamorro, a Colombian lawyer with the Sunshine Project. "In Colombia, four close relatives of coca are already listed as endangered. Agent Green might be the last step to their extinction."

It is well known that some strains of *F. oxysporum* can infect many different plants, even distantly related species. To avoid disturbing delicate ecosystems in the Amazon, rural Southeast Asia, and the Andes, the fungi must not be released.

One of the most highly prized butterflies in the world, the Agrias (*Agrias* sp.) depends on coca's wild relatives in Amazonian rainforest. Plants in the coca genus are the butterfly's host plant, the only place where young larvae feed and mature. A beautiful fast flyer listed as endangered in Brazil, one of Agrias' centres of speciation is the Upper Putumayo River region, precisely where the US intends to apply the heaviest doses of the coca-killing fungus. If the fungus attacks wild coca relatives, it will ultimately hurt the Agrias butterfly.

Even more disturbing is the fact that strains of *Fusarium oxysporum* are highly toxic to animals and humans. Birds feeding on plant seeds are endangered, and consumption of the coca leaves - which is legal in Peru and Bolivia - might pose a health threat. "*Fusaria can produce mycotoxins that are deadly enough to be considered weapons of war and are listed as biological agents in the draft Protocol to the Biological and Toxic Weapons Convention,*" says Sunshine Project biologist Dr. Jan Van Aken, "*US researchers have not tested Agent Green's production of these deadly mycotoxins.*"

Once released into the environment, the deadly fungus cannot be recalled. Indeed, the coca fungus appears to have escaped scientists' grasp when it jumped into control plots during field tests in Hawaii.

REJECTED IN THE USA ... BUT PROMOTED ABROAD

The fungus has been clearly rejected in the USA, the world's number one producer of illicit cannabis. Last year, the Florida Environmental Protection Agency emphatically opposed and halted a proposal to use *Fusaria*. According to the Agency's director: "It is difficult, if not impossible to control the spread of *Fusarium* species. The mutated fungi can cause disease in large number of crops... *Fusarium* species are more active in warm soils and can stay resident in the soil for years."

Senior US officials have failed to obtain the financial backing of other governments for the plan. Except for modest support from the UK for the poppy killer, no other donor country has financially backed the idea. But this has not stopped the USA's drug warriors from pressuring Asian and South American countries. Through the offices of the UN Drug Control Programme (UNDCP), pressure is being put on Colombia especially, which is being asked to sign a field testing contract. Ironically, it was under Colombian leadership that the recent Biosafety Protocol negotiations were successfully concluded, and Colombia's Environment Minister is now President of the high-level UN Commission on Sustainable Development.

FUNGUS MOVEMENT CAN LEAD TO INNOCENT VICTIMS

According to the Sunshine Project's Edward Hammond, "*An obvious and flagrant flaw in the fungal eradication plan is that microbes pay no attention to passport and visa requirements. The fungus can spread without regard to political borders, potentially attacking legal crops and countries that do not agree to its use.*"

There are many potential victims. Canadian industrial hemp growers have expressed concern about US plans. Fungus applications in coca growing areas in southern Colombia, for example, might lead to infections in Ecuador, Brazil, or Peru (a legal coca producer). Use in Central and South Asia, for example Afghanistan, Pakistan, or Turkmenistan, could lead to losses for bordering India which, under a strict licensing system, produces about half the world's legal pharmaceutical opiates. In Southeast Asia, a variety of disastrous scenarios can be envisioned, where opium poppy areas for example in Burma border on Laos, Thailand and China, which produces opiates for domestic pharmaceutical use.

If developing country production of legal pharmaceutical opiates is damaged by fungus spread, industrialized producers like Australia - which has already planted extra-potent genetically engineered opium poppy - could increase market share.

THREATENS TRADITIONAL USE

The rights of indigenous people who cultivate the target crops for traditional, non-drug uses are also endangered. In South Asia, poppies are used in traditional medicine and plant material is used as fodder. Coca has been used for over a millennium in traditional medicine from Colombia to Argentina. Under the Biodiversity Convention indigenous peoples are afforded rights to their biodiversity - including medicinal plants. Indigenous people who live close to where fungus is applied may become innocent Drug War victims.

GENETIC ENGINEERING POSSIBLE

The United States says that the fungus varieties it wants to use in developing countries are not genetically-engineered. But it has created genetically-modified strains in the laboratory. US scientists have also cloned virulent genes from related fungi (Fusarium strains that attack potatoes) with the possible intent of increasing the kill rate of anti-drug fungi through biotechnology. A consequence of permitting testing and use of the current fungi will be future pressure for countries to allow "enhanced" Living modified organisms (LMOs) fungi.

ACTION BY THE BIODIVERSITY CONVENTION IS URGENTLY NEEDED

Governments have a legitimate need to control narcotic crops; but doing so through the use of "Agent Green" microbes is profoundly misguided and sets an alarming precedent. If governments are idle while microbial agents are developed to attack narcotic crops, how will they protect biodiversity if microbes are developed to kill other unpopular and regulated crops, like tobacco, kava, betel nut palm, peyote, ayahuasca, or hops?

The Sunshine Project, which sent its report to 500 government delegates from 100 countries, is suggesting several options for government action during the May 15-26 Conference of the Parties to the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) in Nairobi. Delegates should adopt a resolution calling for a halt of the US program and condemning the use of any microbe for the purpose of eradicating cultivated crops. Such a resolution is not a statement on drug policy; but instead a reiteration of fundamental objectives of the Convention. The CBD cannot remain quiet while agents are developed by a non-party to deliberately obliterate biodiversity, especially plants with legitimate medicinal and traditional uses.

The CBD may also consider studying the fungus under its Agriculture Program, because of the fungi's impacts on pollinators and soil diversity - both specific responsibilities of the Convention. Governments may also request the CBD Executive Secretary to urgently convey the CBD's views to the United Nations Drug Control Programme (UNDCP), which has been - sometimes reluctantly - helping implementation of the US program.

About The Sunshine Project

The Sunshine Project is an international non-profit organization dedicated to bringing information to light on harmful abuses of biotechnology. The Project has expert staff with training in law, policy, and biology with lengthy experience on policy issues. The Project has offices in Hamburg, Germany and Seattle, USA. For more information, visit our website (<http://www.sunshine-project.org>) or contact us by telephone or e-mail.

A copy of the Sunshine Project's report on Agent Green is available at our website or on request ([Sunshine Project, 2000](#)).

Title: Another Agent Green: Poppy Killing Viruses Investigated By USA: Government Misses Legal Deadline To Release Information

Date: May 12, 2000

Source: [Sunshine Project](#)

Abstract: Research by the United States Government on microbes designed to kill narcotic crops extends to pathogenic plant viruses. A US Department of Agriculture (USDA) team, headed by a plant pathologist at a Fort Detrick, Maryland facility, is experimenting with potyviruses to kill the narcotic crop opium poppy.

This work is in addition to other experiments conducted by USDA with fungal pathogens intended to kill illicit coca, poppy, and cannabis crops in the developing world. The pathogens have been dubbed "Agent Green" by the Sunshine Project in reference to the USA's use of defoliants in Southeast Asia in the 1960s and 70s. (Please see The Sunshine Project's press release of 2 May at www.sunshine-project.org.)

The Sunshine Project learned of the virus work last month. While analyzing USDA's scientific publications on Agent Green fungi, Project biologist Dr. Jan Van Aken discovered a description of the virus experiments on a US Army website. Within 24 hours, on April 13th, the Project's US office filed for release of documents under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). The legal deadline for response passed yesterday (11 May) without any reply. Previous responses from same office, the USDA's Agricultural Research Service (ARS), met legal deadlines.

