

VICIOUS



CIRCLE

The Chemical and Biological
'War on Drugs'



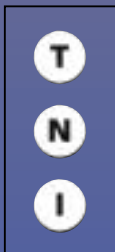


Author:
Martin Jelsma
Assistance:
Virginia Montañés
Editing:
Roberta Cowan
Design:
Elisabeth Hoogland
Printing:
Primavera

Contact:
Transnational Institute
Martin Jelsma
mjelsma@tni.org
Paulus Potterstraat 20
1071 DA Amsterdam
Netherlands
Tel: -31-20-662 6608
Fax: -31-20-6757176
Web: www.tni.org/drugs

Financial support:
Novib-Oxfam (NL)
Trocaire (Ireland)
European Commission

Photo used in cover:
archive El Espectador



March 2001

INTRODUCTION

Over the past decade, more than 300,000 hectares of coca and opium poppy fields in Colombia have been sprayed with herbicides. The coordinated, forced eradication of illicit crops worldwide has intensified since 1998. Plan Colombia involves the drastic intensification of the chemical War on Drugs. The herbicide currently used is based on glyphosate and has been recently altered in composition causing more severe devastation. The DEA has proposed mass spraying operations of US marijuana crops in order to improve their negotiating position and legitimacy in promoting aerial operations in other countries. Plans have been made to launch a biological front in the War on Drugs. Bio-herbicides with killer spores intentionally released into the environment, which will multiply and disperse like a plague are considered the 'silver bullet' in the War on Drugs. Fungi have been identified to destroy coca, marijuana and opium poppy.

The aerial fumigation cycle causes pollution affecting humans, animals and vegetation, and destroys the livelihoods of peasant and indigenous communities forcing these groups to migrate deeper into the rainforest. This displacement accelerates the pace of deforestation where slash and burned plots are planted with illicit coca or poppy crops replacing those previously fumigated. The new plots are eventually fumigated and the cycle starts over again exacerbating the current armed conflict. Despite huge areas sprayed net coca cultivation in Colombia tripled since fumigations started, demonstrating the futility of the exercise. Aerial fumigations have only accomplished setting in motion a Vicious Circle of destruction.

This publication analyses the chemical and biological War on Drugs and argues for breaking this Vicious Circle. The first section outlines the chemical operations and impact in Colombia. The second part describes the background and current status of the biological War on Drugs. The third chapter provides a brief overview of the history of forced eradication worldwide within the context of international drug policy trends. Finally, the last chapter proposes the necessary foundations for an illicit crop policy framework while addressing the most pressing choices Colombia and the international community face today.



El Espectador

CONTENTS

| | |
|---|-----------|
| <i>Chemical Spraying in Colombia</i> | 3 |
| Fumigation | 3 |
| Pollution | 4 |
| Spraying & Health problems | 5 |
| Livelihood Destruction | 6 |
| Migration | 6 |
| Deforestation | 7 |
| Illicit Crop Cultivation | 8 |
| Fumigation and Conflict | 8 |
| <i>The Biological Front</i> | 10 |
| The Need for a Multilateral Disguise | 10 |
| The Quest for 'Environmentally Safe' Eradication | 11 |
| Bringing the Bio-War to Colombia | 12 |
| Environment and Other Concerns | 13 |
| The Silver Bullet Ricochets | 13 |
| The Game is Not Over | 15 |
| <i>A Global View</i> | 15 |
| Mexico | 15 |
| Marijuana Spraying in the USA | 16 |
| The Overview Worldwide | 19 |
| UN: Re-Affirm Versus Re-Assess | 20 |
| A New Escalation | 22 |
| <i>An Alternative Policy</i> | 24 |
| Supply Reduction Versus the Market | 25 |
| Harm Reduction | 26 |
| Drugs & Peace in Colombia | 26 |
| Commercial Plantations | 27 |
| Manual Eradication | 28 |
| Alternative Development | 29 |
| A Global Ban | 29 |
| <i>Footnotes</i> | 31 |
| <i>The 'Drugs & Democracy' Programme</i> | 33 |
| <i>Useful websites</i> | 34 |





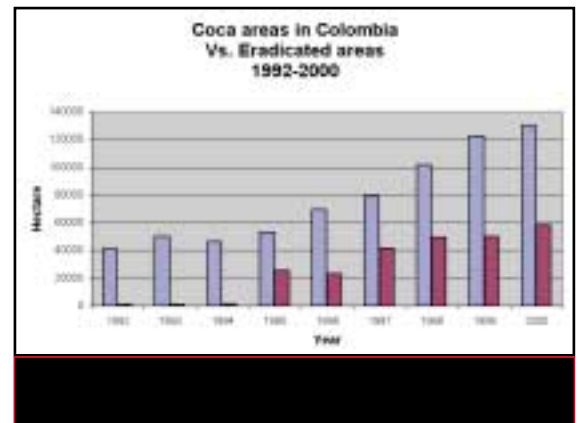
The spraying of marijuana in Colombia began in the ecologically sensitive Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta. This region was omitted from further spraying in 1993 due to mass protests. Working with affected communities, the Pro-Sierra Foundation predicted what would eventually become the pattern for opium and coca in the nineties: "This fumigation did not result in the definitive eradication of marijuana. To the contrary, it intensified the environmental damage, affected human health and more than anything, enlarged the distance between the peasant sector and the State with a considerable increase in social discontent. Unforeseen, the State helped to prepare the ground for the presence of several armed groups."²

CHEMICAL SPRAYING IN COLOMBIA

The aerial fumigation cycle causes chemical pollution affecting humans, animals and vegetation, and destroys the livelihood of peasant and indigenous communities forcing these groups to migrate deeper into the rainforest. This displacement accelerates the pace of deforestation where slash and burned plots are planted with illicit coca or poppy crops replacing those previously fumigated. The new plots are eventually fumigated and the cycle starts over again exacerbating the current armed conflict. More than 300,000 hectares of Colombian coca and opium poppy fields were sprayed with 3 million liters of Roundup herbicide over the past decade. Despite huge areas sprayed net coca cultivation tripled over this same period. Aerial fumigations have only accomplished setting in motion a Vicious Circle of destruction.

Fumigation

Aerial fumigation is part of the 'drugs supply reduction' strategy. The strategy is premised on reducing the availability of cocaine and heroin thus increasing the international market value. Ultimately, the theory argues that the higher the cost of illegal drugs, the lower the consumption levels. Figures clearly show, however, that in Colombia, this strategy does not work as coca production has increased threefold over the past decade.



Aerial fumigations in Colombia were initiated in three waves beginning in 1978 with marijuana, opium poppy in 1992 and coca in 1994. Initially Paraquat was the herbicide of choice but from 1984 until today, glyphosate has been used.

The Colombian Andean mountain range or 'coffee belt,' was the focus of concern in the early nineties leading to the second wave of aerial operations. Small coffee producers, approximately 350,000, saw their income drop dramatically after the 1989 end of the International Coffee Agreement (ICA). This had direct implications for the entire coffee-producing workforce of more than two million. Prices reduced to a quarter of pre-ICA levels resulted in massive job losses. As many moved uphill cutting down plots of Andean cloud forest to survive the crisis, the cultivation of opium poppy, which is the primary material for producing heroin, exploded. In the departments of Huila, Tolima and Cauca, an estimated 1,500 hectares in 1990 expanded to more than 19,000 in 1992. That year, the Anti-Narcotics Police started spraying these crops with Monsanto's Roundup. Official 1999 statistics estimated 8000 hectares of opium poppy were eradicated out of 15,500,⁴ however, poppy figures are considered highly inaccurate. Aerial detection is extremely difficult because fumigation has dispersed the cultivation into even smaller and often intercropped plots while the harvesting of poppy take place only four months after planting.

In 1993, the first indications of a more serious coca boom in the Amazonian southern parts of the country were apparent. A series of field tests, under US supervision, carried out in Panama on coca test plots demonstrated the effectiveness of Glyphosate when applied to coca bush. The Colombian

Narcotics Council started aerial fumigations of coca fields on February 11th, 1994 with an estimated extension of coca cultivation of 40.000 hectares. According to current US figures on Colombia, after spraying some 183.000 hectares, 122.500 hectares of coca remain,⁵ demonstrating the futility of the exercise.

President Samper (Colombia, 1994-1998) called for 'option zero' or the total elimination of all illicit cultivation within two years. Under his presidency aerial operations assumed an unprecedented intensity. The epicenters of the coca boom in the Guaviare and Caquetá departments were the targets of fumigation, both strongholds of the the largest guerrilla group, Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC). These areas crystallize the dynamics and mechanics of the Vicious Circle in terms of social and environmental devastation and the prospect for peace. Samper's focus on the Guaviare is the main reason for the subsequent coca explosion in the Putumayo, now the main target of Plan Colombia's 'Push into Southern Colombia,' including new fumigations that began on December 22nd, 2000.⁶

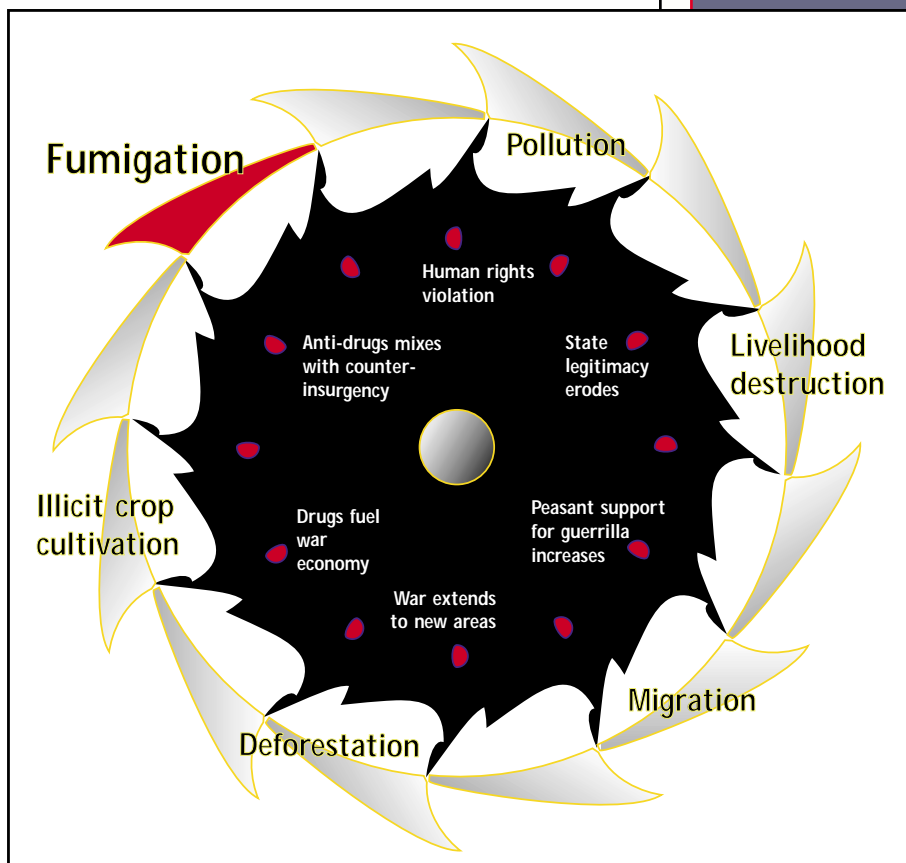
Pollution

It is difficult to estimate the direct environmental damage to the soil and water in fragile ecosystems like the Amazon rain forest and the Andean mountain cloud forests due to the spraying of chemical herbicides. Glyphosate is promoted as 'mild' because it allegedly breaks down quickly. However, in 1997 Monsanto was forced to remove the terms 'biodegradable' and 'environmentally friendly' from the glyphosate advertisements.⁸ The sprayed substance, however, contains ingredients other than just glyphosate and especially in the case of coca the amount actually used is very high. After several field trials, an average of 2.5 liters/hectare of the active ingredient glyphosate was deemed sufficient to destroy marijuana and poppy fields. Coca is a very strong bush so the dosage was recommended at 10.41 liters/hectare, in order to achieve a sufficient 'real kill percentage.'⁹

Roundup is a broad-spectrum herbicide severely affecting or killing other plants if sprayed including food crops like banana, yucca, cocoa, maiz, papaya etc. Eating contaminated crops or drinking polluted water leads to a range of health problems including vomiting, diarrhoea, nausea, and headaches according to peasant populations. The long-term consequences are still unknown. Pastoral land turns completely yellow but revives in six months. Young cattle, especially, lose hair after eating sprayed grass. Chickens often die after drinking Roundup-polluted water. If pools of water are slow moving, fish stocks become extinct.¹⁰

The damage the fumigations cause to the cananguchales is severe. Every cananguchal is like an oasis in open Amazon terrain. Groups of Canangucha Palm trees form the basis for the cananguchal and are

Between 1992-98, 140,858 hectares of coca were dusted with 1,897,357 liter of glyphosate, and 41,468 hectares of opium poppy were fumigated with 540,979 liter of the same chemical.¹ For 1999, a fumigation figure of over 42,000 hectares of coca and 8,000 of opium poppy was reported, and again 50,000 was set as the target for the year 2000. In six weeks of massive spraying beginning December 19th 2000, 29,000 hectares were fumigated.



Chemical spray mixture

In Colombia today, the spraying mixture used is Roundup Ultra plus the additives Cosmo-Flux 411F and Cosmo-In-D. Roundup, a commercial formula registered with Monsanto based on the active ingredient glyphosate, is one of the most commonly used herbicides. It is a systemic, broad-spectrum (non-selective) herbicide, used to control broad-leaved shrubs and plants inhibiting the synthesis of amino-acids. In addition to the active ingredient glyphosate, Roundup contains a variety of unlabelled 'inert' ingredients including a polyethoxylated tallowamine surfactant (POEA - polyoxyethylamine), used to increase the absorption of the active ingredient into the leaves. Roundup Ultra is a stronger glyphosate-based formula developed by Monsanto using an improved 'transorb' technique that greatly enhances the penetration into the leaves, again using a POEA surfactant where the precise formulation remains commercial secret. The two other 'inert ingredients' produced by Cosmoagro in Colombia are added to the mixture before spraying.



home to a range of animals and birds. Each oasis also maintains a permanent pool of water surrounding the palm trees, which is used for drinking by cattle and wild animals. Honored by local indigenous people, the canangucha represents their 'Tree of Life,' named appropriately for the many uses it offers for their survival. Apart from providing food and drink, the leaves produce a fiber used in clothing and roof construction while the stems are used to make bottles, bags and other useful items. Many of these cananguchal oases have been severely affected by the fumigations, either due to wind driven clouds of glyphosate, or absorption through the soil. Situated at low points in the terrain, rain and soil bring glyphosate from nearby sprayed fields. Once contaminated glyphosate makes the palm trees lose their capacity to absorb causing the entire cananguchales ecosystem to dry out leaving the surrounding vegetation and animal life to perish.