"We do not know if this is the result of an overworked staff or due to other concerns," says Edward Hammond of the Sunshine Project, "It certainly works to the USA's advantage to not release any information prior to Monday's start of the important meeting of the United Nations Biodiversity Convention in Nairobi."

In Nairobi, the Sunshine Project's Susana Pimiento, a Colombian attorney, said "The Project had hoped to present important details about the virus experiments to the 130 or more governments coming to Nairobi. We have plenty to tell delegates already; but it is very disappointing that the US has not responded to our request in accordance with its own laws. This lack of transparency underscores the need for international action."

The Sunshine Project is very disconcerted to note unexplained changes in the US Army website since its Freedom of Information request was filed. The Project's archive of the web page, dated 12 April, includes a description of the potyvirus work conducted by a USDA research team headed by Dr. Vernon Damsteegt. The web address, however, has been subsequently (after April 12) edited to delete reference to the poppy-killing research and altered to incorrectly read "Last update April 6 2000".

The critical questions asked by the Sunshine Project in its FOIA request remain unanswered. One of the most important has to do with the history of a poppy-killing potyvirus strain called D-437.

Now a research lab shared by USDA, the US Army, and the US National Institutes of Health, Fort Detrick was a US military center for offensive biological warfare research before President Richard Nixon stopped the US program in 1969. According to USDA, before being recently thawed out, D-437 had been frozen in storage at Fort Detrick since that same year. Prior to 1969 Dr. Damsteegt worked at Fort Detrick on plant diseases for the US Army's Biolab. He has since worked for USDA on controlling the spread of foreign plant diseases in the US.

"The Sunshine Project was very disturbed at what appeared to be a possible connection between biological warfare research of the 1960s and the USDA's program to develop narcotic crop pathogens in 2000." says Edward Hammond, "We thought it must be some incredible coincidence. We are increasingly perplexed at why USDA has not rushed to clear up such potentially damaging confusion."

According to The Sunshine Project's Susana Pimiento: "Because of the USDA's failure to respond, it is premature to ask the Conference of the Parties in Nairobi to act on USDA's virus program; but there is more than enough evidence of dangers to biodiversity, traditional use, and human health for the Parties to be able to condemn the Agent Green work on crop-killing fungi."

Van Aken adds, "The Project will vigorously follow up on the virus research and report on our work as soon as possible" ([Sunshine Project, 2000](#)).

Title: Biological Agents In The Drug War: Colombian Response To US Pressure For Biological Drug Eradication Is Inadequate; UN Role Questioned

Date: July 7, 2000

Source: [Sunshine Project](#)

Abstract: According to press reports, yesterday Colombia agreed to test biological means of drug eradication. In a deal to free up US \$1.3 billion in mainly military aid, Colombia is reported to have agreed to search for biological agents to eradicate coca; but appears to have rejected field tests of a fungus developed by the USA. Initially, the USA had proposed to release *Fusarium oxysporum*, a microbial agent that kills coca crops, into the Colombian environment for testing purposes. The government of Colombia rejected this idea and replied with a counterproposal, which has formed an apparent basis of yesterday's decision.

The Sunshine Project has obtained a recent version of the Colombian document and has concluded that the still-secret proposal, mentioned in recent reports by AP, Reuters, the New York Times and Miami Herald, is currently insufficient to stop US deployment of biological weapons in the Drug War.

According to Susana Pimiento, a Colombian attorney with the Sunshine Project, "The counterproposal is heavily weighted towards satisfying US pressure, not Colombian needs, and it cannot be supported in its current form. Despite confusing statements from the US State Department, we are encouraged that press reports and the document itself appear to indicate that plans to immediately field test the dangerous US-developed agents have been stopped. But this counterproposal would only result in a delay, not a prohibition, on the use of biological warfare agents in Colombia."

Pimiento says "We are supportive of ecologically-sound ways to reduce coca cultivation. The Colombian Government should modify its plan to ensure civil society and indigenous peoples' participation, rule out biological eradication agents, and focus on environmentally-sound manners to enhance the profitability of legal alternatives to coca."

Of special concern in the plan is the lack of participation. It does not adequately involve civil society and indigenous people. Dr. Tomas Leon, a Colombian scientist says "There must be complete transparency and full participation in the search for safe and ecologically sound ways to reduce coca cultivation. We should not move any further with this proposal until civil society is fully consulted and involved."

Sunshine Project's Susana Pimiento concurs, saying, "Until the shortcomings are fixed, the door remains unlocked to the US plan to use the conflict in Colombia as a live-fire proving ground for creating of crop killing technology."

The Sunshine Project's copy of the counterproposal document is a 20 page near-final draft recently circulated among Colombian and foreign government officials. The counterproposal project is to be implemented by two prominent semi-governmental research institutions and is largely aimed at identifying and developing alternatives for the protection of biodiversity in Amazon areas impacted by coca cultivation and eradication. But one component that has nothing to do with protection of biodiversity has been introduced. This component is aimed at the identification, testing, and development of "environmentally-safe biological mechanisms" for eradication of coca and responds to US pressure to test mycoherbicides.

Poking A Hole Into The Biological Weapons Convention

"The US is opening a Pandora's box here. The critical principle is that governments should not develop biological agents to kill cultivated crops. Others will see this work as license to develop ways to kill crops they don't like. It is an invitation for countries opposed to alcoholic beverages to develop biological agents to attack grapes and hops", says the Sunshine Project's Jan Van Aken in Hamburg.

UN Role Questioned

A concern is the continued role of the Vienna-based United Nations Drug Control Program (UNDCP), which is lobbying Colombia to agree to US plans and serving as a multilateral intermediary for the project. According to Hammond "UNDCP has overstepped its bounds. The US and Colombian governments are internally split on use of biological agents. If even the major ministries of the two principals are deeply divided, why is UNDCP playing the role of the USA's junior assistant, receiving the money, drafting agreements, and pushing and prodding Colombia to do what the US says?"

The questionable role of UNDCP in this issue became clear in a cable from US Secretary of State, Madeleine Albright, from last year, where she "urge(d) UNDCP to solicit funds from other governments, in order to avoid a perception that this is solely a USG initiative."

Native Nonsense

Says the Sunshine Project's Edward Hammond, "There is a lot of nonsense coming from US officials that if fusaria occur naturally in coca in Colombia, then massive spraying of virulent types can be justified. But many biological weapons are 'natural' toxins and diseases used in an unnatural way. The massive multiplication and spreading even of native pathogens can cause new epidemics, with unforeseen consequences for the environment and human health. Ebola is endemic in Africa, but is this an argument to produce it by the ton and saturate the countryside from airplanes?"

The Sunshine Project and CSOs are urging an overhaul of the plan, including:

1. Placing emphasis on characterization of Amazonian biodiversity. Over 90% of the species of the Colombian Amazon are uncharacterized. Soil microbes are an almost complete mystery. An ecologically-sound plan to reduce coca cultivation must include a far better understanding of these ecosystems.
2. Involving indigenous people and farming communities in all levels and components of the project. They are most directly affected and understand the fragile ecosystems best. It will be impossible to research to reduce the environment impact of coca cultivation without farmers and indigenous peoples organizations in a lead role.
3. Biosafety issues must be clarified. The proposal does not rule out use of genetically-modified organisms or clearly ascribe liability in its "environmentally-safe biological mechanisms" component.
4. No rationale is provided for studying biological mechanisms in the first place. The safety and effectiveness of chemical eradication is already highly questionable. Colombia should reconsider using aerial fumigation at all, rather than moving from a dangerous chemical system to a biological approach that could threaten ecosystems.
5. Lack of international partners. A broad range of expertise exists nationally and internationally which might assist the program; but which has not been included. UNDCP is a small UN organization with a narrow focus, while UN agriculture, health and environment groups have important roles to play as principals in this research.
6. Need to involve neighboring countries. The geography of the Amazon basin and coca cultivation are unavoidable. This research on Colombia's coca growing regions has potential impacts in Ecuador, Peru, Venezuela and Brazil. Issues of liability and tranboundary movement of species must be thought through. Other Andean countries, including Bolivia, may even be interested in looking at methods for crop substitution programs that can help small farmers achieve profitability with non-narcotic crops. Colombia could take the initiative of suggesting the program be examined regionally, through the Andean Community ([Sunshine Project, 2000](#)).