Spraying & Health problems

Glyphosate, when applied in recommend dosages is "less toxic than table salt or aspirin" and is similar to "baby shampoo in terms of irritation potential," according to US authorities. Complaints from people in the sprayed areas of flu-like symptoms including nausea, dizziness, vomiting, diarrhoea, respiratory problems, and skin rashes, are considered "scientifically impossible."¹¹ Most scientific studies only focus on glyphosate. There are some studies that refer to the commercial formulation Roundup, while there are no toxicological studies addressing the effects of the composition currently used in spraying. Complaints to local doctors are common in the weeks following the fumigations. In 1999 for example, doctor Enrique Cantillo of the hospital in Almaguer received complaints from 60 people in the indigenous reserve of Caquiona, in the Cauca department, for vomiting, diarrhoea, fever, muscle and headaches and intestinal problems shortly after spraying.¹² Doctor Nelson Palechor Obando of the hospital in Papayán, capital of Cauca said his patients, "complained of dizziness, nausea and pain in the muscles and joints of the limbs, and some also had skin rashes. We do not have the scientific means here to prove they suffered pesticide poisoning, but the symptoms they displayed were certainly consistent with that condition."¹³ After the November 2000 fumigations in the indigenous reserve of Aponte in the southern Nariño department, local doctor José Tordecilla reported that 80% of the children of the indigenous community fell sick



Cananguchal

Martin Jelsma

with skin rashes, fever, diarrhoea and eye infections. "This is a medical drama," he said.¹⁴ The Colombian Ombudsman's office made several missions to verify individual complaints received from other areas. To date, however, there has never been a medical field investigation or a systematic attempt to collecting information from local physicians, hospitals or health authorities.

Livelihood Destruction

The illegal agricultural sector is largely a colonization-driven, frontier, survival economy. Deep in the Amazon, there is a portion of the drug economy operated by traffickers who also act as absentee, anonymous landlords for plantations up to 150-200 hectares. The majority of opium poppy and coca, however, is cultivated on small (up to three hectares) and medium sized farms (up to 10 hectares) by poor peasant families for whom the illicit crops constitute the only available means of survival. The diminishing prices of agricultural products on the international markets and a counter agrarian reform agenda of the 1980's and 1990's meant that rural conditions worsened, resulting in economic instability and conflict. Many farmers and families were forcibly removed from their land by paramilitary groups, which lead to a re-concentration of land. Fleeing from war and without viable economic alternatives, hundreds of thousands of peasants took refuge in illicit agriculture and a new colonization process was set in motion.¹⁵ After intensive sprayings, 240,000 people dependant on the illicit economy revolted between July and September 1996, by marching, blocking roads and staging occupations throughout the country. The fumigations destroy the few promising attempts at implementing alternative development projects, which would, if successful, provide farmers with legal crop options. Establishing trust and cooperation with peasant farmers committed to phasing out their coca is severely threatened by indiscriminate spraying. Fumigation and alternative development in practice are simply incompatible strategies.

Migration

Loss of livelihood leads to displacement and migration. After coca, opium poppy and food crops have been fumigated the population is forced to move to urban centers or other rural areas. The peasants are not the only ones driven away. Raspachines, or the seasonal harvesters and the peripheral workforce supporting the coca economy, are also forced to migrate. Migration to urban slums generates grisly living conditions, unemployment and misery. Rural migration results in the search for available land to replace illicit crops often deeper in the Amazon rainforest or higher up the mountains. Often a devastating process for those involved, the move could be the second or third displacement as a result of war and fumigations. The intensified eradication plans for southern Colombia, implemented with support from the new Anti-Narcotics Army battalions, could displace up to 150,000 people.¹⁷ The US aid package for Colombia under the, "Push into Southern Colombia Coca Growing Areas" programme, reserves \$31 million to aid 10,000 people that, "will be displaced by the eradication campaign. Displaced persons will receive a 90-day emergency benefits package."¹⁸

The fumigations are increasingly affecting the Indigenous Peoples of Colombia and their native territory. The sprayings of Yanacona and other indigenous communities in the Andean mountain Cauca department prompted the Regional Indigenous Council of Cauca (CRIC) to mobilize 15,000 in protest in June 1999, which led to a temporary halt of the sprayings. The indigenous reserve of Aponte in

A State Department report explains: "Cosmo Flux-411F is a surfactant. It increases the herbicide penetration through the waxy layer of the coca leaf by allowing more of the spray to stick to the plant. [] Cosmo-In-D is an anti-foaming additive. It is used to minimize the foam created by the mixture-circulating pump inside the aircraft spray hopper."⁷



Little patient of doctor Tordecilla after spraying in Aponte, Colombia, November 2000
Kadir van Lohuizen



Almost a decade ago Mr. Bernardo Velásquez from the Caguán region in southern Caquetá, started to participate in a crop substitution project coordinated by the Catholic Church. He planted rubber trees amidst his three hectares of coca. 'Natural eradication,' occurs when the growing rubber trees shade the coca plants until they are eventually starved of sunlight. He replaced some of these coca plants with cocoa that grows well in the shade. After seven years, finally he could harvest the latex from the rubber trees but on April 16th, 1998 armed helicopters appeared, followed by a spray plane and within 30 minutes his dream of cultivating a different crop was dead. Determined to be less dependent on coca and create viable alternatives for his family, a decade of work was destroyed in front of his eyes. Roundup also sprayed his family home, fruit orchard and fishpond, killing all marine life. A week later his children were ill with nausea and diarrhoea, the rubber plantation was destroyed, and the cocoa was blackened.

(cont. box pag 7)

Nariño was sprayed twice in June and November 2000. The Cofán communities in southern Putumayo were among the targets for spraying in January 2001, as part of Plan Colombia's 'Push into Southern Colombia.' Unlike peasants who migrate deeper into the Amazon to replant crops, some Indigenous Peoples have refused to migrate even after fumigation and crop poisoning precisely because of their cultural and traditional connection to the land upon which they live. Other indigenous areas are also under pressure due to the migration of peasants to their native territory as a result of fumigations and crop displacement from surrounding areas. For example, the Nukak Natural Reserve located in the heart of the Colombian Amazon, is threatened as a result of the displacement of fumigated crops on the banks of the Inírida, Tomachipán, El Capricho, and Sabanas de Fuga, in the Guaviare department, located north and west of the Nukak reservation. To the south, conflicts have intensified due to displacement after massive fumigations in Miraflores (Guaviare) causing peasants to invade the lands of indigenous communities living in the Vaupés. The vicious cycle is increasingly geopolitical as the southeastern departments in the Amazon and Orinoco basin are drawn into the War on Drugs.¹⁹



Gerardo Moreno with dead cocoabush and rubber trees in the background Martin Jelsma

Deforestation

In the quest to hide from aerial fumigations, available land is generally found by moving higher up or deeper down into the Andean forests. The 'slash and burn' technique used to clear the land requires between one and a half and two hectares of cut forest for every replanted hectare of coca or poppy. According to statistics from the Colombian Ministry of Foreign Affairs from July 1999, "The cultivation of the coca plant alone has since its inception destroyed between 160.000 and 240.000 hectares of tropical jungle in the Orinoco and Amazon basins; and [] 30% of annual deforestation estimated in Colombia. In the Andean zone, the cultivation of opium poppy has destroyed approximately 60.000-100.000 hectares of Andean woodland and high Andean woodland of great ecological value, and these figures represent some 15% of the deforestation rate mentioned."²⁰

As these government figures far exceed the current numbers of hectares used for illicit cultivation, much of the deforestation is a direct consequence of the fumigation campaign and forced repositioning of coca and poppy fields deeper into the Andean and Amazon forests.

sequence of the fumigation campaign and forced repositioning of coca and poppy fields deeper into the Andean and Amazon forests.