Title: Colombia's Agent Green Counterproposal Released

Date: July 18, 2000

Source: [Sunshine Project](#)

Abstract: -To clarify contradictory and confusing press reports surrounding the proposed use of biological weapons in Colombia, the Sunshine Project is making available on its website the text of the Colombian Environment Ministry's diplomatic response to the USA's bid to use a *Fusarium oxysporum* biological weapon to kill Colombia's illicit coca crop.

The Project will seek the intervention of United Nations agencies to prevent biological weapons use in Colombia and other parts of Latin America and Asia - all of which are targets of the US global plan to use biological weapons on drug crops.

The Project is also strongly supporting initiatives by the nonprofit *Acción Ecológica* in Ecuador to explore the possibility that biological weapons use in Colombia would violate regional cooperation agreements. Today in Quito fears of spillover effects from use of biological weapons in Colombia

have catapulted the issue to the front pages. In response, the US Ambassador has called an emergency press conference.

Secret Negotiating Document Posted To Internet ([click here to download in PDF format](#))

The 21 page Spanish language Colombian Environment Ministry paper, dated May 30th, is a project proposal to conduct a domestic research program on biological mechanisms to kill coca plants. The secret document was leaked when it was distributed among Colombian and other officials for analysis. The document has been mentioned in many recent press reports; but has not yet been analyzed by the media.

The Colombian proposal is the basis of current negotiations between the Vienna-based United Nations Drug Control Program (UNDCP) and the Government to conduct US-funded biological agent research. The proposal is draped in ambiguous language and leaves room for interpretation in many areas. The proposal clearly reflects that many officials in the Colombian government are struggling to stop the US plan; but are under tremendous pressure to allow biological weapons. The component of the proposal dealing with biological agents, however, is explicit that testing and evaluation of the biological weapons potential of domestic organisms will be conducted.

A previous press release by the Sunshine Project outlined severe weaknesses in the proposal, particularly related to the weapons research, biosafety, civil society and indigenous peoples' participation, and the lack of involvement of appropriate regional and international organizations. Civil society groups are concerned that Colombia's Environment Ministry is taking on the job of developing biological agents rather than independently reviewing their impacts.

The actual implementation of the biological weapons research is obviously conditional on the final, signed version of the contract with UNDCP.

It appears likely that UNDCP and the US will continue to claim that if they can find minute quantities of a crop-killing disease in Colombia, that this creates a substantially different situation than if the biological weapons were an introduced strain. This artificial distinction has no logical basis. Naturally occurring of small quantities of a pathogenic microbe cannot be equated with the deliberate and massive provocation of disease epidemics. All biological weapons, except those that are genetically engineered (the US has developed such fusarium) or bred, are found in nature. Examples include ebola (Africa), hantaviruses (USA), and rice blast (Asia).

By distributing the Colombian document, the Project also hopes to show that the debate over use of the specific "EN4" *Fusarium oxysporum* agent developed by the US Government only covers one aspect of the potential for bioweapons use. The Colombian proposal also discusses other biological weapons possibilities. In fact, the US-proposed use of Fusaria to control coca in Colombia is only one part of a global plan. The US is also supporting the development of other fungal and viral agents to kill narcotic crops of opium poppy and marijuana. While the proposed use of Colombia as a proving ground for the US biological weapons technology is a very important case, it is also important to remember that it is only one instance of a global plan to use biological weapons in the drug war.

Regional And International Concerns

The necessity of international action has been dramatically underscored by events in the past two days in Ecuador, where there has been an outpouring of concern that testing and use of biological weapons in Colombia would have spillover effects, especially in the biodiverse Putumayo River region. Today the US Ambassador in Quito called an emergency press conference on the issue and to address allegations that US researchers may have secretly applied the fungus in the Ecuadorean Province of Sucumbios. Quito-based nonprofit *Acción Ecológica* has called for an urgent regional consultation of civil society and legislators to address the biological weapons, particularly to discuss international ramifications and if testing and use in Colombia violates Andean Community decisions.

The Sunshine Project will ask several United Nations agencies to take action to stop the US effort. The Project has begun a process to contact officials and government delegates to UN groups, each of which have relevant concerns. The Project will ask officials to stop the use of biological agents in the drug war and to reinforce the global ban on environmental and crop biological warfare. The UN

groups asked to be involved include the United Nations High Commission on Human Rights (UNHCHR), World Health Organization (WHO), Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), and the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) ([Sunshine Project, 2000](#)).

Title: UNDCP And US Mislead On Environmental Supervision Of Biological Weapons Plan

Date: August 10, 2000

Source: [Sunshine Project](#)

Abstract: The US Government and the United Nations Drug Control Program (UNDCP) are making misleading statements about international environmental supervision of their program to use biological weapons to eradicate drug crops, according to the Sunshine Project, an international nonprofit working on biological weapons issues.

The USA and UNDCP have repeatedly suggested that the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) may be involved in the plan to use biological weapons against illicit drug crops in the Andes and Asia. But the Sunshine Project has directly confirmed with senior UNEP officials that these suggestions are false.

What the U.S. & UNDCP have said:

"We're not going blindfolded into anything and our major concern is to see that this is environmentally safe... after we have asserted, with the help of the United Nations Environment Program, that all this is feasible." ~**Sandro Tucci of UNDCP to BBC World Service, 27 June**

"Use of biological control agents to control narcotic crops ... would be regulated by the United Nations Environmental Program" ~**U.S. response to the Sunshine Project, in FOIA Request, 3 May**

"The programme will be developed ... in consultation with UNEP." ~**UNDCP contract offered to Colombia for field testing US-developed bioweapons agents and technology, n.d.**

Reality:

"I can inform you that UNEP is at present not involved in the mentioned project..." ~**Rob de Jong, Special Assistant to the UNEP Director General in an email to the Sunshine Project, 27 July.**

The UN environment group denies involvement. UNEP says it has not, nor is it currently advising or overseeing the biological weapons work. Moreover, neither the US or UNDCP - the project's only backers - have even asked UNEP to become involved.

The Sunshine Project raised its concerns that UNEP was being inappropriately cited in reference to the biological weapons work in person with UNEP Director General Klaus Topfer. After contacting several UNEP regional offices, a Special Assistant to the Director General responded that UNEP "is not involved in the mentioned project".

The dangerous biological weapons work is US conceived and funded; but implemented by UNDCP with the ardent support of its crusading chief, Pino Arlacchi. It is most advanced in Colombia, where UNDCP is pushing to start a contract to test and formulate biological agents to eradicate illicit coca crops. Current negotiating texts of the contract indicate no international standards or oversight will be applied to the formulation and production of the biological agents. Instead, an unknown and small private Colombian company called Live Systems Technology, S.A. will provide methodology and weaponization advice.

Thus the biological weapons research, which has recently stirred international controversy, has no independent international environmental oversight. And since Colombia's own Environment Ministry may abandon its national-level supervisory role to directly engage in research, UNDCP and the US have unacceptably been left to their own devices to assess the safety of the dangerous biological agents being developed in the USA, Uzbekistan and, possibly, Colombia.