"At this rate, Colombia's woodlands will be depleted in forty years. Such deforestation has increased the rate of extinction for many plant and animal species, many of which are endemic to the country. Furthermore, the social and economic fabrics of indigenous peoples who inhabit the forests are rapidly being destroyed. [...] Colombia's total forest coverage accounts for 10 percent of the earth's biodiversity. Behind Brazil, the country is considered the most bio diverse in the world."²¹

Illicit Crop Cultivation

The current fumigation strategy is based on the assumption that it is possible to cut off the supply at the level of production. In reality however, the supply is consistently restored providing the land

exists and the workers are willing to cultivate the crop. In the case of Colombia, the Amazon has inexhaustible potential,²² both in terms of land and workforce. The impoverished and internally displaced people of Colombia are desperate enough to do anything to survive. *“Every hectare fumigated means a hectare substituted,”* says Gloria Elsa Ramírez of the environmental section of the Defensoría del Pueblo, the governmental human rights ombudsperson.²³

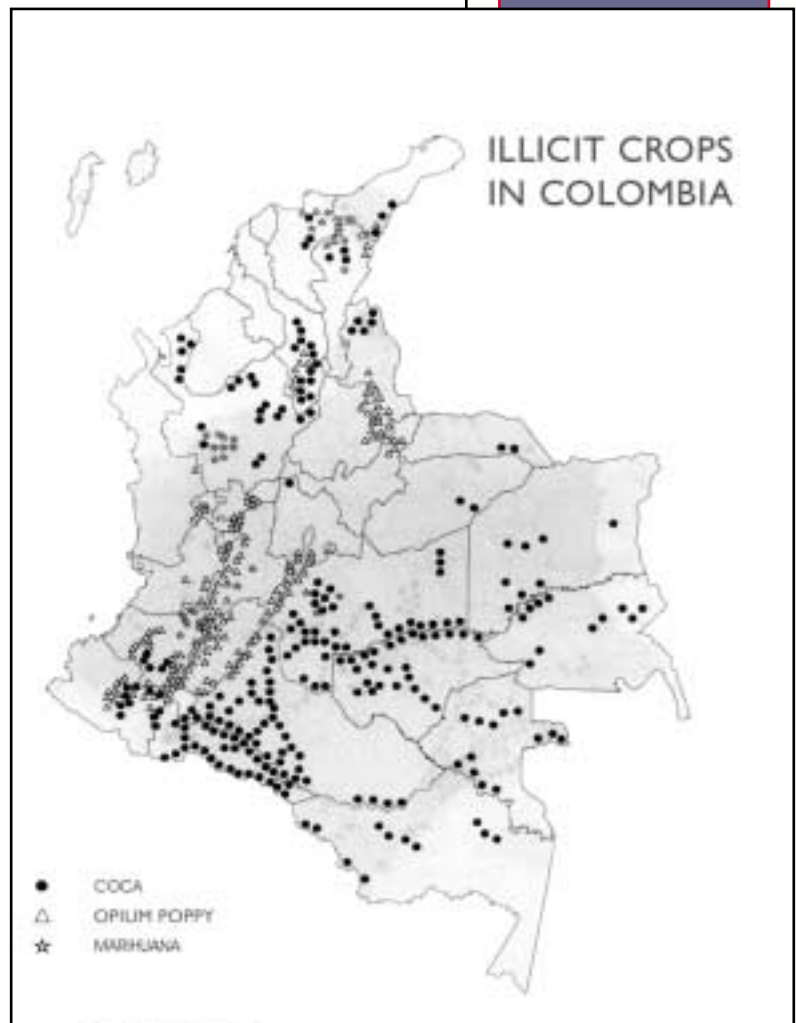
One of the arguments often used in defense of the fumigation operations is that drug crop cultivation and processing are far more environmentally damaging than spraying the fields. A clear example of this twisted logic comes from a UN expert group: *“The group recognized that herbicides were commercially available for the effective control of illicit cannabis, coca and opium poppy, and that these had been proven to be environmentally safe and non-toxic to humans. In view of the significant damage to the environment (including the destruction of forest ecosystems) resulting from illicit narcotic plant production, very high pesticide use and toxic extraction chemicals, the United Nations should promote and coordinate the use of approved herbicides for the control of coca, cannabis and opium poppy.”*²⁴ Drug crop cultivation and chemical processing of raw material into cocaine and heroin cause environmental damage, but the current fumigation policy is not an antidote to the environmental impacts made by illicit crops. Chemical spraying, directly and collaterally, increase the negative environmental effects of illicit crops. The continual displacement of crops caused by the aerial campaign multiplies the pace of deforestation of the Amazon and Andean mountain forests and spreads the polluting consequences of cultivation throughout these ecological pristine areas.

Fumigation and Conflict

The displaced crops are then again fumigated and the cycle continues. The US has pressured Colombia to increase the intensity of spraying and use a stronger and more hazardous granular herbicide in the aerial eradication programme. Illegal experiments with Imazapyr and Tebuthiuron have already occurred on Colombian soil despite opposition from the Colombian Ministry of Environment. The manufacturer of Tebuthiuron (Spike), Dow AgroSciences, strongly oppose its use in Colombia. *“Tebuthiuron is not labelled for use on any crops in Colombia, and it is our desire that the product not be used for coca eradication.”*²⁵

The opposition to the current operations is growing exponentially. Augusto Ramirez Ocampo, currently Minister of Economic Development, stated: *“Drug trafficking is the fuel that keeps this conflict burning. [...] Peace negotiations will have to be based on a development plan, and that plan will have to include real alternatives to narcotics cultivation.”* It cannot be based on crop spraying, *“that hasn’t worked.”* Juan Mayr, the Environment Minister, was cited: *“We can’t permanently fumigate the country.”* The opposition is supported by Klaus Nyholm, head of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP) in Colombia: *“the fumigation of crops is not effective,”* he said on numerous occasions, *“I don’t think you can spray your way out of this mess.”*²⁶

*The only crop that recovered completely nine months later was the small coca plot that he had kept, as his ‘insurance,’ planted alongside the rubber trees. Again, Bernardo and his family were forced to depend almost entirely on coca. The nearby finca of Gerardo Moreno who was involved in the same rubber conversion programme was also destroyed by spraying in 1998. He did not have a spare coca field, but still the remains of his finca were fumigated again on July 12th, 1999.*¹⁶



Los cultivos ilícitos, Política mundial y realidad en Colombia Defensoría del Pueblo, Bogotá, August 2000.

Jorge Devia, former governor of Putumayo: "The peasant farmers will just cut down more trees and plant more coca."



In January 2001, local authorities of seven departments (Putumayo, Caquetá, Nariño, Tolima, Huila, Santander, Norte de Santander) expressed their opposition in a joint statement: "We consider the indiscriminate use of aerial chemical fumigations, justified to combat drug trafficking, to be highly harmful to health, to the environment and to production. Colombia has applied this policy during 25 years without successful results." The governor of Norte de Santander, Juan Alcides Santaella, added: "The eradication of illicit crops is an activity that has to be developed in agreement with the community and with the regional and local authorities in the whole country."²⁷ The Ombudsman, Eduardo Cifuentes Muñoz, after visiting fumigated areas in Putumayo in February 2001, called for an immediate suspension. He said that the recent sprayings had affected no less than eleven alternative development projects in the department, including Plante projects implemented with European development assistance, three UNDCP projects and one 'manual eradication pact' signed in December 2000.²⁸

US officials refuse to listen to these opinions in Colombia and maintain that the US will only support Pastrana's peace efforts under the condition that aerial fumigation operations continue. "The anti-drug efforts between the US and Colombia, including aerial eradication, are not negotiable and will continue."²⁹ "We have made clear to all parties that the peace process must not interfere with counter narcotics cooperation, and that any agreement must permit continued expansion of all aspects of this cooperation, including aerial eradication."³⁰

"It is essential to eliminate the product where it is grown. Every day we delay eliminating these drugs, another hundred or a thousand kids could be addicted."³¹ Washington electoral rhetoric denies the complexity of the interconnectedness between an illegal-survival economy, anti-drugs operations and the armed

conflict. By sending more helicopters and spray planes, US drug warriors threaten a historic opportunity to end a forty-year war through a negotiated settlement. In the course of the Vicious Circle, human rights are violated, state legitimacy erodes, peasant support for the guerrilla increases, the war expands to new areas, drug production continues fueling the war economies of both guerrilla and paramilitary forces, and the anti-drugs mission is increasingly obscured with counterinsurgency objectives.



Helicopter spraying of opium poppy in Colombia

El Espectador

An editorial from a leading Colombian newspaper stated: "The relationship between the guerrilla and

coca cannot be denied and has contributed like no other factor to the escalation of the Colombian conflict. However, in its urge to combat this perverse relationship, the Colombian state should avoid deepening disastrous contradictions that erode its legitimacy, that intensify the conflict or that destroy the environment even more. If there are nowadays more than 100.000 hectares of coca and the Colombian Amazon disposes of 40 million of hectares for expanding the agricultural frontier, will this spiral of fumigations ever come to an end?"³²

THE BIOLOGICAL FRONT

Plans are underway to execute a biological front in the War on Drugs. There has been disappointment around the efficacy of chemical spraying and concern regarding the environmental impact. Biological herbicides to destroy drug crops are considered a promising and lasting tool in international drug control. A plague, intentionally introduced, with killer spores that disperse and multiply will have a lasting affect, according to the proponents. This biological weapon should prevent the replanting and displacement of crops and would supposedly be 'environmentally safer' because the ingredients used are 'natural' in origin. Scientists from around the world have been working on this project for almost twenty years and are now ready to experiment with pathogenic fungi to fight coca, cannabis and opium poppy. There are fungi prepared 'offering exciting potential,' for each illicit crop. The US government has been driving this agenda, but the United Kingdom financially backed the first open field test project in Central Asia. The United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP) embraced the plans and continues playing the dubious role of promoting research in this area.

Plans to initiate a series of open field tests of the *Fusarium oxysporum* fungus, under the auspices of the UNDCP, to evaluate its effectiveness against coca bush and its environmental impact prompted a controversy in 2000. According to the draft project document, "At the end of this project, an environmentally safe, reliable and effective specific biological control agent for coca bush will be available for use in Colombia, the rest of the Andean region and, possibly elsewhere in the world."³³ The project intended to sufficiently test, develop and manufacture the coca-killing mycoherbicide for large-scale aerial application by 2002. This new form of bio-warfare has been considered the potential 'silver bullet' in the War on Drugs making the Amazon soil unfit to grow coca for many, many years. The project raised serious issues including the unknown impact the fungus could have on other plant species, the social consequences for the war-driven refugees and the role the UN has played in facilitating such a controversial agenda. The introduction of another eradication agent, regardless of 'safety' or 'efficiency,' does not address the logic underlying the illegal drugs market, which is operating in an impoverished and war-torn society. For the moment, as a result of widespread controversy around the potential testing and application, the Colombian *Fusarium* project has been put on hold.

The Need for a Multilateral Disguise

The project was intended to isolate, test and develop the so-called 'EN-4 strain' of *Fusarium oxysporum* into a granular form. EN-4 was first discovered when it destroyed a coca-test field, established by the Coca Cola Company in Hawaii, and was further developed by the Agricultural Research Service (ARS) of the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) laboratories. An epidemic of the *Fusarium* fungus severely affected coca fields in Peru in the 1980's, and since then the idea of creating biological epidemics has been considered the potential 'silver bullet' in the War on Drugs.

The US Congress, in 1998, approved a \$23 million package part of which was earmarked to intensify the research putting *Fusarium* into operation by 2002. Two Republican Congress leaders, Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott and House Speaker Dennis Hastert, called for "the early deployment of mycoherbicides in FARC and ELN controlled zones,"³⁴ in an August 1999 letter to then President Clinton. An internal State Department 'action request' confirms the willingness to provide \$400,000 for a pilot stage of the project, "however we urge UNDCP to solicit funds from other governments, in order to avoid a perception that this is solely a US Government initiative."³⁵ Similarly,

As the draft project document states: "USDA research in the area stems from the mid 1980's when disease epidemic, subsequently found to be caused by the plant pathogenic fungus *Fusarium oxysporum* f. sp. *Erythroxyli*, caused widespread death of coca plants in the Upper Huallaga valley in Peru. This wilt disease has been the focus of extensive research and is clearly identified as having enormous potential as a biological control agent. It is specific to *Erythroxylum* species, causes a debilitating disease that persist in the soil for several years, so preventing re-planting of the illicit crop."



Uzbekistan Project Document

"The fear of national authorities that chemical interventions, with their broad spectrum of action, will have unacceptable impact on the ecosystem is understandable."
 "A series of Expert Group Meetings had been organized by UNDCP [...]. The above meetings recognized that the Republics of Central Asia were offering a unique potential for the establishment of a broad-based Research and Development Programme to establish environmentally safe, reliable methods of eradication of illicit plants which would be acceptable not only to the Governments of the Central Asian countries, but also to Governments elsewhere."

"An isolate of *Pleospora papaveracea* has been obtained from a diseased plant of corn poppy (*P. rhoeas*). This indicates that the specificity of this fungal species is not absolute and strengthens the need to investigate this aspect further. Infection of corn poppy, in itself, is not a problem as this plant is considered as a weed throughout Europe and North America and has no significant conservation value."

the draft project document explains the necessity for the multilateral guise by stating, "If development of a biological control agent for coca bush is to be achieved and the agent is to be successfully applied, the necessary research and development must, for political reasons as well as for scientific rigor and veracity, be done in an Andean region country and must be funded by the UNDCP and progressed under UNDCP management and control."

The Quest for 'Environmentally Safe' Eradication

There is a history to UNDCP's willingness to promote this highly controversial quest. High concentrations of Paraquat were found in marijuana in the US in the late 1970's causing a popular panic and political controversy. The Paraquat found in the marijuana came from a herbicide used in Mexican aerial eradication. "Paraquat-Fever," led to a group of international experts coming together in the scientific quest to find a less potentially hazardous ingredient for eradication. Experts representing ten countries, facilitated by the UN, met regularly to exchange data on environmental impact assessments, the efficacy of chemical spraying and research on promising new chemical and biological control agents. This 'Expert Group on Environmentally Safe Means of the Eradication of Illicit Narcotic Plants,' operating in the shadow of the UN Commission on Narcotic Drugs met for two decades and had their recommendations elevated to an operational stage after Pino Arlacchi was appointed executive director of the UNDCP, in September 1997.