Both UNDCP and the US have abysmal environmental records of advocating massive aerial spraying of broad spectrum herbicides in some of the world's most biodiverse areas. Spraying is currently being conducted in Asia, Africa, South America, and North America (Mexico).

"It's an environmental façade. UNDCP and the US telling half truths to give a false sense of safety. They're invoking UNEP's name; but haven't bothered to phone Nairobi. If they call UNEP at all, they'll only do it once the project is a fait accompli. It is a foregone conclusion that the drug warriors will decide that what they themselves have developed is safe and legal." says the Sunshine Project's Edward Hammond.

According to the Sunshine Project's Susana Pimiento, "Before the negotiations with Colombia move one centimeter further and before any more research is designed or conducted, a truly independent intergovernmental review should be conducted to assess safety and treaty compliance issues."

This review might include experts from UNEP, WHO, FAO, and other UN organizations. These groups should be operating with full power to determine the project's fate.

Says Pimiento "Intergovernmental supervision should not be an afterthought done by vassals of Vienna and Washington, as UNDCP and the US would like. We are confident that a full and transparent review will conclude that this bioweapons project should be stopped. It should have been dropped years ago" ([Sunshine Project, 2000](#)).

Title: USA Admits Possible Link Between Biological Weapons And Agent Green

Date: August 29, 2000

Source: [Sunshine Project](#)

Abstract: In an August 22 memorandum, US President Bill Clinton has conceded that the US plan to use microbial agents to eradicate drug crops may have an impact on biological weapons proliferation. This is the first time that US officials have publicly admitted that the use of biological agents like *Fusarium oxysporum* (dubbed "Agent Green") raises arms control concerns.

The Sunshine Project has convincingly argued that *F. oxysporum* and other mycoherbicides are biological weapons. Because of its illicit coca crop, Colombia is on the front line of US biological warfare plans. Other projects on biological agents to kill opium poppy and marijuana are also funded by the US and the British Governments.

The Presidential memo waives several conditions for US assistance to Colombia. In particular, Clinton overruled the US Congress and severed the link between Colombian acceptance of Agent Green and the overall implementation of the US 1.3 billion dollar bilateral assistance package for Plan Colombia. Clinton states that the US will not use Agent Green until "*a broader national security assessment, including consideration of the potential impact on biological weapons proliferation and terrorism, provides a solid foundation for concluding that the use of this particular drug control tool is in our national interest.*" (from [Memorandum of Justification](#) for [Presidential Determination 2000-28](#)).

According to the Sunshine Project's Edward Hammond, "*This is an important step forward. While important parts of the US Government stubbornly refuse to withdraw support for Agent Green, President Clinton has eased the bilateral pressure on Colombia and admitted that this may have been a bad idea from the start.*"

Adds Sunshine's Jan Van Aken, "*Agent Green is a biological weapon. It was developed with a hostile purpose, intended to be used in an armed conflict in Colombia. Use of Agent Green threatens to undermine international agreements prohibiting biological weapons. It must be stopped immediately, worldwide.*"

It is important to note that the presidential memorandum does not necessarily signal a change in US policy. "*Pro-fungus parts of the schizophrenic US Government could easily rebound. The memorandum is a window of opportunity. Governments should take fast action and exploit the possibilities for progress before the window closes.*" says the Sunshine Project's Susana Pimiento.

The Sunshine Project is calling on governments and international agencies to take the following steps:

The United Nations Drug Control Program (UNDCP), which administers the US-funded work in Uzbekistan and is promoting Fusarium testing in Colombia, should immediately freeze all of its international projects on crop-killing biological agents and withdraw the contract it is offering Colombia. No government, much less a United Nations agency, can take risks with bioweapons proliferation. Work cannot resume until the arms control issues have been resolved, a broader range of expert UN agencies have independently evaluated the program, and UNDCP's governing body has fully reviewed the work.

With aid no longer conditional on acceptance of Agent Green and with the US publicly admitting that it is uncertain about bioweapons links, there is no reason why the Government of Colombia has to proceed with the US-inspired biological eradication idea. Colombia may now heal regional unease with the plan and publicly withdraw from negotiations with UNDCP, halting any planned research on Fusarium and other biological agents.

The US Government must conduct a transparent review of the US Department of Agriculture program that funded and developed *F. oxysporum* and other crop-killing weapons. The USDA worked for more than a decade on projects. A dangerous policy failure has taken place if serious assessment of the treaty compliance and proliferation aspects of this program have not been reviewed until now - after agent identification, work on virulence enhancement, delivery systems, and field testing.

The current situation offers a remarkable opportunity to strengthen the Biological and Toxic Weapons Convention (BTWC), updating it to reflect new and different political realities and type of conflict prevalent in the post-Cold War era. With the US leadership having conceded there are proliferation concerns raised by the drug war biological agents, during the next Review Conference of the BTWC in 2001, states parties should leap on the opportunity to insure that all crop-killing biological agents, especially those used with hostile intent in an armed conflict, are banned by the convention.

Opposition Increasing

In July, the Ecuadorian Government banned the introduction and use of *Fusarium oxysporum*. In an editorial in its August 7th edition titled "*Agent Orange and F. oxysporum*", the Managing Editor of Chemical and Engineering News, the magazine of the American Chemical Society, called for a halt to drug war bioweapon research. Accusing the US of developing "*dubious weapons systems*", the editorial condemns the program, saying, "*There is an unavoidable moral component to scientific research, and development of F. oxysporum as a weapon in the war on drugs or any other war violates it. Scientists should just say no to participating in this research*" ([Sunshine Project, 2000](#)).

Title: United Nations Pulls Out Of Plans To Use Anti-Drug Biological Weapons In South America

Date: November 13, 2000

Source: [Sunshine Project](#)

Abstract: NGOs Caution that Dangers Remain in Asia, Colombia, and the US and Call for the UN Drugs Commission and Biological Weapons Convention to Impose a Ban.

The United Nations has pulled back from proposals to develop and use biological agents to eradicate illicit coca and opium poppy crops in the Andes. Several nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) welcome the change as a positive step; but caution that anti-drug biological weapons programs are still active in Asia and the United States, while proposals exist to start such research in Colombia. The NGOs say that the UN decision to pull out in South America should be the first step toward a global ban on biological agents to eradicate illicit $\text{\textcircled{D}}$ or any $\text{\textcircled{D}}$ crops.

Clear Statement

The new position of the United Nations Drug Control Program (UNDCP) unequivocally states "*UNDCP is neither implementing, or planning to implement, or discussing the possibility of implementing a biocontrol project in Colombia or anywhere else in the Andes.*" UNDCP, with the sole financial support of the US and UK, has embarked on a global program to develop biological agents

to kill illicit crops. The program has been harshly criticized as dangerous and highly inappropriate for a UN agency by Andean governments, indigenous peoples, scientists, and drug policy, environment, and biological weapons specialists. UNDCP's change of position is [a significant policy reversal confirmed in a letter](#) sent to NGOs on November 2nd by a senior official on behalf of UNDCP Director Pino Arlacchi.

US Misstatements

The non-profits warn that US officials continue to make confusing statements claiming that UNDCP is participating in its plans to use biological weapons in the Andes. The US State Department's Andean policy chief [Phillip Chicola told Bogotá's *El Tiempo* on October 20th](#) that UNDCP would conduct research in Colombia on strains of the coca-killing fungus *Fusarium oxysporum* and other biological agents, despite adamant denials from both Colombia and UNDCP. Last week, a US government official told NGOs that UNDCP is negotiating on its behalf in Colombia. UNDCP says this is false.

Edward Hammond of the Sunshine Project argues that the US position reflects deep cynicism about international governance and biological weapons proliferation. According to Hammond *"If the US used these agents alone, it would be an outright illegal act of war. UNDCP's work on biological weapons is mostly a frightening story of cynical attempts by the US to hijack a UN agency. The US strategy is for UNDCP's involvement to chip away at the sovereignty of target countries and their neighbors, and to reduce US exposure to allegations of biological warfare. Thanks to opposition by civil society, a slumbering UN is waking up to the abuse; but smug US officials still step beyond their bounds, talking about UNDCP policy as if Kofi Annan headed an inconsequential section of the State Department."*

Other Research Continues

NGOs warn that UNDCP's withdrawal only applies in the Andean region and that important steps remain to be taken to ensure that biological weapons will not be used anywhere in the war on drugs. Several imminent dangers need to be addressed urgently:

Asia

UNDCP continues to support biological eradication in Asia, with a poppy-killing fungus research project in Uzbekistan. According to Martin Jelsma of the Transnational Institute (TNI), *"This US-UK jointly funded project has been running since 1998 without any independent monitoring and may soon have fungi ready to use in opium poppy eradication. UNDCP may have backed out on clear terms from the Fusarium project in Colombia; but it has done so without even questioning its role in the Uzbekistan project. UNDCP defends its mandate to collaborate in developing 'safer eradication agents' using a misleading discourse on environmental protection and blinded by the illusion that total eradication of poppy and coca from the planet is possible in a decade. UNDCP has failed to explain why a UN agency is involved in forced eradication at all, a strategy vehemently opposed by many of its member states."*

Colombia

Under US pressure, the Colombian Environment Ministry has prepared a proposal to research biological agents to eradicate coca. Colombian Senator Rafael Orduz, a leading opponent, says *"Despite the Colombian government's repeated affirmation that it rejects the use of Fusarium oxysporum for the eradication of crops, the Environment Ministry persists in leaving the door open to research on native biological agents. The Environment Ministry's ambiguous position legitimizes the possibility of biological warfare under the cover of research and scientific development, with unpredictable consequences for the region. The position also is a part of forced eradication strategies for illicit crops that have been unsuccessful in the past and which, under Plan Colombia, cause the worsening of the armed conflict's consequences for civilians, including forced displacement of people."*

"One of the core themes of the peace discussions in Colombia is illicit crops and their alternatives." says Ricardo Vargas of Acción Andina, *"The continuing threat to use biological agents to eradicate coca and poppy undermines confidence between parties in the peace process. These biological weapons are perceived as another arm for use against insurgents. They generate mistrust between the state and coca and poppy growing farm communities looking for cooperative solutions. Communities see biological agents as another pernicious technique in the war against drugs, on top of chemical sprays, which have failed their purpose of eradicating illicit crops."*

United States

Biological weapons research is also being conducted in the US on agents to kill coca, opium poppy, and marijuana. [US government scientists in Beltsville, Maryland remain fully engaged](#) and are currently testing agents to eradicate opium poppy. The US could also suffer from policy amnesia and reverse its commitment to only fund international testing and use of biological eradication through a multilateral mechanism. Says Susana Pimiento, a Colombian attorney with the Sunshine Project *"These dangerous programs, falsely labeled 'biological control research', threaten the reputation of legitimate biocontrol science and, most importantly, loosen international prohibitions on biological weapons. UNDCP's South American pullout is step one. The announcement must be the prelude to a global ban on development and use of biological weapons to eradicate illicit crops."*

An important concern is the status of US fiscal year 2000 appropriations to the US State Department for more biological weapons research. This money was to be allocated to UNDCP for work on biological eradication of coca; but UNDCP is backing away and the Organization of American States' anti-drug office says it "never planned or even considered" biological weapons as an option. Says Hammond, *"The State Department's narcotics unit must turn its biowarfare bank account to peaceful purposes."*

Building A Global Ban

Critical steps in creating a global ban on the use of biological weapons in the drug war will be work by civil society at upcoming meetings of the UN Commission on Narcotic Drugs and the Biological and Toxic Weapons Convention. At these meetings, NGOs will seek the dismantling of existing research programs and a ban on any future work on biological weapons to eradicate illicit crops. NGOs will ask the Commission on Narcotic Drugs and UNDCP donor countries to stop all UNDCP work on biological agents in illicit crop eradication. The Biological and Toxic Weapons Convention will be asked to consider the issue of biological eradication for its upcoming Review Conference in 2001, with the objective of clarifying and asserting that Convention's ban on hostile use of anti-crop biological agents ([Sunshine Project, 2000](#)).

Title: Colombia Abandons Research On Biological Agents For Drug Eradication

Date: January 25, 2001

Source: [Sunshine Project](#)

Abstract: Colombia has abandoned a project to develop biological agents to eradicate coca and opium poppy plants, dealing another major defeat to the US-promoted idea to use biological weapons in the Drug War.

Last year, Colombia refused a US-funded United Nations Drug Control Program (UNDCP) proposal to field test fungal pathogens developed by US researchers. But, responding to US pressure, the Colombian government floated a counterproposal to domestically develop biological agents for drug eradication. Like its UNDCP predecessor, the counterproposal was intensely opposed as biological weapons research. Now, Colombian Environment Minister Juan Mayr has abandoned the plan altogether.

Mayr's announcement follows Vienna-based UNDCP's decision to withdraw from all efforts to use biological eradication in the Andes and after former US President Clinton decided to suspend a US Congress-imposed stipulation that Colombia use fungi in drug eradication in order to receive military assistance. Thus, barring a major policy shift in Washington, Bogotá, or Vienna, the Colombian decision is the last and final step that ends any biological eradication projects in the region.

Minister Mayr announced his decision in a [January 4, 2001 letter](#) to a prominent Colombian Senator who opposes the project. Mayr wrote that the government has "decided not to continue" the controversial research project, a decision Mayr says was precipitated by UNDCP's November withdrawal (for more information, see Sunshine Project / Acción Andina / Transnational Institute [news release of Nov. 13th](#)).

Mayr's decision makes fully evident that biological eradication agents are indeed biological weapons. All further research - anywhere - on biological agents for coca eradication is outlawed by the Bioweapons Convention. Since all countries with illicit coca harvests have now announced their

opposition to biological agents, any use of such agents can only be considered a hostile act. Under the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (and US implementing legislation), development of biological agents for non-peaceful purposes is outlawed.

UNDCP, however, is continuing its work on biological agents in Asia. An anti-opium poppy fungus is currently being field tested by an Uzbekistan laboratory that was part of the former Soviet Union's offensive biological weapons program. The continuation of the Asian projects illustrates why a global ban is urgently needed. A global ban on any such agent can be achieved in resolutions by the Conferences of the Parties to the Biological Weapons Convention, the Convention on Biological Diversity, and the Commission on Narcotic Drugs ([Sunshine Project, 2001](#)).

Title: European Parliament Rejects Agent Green: Citing Human Health And Environmental Dangers, Parliamentarians Vote 474 - 1 To Prevent Introduction Of Biological Agents

Date: February 1, 2001

Source: [Sunshine Project](#)

Abstract: Today the European Parliament voted overwhelmingly against the introduction of biological agents into the Drug War. In Resolution B5-0087/2001, which sets out a stance against militarization in Colombian President Pastrana's "Plan Colombia", Parliamentarians expressed their conviction that the European Union:

*... must take the necessary steps to secure an end to the large-scale use of chemical herbicides and prevent the introduction of biological agents such as *Fusarium oxysporum*, given the dangers of their use to human health and the environment alike;*

Political support for the decision is strong. The European Union's top foreign policy official, Council of Foreign Ministers President Lars Danielsson, said the EU considered Plan Colombia a bilateral US-Colombia affair in which Europe did not wish to become involved. Commissioner Poul Nielson, speaking on behalf of the European Commission, declared that he was "completely in agreement" with sponsor Joaquim Miranda of Portugal, who attacked eradication with biological agents as dangerous for biodiversity and potentially deepening international spill over of Colombia's complex internal conflict.