In its 1989 report to the UN Commission on Narcotic Drugs, the Expert Group "acknowledged that a major contribution to eradication programmes could be made by biological control strategies in the foreseeable future. It agreed that every opportunity should be made to foster the development and adoption of such strategies while recognizing that their introduction would not replace the use of herbicides in some situations."³⁶ They recommended initiating, under UN supervision, an intensive international research programme "at the earliest opportunity." That opportunity did not arise until many years later.

Under the directorship of Arlacchi, the UNDCP developed its widely criticized Strategy for Coca and Opium Poppy Elimination (SCOPE) between 1997-1998 with the intention of completely eradicating all illicit cultivation of coca and opium poppy by the year 2008. Arlacchi failed to have the plan endorsed at the UN General Assembly Special Session on Drugs in June 1998, but many elements of the integral strategy continued to be developed. In paragraph 75 the SCOPE plan notes: "UNDCP also intends to test, through an applied research programme in Uzbekistan, a biological control agent based on the plant pathogenic fungus *Dendryphion papaveraceae*. The agent is claimed to have been found in other central Asian States. An important step will be to confirm its natural occurrence throughout the region (in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan), which would contribute to ascertaining whether it is environmentally safe for use in poppy-growing areas, especially in central Asia." In February 1998, the UNDCP signed a \$650,000 contract with the Institute of Genetics in Tashkent, a former Soviet biological warfare laboratory, in Uzbekistan, for a 3.5 year research programme to develop a "reliable biological control agent" for opium poppy.³⁷ M.P. Greaves, an expert from the Bristol-based IACR-Long Ashton Research Station, was contracted as a consultant and provided training for the researchers of Tashkent. "We've been looking for something like this for years and years" said Cherif Koudri, head of UNDCP laboratory in Vienna, "It would hearten all of us if we were to find that it was indigenous to Afghanistan," which would open the door to large-scale application in the world's main opium producing country.³⁸

Bringing the Bio-War to Colombia

"Herbicides are currently most disfavored, despite their efficacy, on grounds of public and Governmental concerns that they will damage the environment," and "there is considerable organized public opposition

to their use, which has resulted in political opposition, on grounds of environmental damage risk, especially in rainforest areas," according to the draft Fusarium project for Colombia. Therefore, the scientists focused their efforts on developing a fungal solution: "The development of a highly specific, effective, reliable, environmentally safe biological agent, that has been exhaustively tested in a coca producing country, obviates these concerns."

Mr. Greaves, IACR-LARS consultant for the Uzbekistan project, was subsequently contracted by UNDCP to evaluate the longstanding USDA research project on the Fusarium fungus and to advise the UNDCP on the possibility of a similar breakthrough in coca bio-control in the Andean region. "He recommended strongly that UNDCP should become involved in the further development of this agent and that priority should be given to establishment of a research programme in Colombia that emphasized the environmental safety of the agent." This issue then became integral to the negotiations between the US State Department and the Pastrana government over 'Plan Colombia.' The 'Plan for Peace, Prosperity and the Strengthening of the State' in the published edition of October 1999, states as one of its objectives, "Strengthen and increase the employment of combined security operations during fumigation and eradication operations. Support the new strategies under the United Nations International Drug Control Programme to test and develop environmentally safe and reliable biological control agents, thereby providing new eradication technologies."

Environment and Other Concerns

Apart from the 'EN-4' strain selected for the coca eradication programme experiments with other Fusarium strains against opium poppy and marijuana have continued.³⁹ Reacting to a 1999 proposal to start a similar project aimed at destroying marijuana cultivation in Florida, Secretary of the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, David Struhs said; "Fusarium species are capable of evolving rapidly... Mutagenicity is by far the most disturbing factor in attempting to use a Fusarium

Draft Fusarium project document: "It is recognized by many that effective progress with such a drug plant eradication programme could only be made if the research was seen to be a multinational programme, preferably under the auspices of the United Nations. At the same time, the Colombian government has developed a keen interest in the biological control strategy, (...), and is prepared to establish appropriate field tests, provided that the United Nations supervises and controls the programme of activities."



Coca paste lab

Martin Jelsma

Juan Mayr: "The Environmental Ministry in name of the national government, and taking into account the scientific arguments brought forward by our experts, by academic sectors and by NGOs, has issued a clear rejection of the introduction, experimentation and/or application of the proposed *Fusarium Oxysporum*, because it constitutes an element foreign to our ecosystem that could put in danger the integrity of the environment and human health." ⁴⁶

species as a bioherbicide. It is difficult, if not impossible, to control the spread of *Fusarium* species. The mutated fungi can cause disease in a large number of crops, including tomatoes, peppers, flowers, corn and vines, and are normally considered a threat to farmers as a pest, rather than as a pesticide. *Fusarium* species are more active in warm soils and can stay resident in the soil for years. Their longevity and enhanced activity under Florida conditions are of concern, as this could lead to an increased risk of mutagenicity." ⁴⁰

The *Fusarium* fungus produces a variety of dangerous toxins, raising serious concerns about potential food crop poisoning and risks to human health risks.⁴¹ There are specific indications that researchers at the USDA laboratory have "developed a transformation system in *Fusarium oxysporum* to allow alteration of the gene expression,"⁴² of the fungus and have proposed "the development of strains with enhanced pathogenicity using molecular genetic manipulations involving fungal proteins."⁴³ The UN Expert Group also stated, "modern technology offered many opportunities for the improvement of biological control efficacy in fungal pathogens. In addition to selection procedures to isolate strains of high virulence, simple mutations and adaptations as well as protoplast fusion techniques offered significant opportunities."⁴⁴

The Silver Bullet Ricochets

The draft *Fusarium* project document clearly stated several concerns, which eventually did manifest. For example, under 'project risks' it mentioned, "The political sensitivity of the project area may result in adverse reaction from neighbouring countries, the general public and environmental and political pressure groups, particularly in connection with the issue that once released the pathogen may transform or mutate and become pathogenic to, inter alia, desirable plant species" (p.19). Indeed, scientists, environmentalists, drug policy experts and indigenous peoples responded with an avalanche of critique arguing that the intentional release of a plague of this nature could trigger grave environmental consequences, infect human beings, threaten food security, and would quickly cause new displacement of people and illicit crops



Coca paste drying in the sun

Martin Jelsma

deeper into the Amazon. As a result, by mid-2000 the Colombian government rejected the project. Initially, however, in doing so the government felt obliged to propose a replacement. They offered an elaborate alternative proposal, prepared by the Environment Ministry, to develop 'native' biological agents for coca eradication.⁴⁵ The Colombian government kept its options open through this research to the potential launch of a biological front in the War on Drugs. This was in compliance with specific conditions of the Plan Colombian aid package that required the government's cooperation on biological eradication. It was precisely at this moment that the aid package was being discussed in the US Congress.