The proponents of biological eradication in the US and its junior partner the United Nations Drug Program (UNDCP) have faced fierce opposition in recent months, forcing them to withdraw immediate plans to test and deploy biological agents in the Andes. But neither has renounced the strategy of attacking illicit crops with biological weapons, and despite accusations of biological warfare, both the US and UNDCP continue to conduct research and development of anti-narcotic crop biological agents.

The European Parliament's decision is a blow against these policies because it rejects not just one biological agent (*Fusarium oxysporum*); but the entire approach. Thus, the European Parliament resolution is an important step toward a global ban on the use of biological weapons against illicit crops called for at a December meeting in France by an international group of more than eighty non-profit organizations (see the Sunshine Project website for more details).

The Resolution is embarrassing for the British government, which is the only country outside the US that has provided money for UNDCP's biological agents research. The Drugs and International Crime Division of the UK Foreign Office is funding tests being conducted by a facility of the former Soviet Union's offensive biological weapons program located in Tashkent, Uzbekistan. In recent months, however, as public scrutiny has increased of this program and the related one to develop agents to eradicate coca in the Andes, the Foreign Office has become increasingly tight-lipped on the subject, making ambiguous public statements about the future of its support for biological eradication.

Last year the US Congress conditioned aid to Colombia on Bogotá agreeing to use biological agents. This condition was suspended in a waiver issued by former US President Clinton, who overrode the US Congress citing concerns about biological weapons proliferation. But this policy could be reversed in future appropriations. Shortly before leaving office, Clinton reiterated the concern about biological

weapons. The new US administration has not made any public statements on the issue ([Sunshine Project, 2001](#)).

Title: Who's In Charge Of Agent Green In Asia?

Date: June 5, 2001

Source: [Sunshine Project](#)

Abstract: While the UN Drugs Program maintains a press blackout on the controversial research, the UN's "technical" advisor backpedals on safety and takes to the air with a political message.

The United Nations Drugs Program (UNDCP) may have lost control of a controversial project to develop an opium poppy-killing fungus in Asia, according to the Sunshine Project, an international non-profit organization dedicated to stopping biological weapons. The fungus project, and its counterpart in the Americas – research to develop a fungus to kill coca – have been dubbed "Agent Green" by opponents, who compare the fungus plan to the herbicide Agent Orange used during the Vietnam War.

The Tashkent, Uzbekistan-based fungus project's primary targets are opium poppy fields in Afghanistan and Burma. The research is nominally directed by the UN Drugs Agency; but the UN involvement lacks a multilateral mandate and is considered a stalking horse for United States interests. The testing phase of the fungus is scheduled for completion in July. Recent developments have crumbled the façade of UN support, leaving the project's proponents exposed.

Technical Advisor Talks Politics

In mid-May, Dr. Michael Greaves, a part-time technical consultant to the Tashkent project, offered an interview with the BBC World Service in which he strayed from scientific issues. Greaves told the BBC that no country will be forced to use the fungus and that it "*has never and will not be genetically manipulated*". Greaves recently left a position with the research arm of the UK Ministry of Agriculture and was supported by the United States to become scientific advisor to the (aborted) UNDCP fungus project in Colombia.

The scientist's loquacity on the politics of biological warfare on narcotic crops is not paralleled at UNDCP's headquarters in Vienna. UNDCP's press office is maintaining a news blackout on the fungus, taking weeks or months to reply to queries from journalists it considers potentially unfriendly. Former UNDCP employees additionally allege that some high-level UNDCP staff want to shut down the research in Tashkent; but are under intense US pressure to continue.

Greaves' BBC interview raises fundamental questions about control of the project. While UNDCP itself remains silent, why is a part-time technical advisor with close links to the US coming out as the project's political and scientific spokesman?

"Dr. Greaves' right to voice his opinion on scientific aspects is clear; but it raises serious questions about who controls this research when a part-time technical consultant takes to the air with statements that are the responsibility of the UN Commission on Narcotic Drugs." says the Sunshine Project's Edward Hammond, "Dr. Greaves has financial interests in the fungi and has cast his lot with the USA, which wishes to proceed at virtually any cost. But Greaves is speaking in the name of the United Nations. This is an abuse. The Commission on Narcotic Drugs should intervene if UNDCP won't. Failure to act risks further damage to the Commission's reputation and, if the worst happens, co-responsibility for the actions of maverick scientists working in Asia with US money, dangerous crop diseases, and little supervision."

The assertion that fungi will not be applied by force is a political question on which Dr. Greaves has been widely contradicted. A recently resigned senior UNDCP official says that the agency plotted last year to have the Afghan government in exile (in Pakistan) "consent" to use the fungus, despite the objections of the Taliban. The US attempted to coerce Colombia into using anti-coca fungus by withholding a \$1.3 billion aid package (a stipulation that was later waived) until Bogotá went along with the idea.

On genetic engineering, UNDCP's scientist also appears to be dabbling in politics. As early as the mid-1990s, US government scientists conducted genetic engineering experiments on the anti-drug fungus *Fusarium oxysporum*, attempting to isolate and use hyper-virulent genes to create hyper-aggressive types. The chief Uzbek scientist working with Dr. Greaves on the poppy-killing fungus has unequivocally stated that he plans to genetically engineer the anti-opium poppy fungus (*Pleospora papaveracea*) as necessary to increase its effectiveness.

According to the Sunshine Project's Jan van Aken, Greaves' claims are "*Like missile makers speaking on behalf of the US Senate on Star Wars appropriations. The decision on GM ultimately is not Dr. Greaves' to make. US and Asian fungus researchers already have used or say they will use genetic engineering to make extra-lethal fungi. It appears that UNDCP's scientist is making a hollow political promise to allay concerns about biosafety.*" In December of last year, a global group of 80 non-profit organizations called on UNDCP to halt the program.

But there's another interpretation, says van Aken, "*Alternatively, Greaves' statement could be read as a UNDCP scientific opinion that genetic engineering of the pathogens will make them unacceptably dangerous. The potential confusion should be cleared up immediately. If Greaves admits the project is dangerous, then UNDCP Director Pino Arlacchi would be derelict in his duty if he did not immediately stop the research and advise the public he has done so. If Greaves is talking politics, then he has outgrown his job description as a technical consultant.*"

Backpedaling On Safety

The most disturbing of Dr. Greaves' scientific statements is his indication that UNDCP has retreated from the position that the poppy-killing fungus must be specific, killing opium poppy and nothing else. Now, according to Greaves, UNDCP will try to demonstrate that the agent is "*adequately specific*". The retreat comes after leaked UNDCP research documents revealed that the fungus not only kills drug-producing plants; but also relatives, including the corn poppy (Flanders poppy) flower.

According to Susana Pimiento of the Sunshine Project, "*This dangerous attitude is consistent with what we know of UNDCP environmental science. The same UNDCP 'experts' who got the fungus work rolling in 1990 also concluded that 2, 4-D - a major ingredient of Agent Orange - has 'low environmental impact' when used in crop eradication.*" UNDCP's experts went on to state that tight regulation of man-made mutants of devastating crop pathogens such as *Fusarium* is "retrograde". UNDCP also continues to support massive use of broad-spectrum herbicides in biodiversity-rich Colombia. "Now," says Pimiento, "*with full knowledge that Pleospora papaveracea is not specific to opium poppy, UNDCP wants the world to swallow the idea that crop-killing pathogens only need to be 'adequately specific'.*"

Pimiento concludes, "*UNDCP's record of environmental judgment is appalling. It long ago abdicated credibility in assessing environmental impacts of chemical and biological crop eradication. With its record plain to see, any UNDCP assertion that the fungus is safe will not be trusted by responsible governments or civil society*" ([Sunshine Project, 2001](#)).