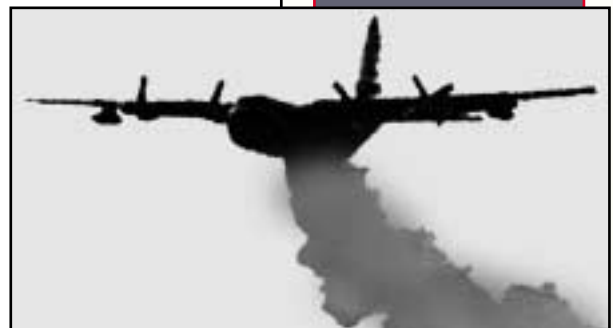
Concerns also spread across the region. In Peru, a decree was issued prohibiting the use of any chemical or biological means for coca eradication.⁴⁷ While Ecuador banned the introduction of *Fusarium* into its territory,⁴⁸ the Andean Committee of Environmental Authorities declared its, "rejection of the use of the fungus, *Fusarium oxysporum*, as a tool for the eradication of illicit crops in the territory of the Member countries of the Andean Community."⁴⁹ This collective resistance led to UNDCP withdrawing from the project. UNDCP representative for Colombia and Ecuador, Klaus Nyholm explained, "because of the disagreements about the project proposal expressed by various experts and the negative response from the Colombian government, UNDCP has not undertaken and could not take any steps to put in motion the activities proposed by the project."⁵⁰ Vienna headquarters confirmed, "UNDCP is neither implementing, or planning to implement, or discussing the possibility of implementing a bio-control project in Colombia or anywhere else in the Andes."⁵¹ And finally, in January 2001, Environment Minister Juan Mayr announced that the domestic research programme would also be abandoned. In a letter to congressman Rafael Ordúz, a strong opponent of the biological warfare plans, Mayr wrote, "We have decided not to continue with the analysis of the project considering that the conditions do not exist to develop it in its research phase."⁵²

The Game is Not Over

UNDCP has not yet questioned its role in the Uzbekistan fungus project co-funded by the United Kingdom and where *Pleospora papaveraceae* field tests proceed without any independent monitoring. This particular fungus could be ready for use in opium eradication programmes in Central Asia very soon. The UNDCP continues to defend its mandate to develop, 'safer eradication agents' using misleading discourse on environmental protection. The UN has also failed to explain why this agency is involved, at all, in developing tools for forced eradication, a strategy, which is strongly opposed by many of its member states.

The story may also not be over in Colombia. Statements made in a BBC-TV documentary suggest that the United States will not easily retreat on this issue. David Sands first isolated *Fusarium* in Hawaii almost two decades ago and has devoted his professional life since then to the development of this fungus. Currently at his private Ag/Bio Con company and on faculty at the University of Montana, he believes that the Colombian government does not have the moral right to reject *Fusarium*. "I think they should suffer the consequences of that decision." Despite Colombia's rejection of the *Fusarium* and in violation of Colombia's national sovereignty, Sands argues for spraying huge quantities of spores using military cargo planes without Colombia's consent. "It could be put on in a matter of 17 airplane sorties for a particular country and that would take out coca. It seems to me that we want something like that, that blankets an entire area so that if the farmer decides to extend his holdings out and grow some more, the fungus is already there." When asked about Colombia's refusal, US Assistant Secretary of State Rand Beers said: "It would be very difficult to recover from that but I'm never prepared to admit that it's over."⁵⁴ Evidently, the US is not yet willing to accept the defeat of its silver bullet.

NGO statement on Biosafety: "We urge governments to condemn the development and any use of genetically engineered organisms for use as Biological Weapons to eradicate crops as a plain violation of the spirit and letter of the Biosafety Protocol. We invite governments specifically to reject the use of biological agents to trigger plant disease epidemics in crops, such as strains of *Fusarium oxysporum* and *Pleospora papaveraceae*, whether genetically modified, products of mutagenesis or other breeding, or naturally occurring virulent isolates, to eradicate illicit crops in Colombia and the Andes, considering the effects on human health, and on indigenous and local communities practices and the biological and cultural diversity of the entire Amazon Region."⁵³



C-130 cargo plane; image used by David Sands in overhead sheet presentation of his *Fusarium* project in Bogota



Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA): "Foreign countries have turned to the United States for leadership in narcotic and drug enforcement because of its support for herbicidal eradication of opium and cannabis in source countries throughout the world. The United States resolve is to employ these same eradication techniques, which have been questionable to some against domestic produced marijuana. During the past year the traditional manual eradication of cannabis was supplemented with an ambitious herbicidal spray operation in Hawaii. These techniques should send a strong message to cannabis producing countries." ⁶⁵

A GLOBAL VIEW

Mexico

Colombia and Mexico are the only two countries today where mass aerial fumigations are systematically applied. The introduction of the chemical War on Drugs can be traced back to 1971 when the first opium poppy fields and marijuana plantations were eradicated with herbicides in Mexico. At the same time, small-scale spraying of marijuana plantations took place in Kansas using 2,4-D while research on the utility and efficacy of 2,4-D, Paraquat and Roundup on different crops was conducted by the state of Mississippi. ⁵⁵ Based on these experiences, Paraquat was selected to destroy marijuana and the 2,4-D, one of the two ingredients in the infamous defoliant Agent Orange used in the Vietnam war, was chosen to prevent the expansion of opium poppy fields in Mexico.



El Espectador

Larger scale aerial operations took place within the context of the first major US-Mexican anti-drug Operation Condor in 1975. In the three following years the US invested \$30 million in the operation including a fleet of 39 Bell spray helicopters and 22 small planes used for reconnaissance trips. In 1978, for the first time, Paraquat was used for a short period in Colombia until "Paraquat-Fever" broke in the US. Paraquat found in marijuana on the US market provoked a public panic and a political controversy that year which led to a temporary suspension of the spraying programmes. They did resume operations in 1982 after the US Congress approved a \$37.7 million package for eradication abroad, which was also intended to export the Mexico model to other countries.

In Mexico today aerial eradication operations using Paraquat continue. More than half of the eradication however, is on the ground through manual eradication. According to government figures, Mexico has approximately 50,000 hectares of opium poppy and marijuana plantations. The anti-drug agency claims 85% of the crops are destroyed annually while acknowledging that the crops are replanted at almost the same rate of eradication. Mexico has more than two-dozen spraying heli-

copters and reconnaissance planes in the air everyday.⁵⁶ The spraying of Paraquat has had serious repercussions, in an isolated indigenous community in Chorugüi, Chihuahua. In July 2000 spraying operations in this region caused severe health problems among the Tarahumara population. The Chihuahua State Human Rights Office reported the death of a two-year old child two days after the spraying. More than 300 villagers developed respiratory problems, temporary blindness, severe nausea and open sores and many farm animals have died.⁵⁷

Marijuana Spraying in the USA

Domestic cultivation of marijuana in the United States increased six-fold over the 1980's in direct response to the US operations against marijuana production in Mexico and Colombia. Today almost half of the marijuana consumed in the US is grown domestically compared with the 10% in 1980. Production is concentrated in Kentucky, California, Alabama, Connecticut, Hawaii, Tennessee, West Virginia, Virginia, Maine and Rhode Island. Marijuana is the crop with the largest revenue in these states according to a 1998 survey.⁵⁸ According to this survey marijuana ranked fourth out of all US cash crops amassing a greater value to farmers than tobacco, wheat or cotton. The DEA started supporting manual eradication in California and Hawaii in 1975 and within five years 50 states participated in the "Domestic Cannabis Eradication/Suppression Programme."⁵⁹ At that point, the military became involved with the National Guard providing helicopter support for aerial eradication.