Title: Sunshine Project Blasts The UN Drug Program's Self-Serving "Green" Propaganda

Date: July 20, 2002

Source: [Sunshine Project](#)

Abstract: "*UNDCP's environmental message is like the cigarette industry passing out public health suggestions*"

Seattle and Hamburg, 20 July -The United Nations Drug Control Program (UNDCP) should be censured for its lobbying tactics, says the Sunshine Project, an international nonprofit working on biological weapons issues.

The Vienna-based UN agency, while often less aggressive than the USA in drug crop eradication, has nevertheless taken the lead in trying to implement the US project to use biological weapons against illicit coca in Colombia.

In an effort to counter outrage in the Andes over the plan, UNDCP is spreading unsubstantiated stories in the press suggesting that the biological agents, dubbed "Agent Green" by the Sunshine Project, are environmentally safe. The UN group is using the media to attack the policy of the Governments of Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru, all of which have expressly rejected use of the US *Fusarium oxysporum* weapons agent.

According to Susana Pimiento, a Colombian attorney with the Project, "*The false environmental message of these drug warriors is outrageously self-serving. Cocaine production is environmentally damaging enough. UNDCP's proposals will make a bad problem worse. UNDCP is not an environmental organization. It advocates the massive aerial spraying of broad spectrum herbicides like RoundUp Ultra in some of the world's most biodiverse areas.*"

In the first half of this year alone, chemical spraying programs in Colombia, in which UNDCP plays a role, blasted an estimated 439,445 liters of glyphosate into Colombia's Amazon and Andean regions, provoking outrage from indigenous people and rural inhabitants.

Says the Sunshine Project's Edward Hammond "*You could expect this kind of arrogance out of the Americans; but UNDCP pushing its environmental advice on Amazonian governments is like the cigarette industry passing out public health suggestions.*"

UNDCP spilled details of its still secret and unapproved plan to the Environment News Service (ENS), a US news wire, which [published them](#) on July 19th. ENS reports that, contrary to the declarations of Colombian Environment Minister Juan Mayr, UNDCP told it that *Fusarium* will be tested in Colombia. ENS goes on, quoting UNDCP as promoting *Fusarium* by comparing it favorably to cocaine production saying "*for each hectare of coca grown and processed into cocaine, growers and traffickers, with no respect for the environment, generate and dump an estimated two tons of ... waste into Colombia's soils, streams and rivers.*"

UNDCP is putting an environment spin on Agent Green despite the fact that Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru have unequivocally rejected the *Fusarium*:

1. In Quito on Tuesday, July 18th, Ecuadorean Environment Minister Rodolfo Rendón issued a written statement saying that *Fusarium oxysporum* "*has not been authorized and will not be authorized for use on Ecuadorean territory to eliminate coca plantations, because such activity could have negative effects on human health and the environment. This is a decision that has been taken and there is no room for changes.*"

2. On last Friday, July 14th, Colombian Environment Minister Juan Mayr told the Associated Press "*We will not accept the introduction of any foreign element, which is what they have offered us under the name *Fusarium oxysporum*. We have told them to forget it.*"

3. On March 24th, by presidential decree 0004-2000-AG, Peruvian President Alberto Fujimori updated that country's ban on aerial fumigation of coca to specifically forbid the use of biological agents like *Fusarium oxysporum*.

According to Pimiento, "*If UNDCP was serious about the environment, it would be advocating a rethink of using fumigation at all, instead of pushing a dangerous biological supplement to destructive chemical strategies.*"

Says Hammond "*UNDCP is out of touch with reality. It has crossed the line of acceptable behavior by a UN agency and is engaging in public theatrics to undermine the policy of governments. UNDCP's behavior in this matter should be reviewed by its governing bodies. Donor governments should be alert to this abuse of UNDCP's position*" ([Sunshine Project, 2002](#)).

Title: Agent Green: New US Bioweapons Threat On Colombia

Date: December 17, 2002

Source: [Sunshine Project](#)

Abstract: US Legislators Renew Calls for Bio-Attack On Illicit Crops

As the United States prepares to invade Iraq under the banner of destroying that country's alleged biological weapons programs, US legislators are making new threats to use biological weapons in Colombia's civil war. The weapons are pathogenic strains of fungi designed to kill drug crops. Ascendant Republicans in the US House of Representatives, supported by the US Department of State, lead the push.



Endorsing Agent Green at a US Congressional hearing on Friday Dec. 13th, Florida's Mica said the biological weapon "would do a lot of damage" in Colombia.

The Sunshine Project is alerting governments and nonprofits that a new effort is required to stop the US from waging biological warfare in Colombia. This effort should include action by the Biological Weapons Convention, the principal treaty against biological warfare. The ramifications of the US bioweapons plan are global. If it proceeds in the Colombian conflict, pressure to use anti-crop bioweapons will quickly extend to other countries of Latin America and other world regions, particularly Asia.

US Congressional Testimony: At a hearing on Friday of the Committee on Government Reform of the US Congress, Florida Representative John Mica, a senior drug policy legislator, repeatedly pushed for the US to move ahead with biological warfare in Colombia. According to Mica, the time has come for the US to mount an attack. " *We have to restore our... mycoherbicide,*" said Mica in reference to the biological agents, " *things that have been studied for too long need to be put into action.*" He added, " *we found that we can not only spray this stuff, but we can also deactivate it for some period of time... it would do a lot of damage... it will eradicate some of these crops for substantial periods of time.*"

In response, US Ambassador to Colombia Anne Patterson stated that she thought that the US had already tested anti-crop biological agents in Colombia. She later retracted the statement, saying that it was made under duress. Patterson's Department of State supports using bioweapons on Colombia. Rand Beers, the Assistant Secretary of State for narcotics, pushed bioweapons during the Clinton Administration. Beers still serves under George W. Bush. In 2001, the US defended the plan at the Biological Weapons Convention, where US Ambassador Don Mahley said it is needed in order " *to fight the Medellin Cartel!*", an anachronistic reference to a criminal organization dismembered by Colombian police a decade ago.

Aid with Biological Warfare Attached? Mica may be preparing to repeat an old trick - inserting language in legislation to require use of bioweapons in order for Colombia to receive US money. The Committee on Government Reform's hearing was on Plan Colombia, Bogotá's controversial military-

political strategy for national pacification. The US is almost alone in funding Plan Colombia's military side, and Bogotá's armed forces are highly dependent on US dollars and equipment. The US' 1999 funding package for Plan Colombia required testing of biological weapons. When international protest erupted, the provision was waived by President Clinton, who cited biological weapons proliferation concerns (see Background, below). But administrations have since changed in both capitols, opening the possibility that, this time around, Washington may be more aggressive and Bogotá more receptive.

Global Ramifications: The potential use of biological eradication agents in Colombia is of global importance. Many other countries have problems with illicit crops. US officials have repeatedly said that their biological strategy is global. That is, the agents are intended for use in many countries. The US exercises particular power over Colombia because of its heavy dependence on US aid. If it is successful there, pressure will mount to use the strategy in other countries, doing immense damage to arms control and with ecological and human effects that are likely to be severe.

Appearing with Colombia on the US target list is Afghanistan, the major producer of opium poppy for heroin. Afghanistan's opium poppy crop is recently resurgent. Also on the firing line are other countries with coca and opium poppy production in South Asia, Southeast Asia and Latin America. The US has a huge illicit cannabis crop; but efforts to use the agents there were quashed by environmental regulators from Representative Mica's own state of Florida.

International Action: For Colombia, the bioweapons plan resurfaces at an inopportune time. Colombia is presiding over the UN Security Council and is under fire for its decision to give the US an early copy of Iraq's weapons of mass destruction declaration. Critics link the decision to recently increased US military aid to Bogotá. With Colombia's willingness to differ with the US in question, US proponents of biological eradication are pressing their advantage. Ignoring the colossal hypocrisy of promoting US biological weapons in the midst of the Iraq showdown, they are taking advantage of Colombia's stressed diplomatic position to press for biological escalation of the Colombian conflict.

A venue for action to stop a biological attack will be next year's meetings of the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC). The BWC prohibits international transfers of bioweapons and equipment, yet the US is seeking to create a biological conflict in South America as part of what it says is a global approach. Some of Colombia's neighbors, including Ecuador and Peru, have acted by passing national laws and regulations to try to preempt US bioweapons pressure like that exerted on Colombia. How can other countries and regions defend against export of this and other biological weapons?

Agent Green Background: The US plan is to use airplanes to spray massive quantities of crop disease agents (specially formulated pathogenic fungi) in efforts to eradicate opium poppy and coca crops. Critics say that the plan proposes illegal acts of biological warfare, poses major ecological risks in the world's 2nd most biodiverse country, and will increase the human damage of a failed eradication policy. The agents have been developed by the US Department of Agriculture in Beltsville, MD, and – by two others with US government funding - a private company in Montana and a former Soviet biological weapons facility in Tashkent, Uzbekistan. The lead agents are types of *Fusarium oxysporum* (to kill coca and cannabis) and *Pleospora papaveracea* (to kill opium poppy). Their ecological and human health safety is very poorly tested, and they are known to impact non-target species.

The fungi are designed to be more powerful than the chemical agents currently used for the same purpose. Termed 'mycoherbicides' by supporters, they are better known as "Agent Green", as the Sunshine Project dubbed them. Proponents say that their goal justifies the agents; but as the history of the South African Apartheid regime's bioweapons reveals, claims of law enforcement ends can conceal heinous biowarfare plans. If Agent Green is used anywhere, it will legitimize agricultural biowarfare in other contexts. Reasoning in a similar manner as the US, others might prepare a biological attack on the US tobacco crop, which poisons millions worldwide, or those opposed to alcohol might target grapes or hops. Opium poppy, cannabis, and coca are also cultivated for legal industrial and pharmaceutical purposes, and by indigenous peoples and traditional farmers for reasons unrelated to narcotics. These uses of these crops are also threatened.

In a 1999 Plan Colombia aid package worth \$1.3 billion, the US Congress required Colombia to test the bioweapons in order to receive aid. The bioweapons testing was opposed by civil society worldwide. Under pressure, the UN Drug Control Program – which had supported the effort – disassociated itself (in the Andes only). The European Parliament rejected the strategy in a resolution adopted by a 474-1 vote. Latin American governments staunchly protested, including an appeal to UN Secretary General Annan. With fury mounting, President Clinton waived the requirement, citing bioweapons proliferation concerns. Colombia then rejected proposals to test the agents, citing environmental risks.

A review of arms control, human, and ecological dangers of Agent Green can be found on the Sunshine Project website in Backgrounder #4, [Risks of Using Biological Agents in Drug Eradication](#). Detailed information can also be found at www.mycoherbicide.net, a website dedicated to the issue ([Sunshine Project, 2002](#)).

Title: US State Department Launches New Push to Use Agent Green In Colombia

Date: April 6, 2004

Source: [Sunshine Project](#)

Abstract: US State Department officials have revived a controversial scheme to use biological weapons to forcibly eradicate coca and opium poppy crops in Colombia. The eradication technique calls for testing types of the fungus *Fusarium oxysporum* (dubbed "Agent Green" by the Sunshine Project) and using airplanes to blanket coca and poppy-growing areas of the country with the biological agents. A previous attempt to use Agent Green was shelved amidst protests in 2000-01 and following a determination by then-President Clinton that it could run afoul of the Biological Weapons Convention. If the renewed US pressure continues, it is very likely to generate protest by civil society organizations, indigenous peoples, and Colombia's neighbors, all of whom oppose the fungus.

The renewed US pressure came to light last week when Colombian Senator Jorge Enrique Robledo released government correspondence including an October 2003 letter sent by US Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Deborah McCarthy to Colombia's Ambassador in Washington. The letter requested that Colombia send a team to Washington including agriculture officials and a senior policymaker. The Colombians were to be briefed by US officials on their "mycoherbicide" research (the term used by the US for Agent Green) in a bid to acquire Bogotá's approval for field testing in Colombia. It is unclear if the meeting has taken place.

The correspondence first appeared on the Indymedia Colombia website on March 30th. (1) The Sunshine Project has confirmed that the letter is authentic, and that its assertion that a senior US Congressman (Henry Hyde of Illinois) is leading a push for Agent Green is correct. In late 2002, another US Congressman (Rep. John Mica of Florida) urged use of Agent Green in Colombia, saying "it would do a lot of damage" (see [news release, 17 December 2002](#)). The most recent US activity, however, is more worrying because it involves senior State Department officials and appears to relate to new US technologies that the State Department's letter suggests have been developed since 2001.

Prior Controversy: This is not the first time that Colombia has been pressed to test and use Agent Green. US officials pushed the plan in 2000, when the US Congress imposed a requirement that Bogotá agree to use Agent Green in return for foreign aid. At the time, the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC, formerly UNDCP) supported the project. But the specter of a biological escalation of Colombia's civil conflict – far and away the bloodiest in the Western Hemisphere - raised strong objections from governments and civil society. Colombia's neighbors were deeply concerned about the environmental, health and social effects of fungus use, and were staunchly opposed. Brazil lodged its opposition with UN Secretary General Annan, and the European Parliament voted 474-1 to condemn the plan.

While Colombian officials delayed formal action on US demands, UNODC came under fire from governments and civil society groups and withdrew its support. Agent Green was profiled in an hour-long documentary for BBC Panorama, in which the primarily scientific author of the US plan, a plant pathologist from Montana State University, told the BBC that he knew that Agent Green is biological warfare; but that he endorsed its use in countries where narcotic crops are grown, with or without the consent of foreign governments. The controversy over Agent Green prompted consideration of the

issue by the US National Security Council. These discussions raised concern that Agent Green would violate US commitments under the Biological Weapons Convention. As a result, in August 2000, then-President Clinton signed a determination waiving the requirement on Colombia to accept Agent Green, citing concerns over biological weapons control and proliferation. With that letter, US pressure on Colombia began to dissolve, and the controversy slowly faded away.

The Bush administration has made no determination (of which the Sunshine Project is aware) that addresses the serious issues raised by the Clinton administration in 2000.

Faulty Reasoning: Based on its research, the Sunshine Project expects the US defense of Agent Green to include some dubious assertions. Specifically, it will be claimed by US officials that by using a *Fusarium* strain isolated in Colombia (as opposed to a foreign-originating type), that concerns about biological weapons and the environment will be allayed.

The arguments are faulty. According to Edward Hammond of the Sunshine Project "*From a biological weapons perspective, whether a locally-isolated or a foreign fungus is used is irrelevant. The US has anthrax in Texas, hantavirus in the southwest, and tularemia on Martha's Vineyard (Massachusetts). If a biological agent is tested, formulated, and used for the purpose of causing harm, logically and legally, it no less of a biological weapon because it can be found domestically. The same holds true in Colombia.*" With respect to health and environmental concerns, Hammond continues, "*If the US were to use a 'Colombian' fungus, an approach derisively termed the 'hongo criollo' ('creole fungus') by Colombian NGOs, that has no bearing on its safety. It is blatantly incorrect to equate the health and environmental implications of the natural occurrence of a soil fungus with the dispersal of tons of it from the air*" ([Sunshine Project, 2004](#)).