The DEA wanted to make the spraying of herbicides a key factor in the programme however, 'Paraquat-Fever' in the late seventies posed serious obstacles. In April 1979 the secretary of health issued a warning that smoking Paraquat-tainted marijuana could cause permanent scarring of lung tissue. Congress passed legislation banning funds from the foreign aid budget to be used in Paraquat spraying in other countries.⁶⁰ At the end of 1981 the ban was lifted, but when the DEA introduced Paraquat on a smaller scale in November of that year in Georgia and proposed its application in several other states, the controversy exploded again and protest petitions poured into the White House. Even the company controlling the US distribution of the British produced Paraquat, Chevron Chemical Co., condemned its application for marijuana. In a letter the company explained: "The product label bears the word 'poison' and the skull and crossbones insignia, but terrifying people in order to modify their social behavior is not a registered use."⁶¹ Several attempts in the early 1980's to restart the aerial spraying were prevented, effectively, by protests and legal action.

Applying herbicides on US soil has also been driven by foreign policy considerations to improve negotiations abroad. As one US official said in 1982: "We are encouraging other countries to use it and I think it would be extremely hypocritical if we wouldn't be willing to do it here."⁶² The US pressured Colombia and Jamaica to follow Mexico's crop dusting example while both countries argued that the US should prove the safety of these programmes by spraying domestically before imposing these methods on other countries. The failure to start fumigations in US in the 1980's weakened the US negotiating position abroad. This led to a renewed effort in the early nineties to start domestic eradication.

Dr. Daniel Susott, an Oahu physician, Hawaii: "Unless the DEA can prove that the spraying is less dangerous to personal, community and environmental health than the plant they are trying to eradicate, there is no justification for this expensive waste of taxpayers' money,"⁶⁶



Marijuana plant

Jan Sennema

The Drug-Czar William Bennett called the situation in 1990 as 'intolerable' and proposed to increase domestic eradication spending from \$9 million to more than \$36 million for 1990/1. Bennett argued: "If we don't act on our own land, we have no place to stand when we ask others to act on theirs."⁶³ That same year aerial spraying with Roundup began in Hawaii and until now, this is the only US state where it has been applied on such a significant scale. A Hawaiian physician, Dr. Patricia Bailey, found that among local residents from the sprayed areas flu-like symptoms including nausea, headaches, diarrhoea and fatigue as well as eye and respiratory tract irritation were commonplace. She concluded that the human health effects were serious and that, "there is statistical significance to the complaints."⁶⁴



Opium poppyfield in North Thailand

Tom Kramer

The Overview Worldwide

Across the Americas several countries, apart from Mexico and Colombia, have periodically permitted spraying operations or participated in field experiments testing the efficacy of different chemicals. Burma briefly used aerial spraying of 2,4-D for opium poppy between 1986 and 1988 and just recently these methods have been used in Southern Africa.

Operations that began in Mexico became a regionally coordinated effort expanding to Guatemala and Belize. After the Congressional ban was lifted, cannabis spraying was extended first to Belize in 1982 and then Colombia restarted spraying marijuana with Roundup on a large-scale from 1985 to 1989. Marijuana eradication peaked in 1986, when a record number of hectares were fumigated with Roundup in Colombia, Belize and Jamaica. That year Colombia sprayed 9,700 of an estimated 12,500 hectares; Belize 2,425 of the estimated 3,000 hectares; and Jamaica sprayed 2,200 of an estimated 4,800 hectares. Today Belize and Jamaica have stopped all aerial spraying due to environmental issues. Jamaica is the fourth largest marijuana producing country in the Americas and attempts at re-introducing the spraying have met with strong resistance. "As a matter of public policy and reflecting popular opinion, Jamaica is opposed to aurally applied herbicide as a means of eradicating cannabis. Manual cutting is the method utilized. Growers routinely interplant cannabis among legitimate crops. The GOJ [Government of Jamaica] and the environmental community believe that aerial spraying of herbicide would cause long-term ill effects to individuals and the environment."⁶⁷

Guatemala, in 1987, entered into a bilateral drug eradication agreement with the US. Initially the spraying was carried out from bases in Belize targeting marijuana and opium poppy fields in the Peten region, San Marcos, El Quiche, Huehuetenango, Quetzaltenango and northern Solala. Both Roundup and 2,4-D were used at this initial stage. In 1989 the programme was intensified to completely destroy all opium poppy cultivation. The peak year was 1990, when 1,085 hectares –of a total of 1,930- were sprayed with Roundup from Aeres Turbo Trush aircraft owned by the Narcotic Affairs Section (NAS) of the US embassy, complete with DEA pilots. By 1994 the situation was controlled, which is the reason the NAS aircraft were transferred to Colombia where the opium poppy and coca explosions had become a serious concern. Official US statistics from 1997 claimed that only 10 hectares of opium poppy remained in Guatemala hailing it the most successful example of the aerial eradication strategy. Occasionally Guatemala still sprays, especially marijuana fields in the Peten region, which is the largest area of untouched rainforest in Central America. The effects of the intense Guatemalan fumigation campaign from 1987-1992, which coincided with the dirty counterinsurgency operations, are still largely an untold social drama. Many of those indigenous people working in the survival economy of illicit agriculture were part of the massive exodus and ended up in refugee camps in Mexico.

Colombia began opium poppy eradication operations in 1992 and sprayed 10,000 hectares in that first year. Coca spraying began two years later, after a long history of experiments across the Andean region. In April 1982, 85 hectares of coca were fumigated with 2,4-D in Bolivia. Coca farmers protested, with the support of local scientists, bringing the fumigations to a complete halt in Bolivia. Between 1985 and 1986 several field tests were conducted in the Guaviare department of Colombia with Triclopyr (Garlon 4) and Tebuthiuron (Spike). The site was also the testing ground for various helicopter and spray plane techniques. By the end of 1987 open field tests were taking place in Peru with Tebuthiuron, Hexaxinone and various other herbicides supervised by the US Agricultural Research Service (ARS). As was the case in Bolivia, the Peruvian government made the decision in 1990 to suspend the test programme. The ARS continued to experiment, this time in Panama in 1993, testing the efficacy of Roundup. By 1996, the entire small-scale coca cultivation along the Colombian border of the eastern Darien region was eradicated as a result of the 'tests.' Based on the result of these 'tests,' Colombia started using Roundup for coca eradication in 1994.

*Law 1008, Bolivia 1988: "The production, reduction, substitution and eradication of coca crops, have to take into account the preservation of the ecosystem and the norms that regulate agricultural and forestal activities. The reduction has to guarantee that the methods used do not produce harmful effects to the environment or persons, be it on the short, medium or long term; for the reduction and eradication of coca crops only manual and mechanical methods will be used, the use of chemicals, herbicides, biological agents and defoliants is prohibited."*⁶⁸



MULTILATERAL LEGAL FRAMEWORK

The UN Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs, created in 1961, is the basis for the multilateral legal framework used as a reference for eradication policies, which categorize many plants containing psychoactive substances as illegal. In the annexed 'List 1' for example, cocaine as well as the coca leaf are prohibited. The signatories commit to "as far as possible enforce the uprooting of all coca bushes which grow wild. They shall destroy the coca bushes if illegally cultivated."⁶⁹ Due to pressure from Peru and Bolivia, where the chewing of coca is an ancient practice among indigenous peoples, an exception has been made for traditional and cultural consumption. A specific exception is also made in the Single Convention (Art. 27) for the Coca Cola Company, which uses the coca leaf as a flavouring agent. With regards to marijuana, the "Convention shall not apply to the cultivation of the cannabis plant exclusively for industrial purposes (fibre and seed) or horticultural purposes" (Art. 28-2). The UN Vienna Convention against Illicit Traffic in 1988 obliges all parties to "take appropriate measures to prevent illicit cultivation of and to eradicate plants containing narcotic or psychotropic substances, such as opium poppy, coca bush and cannabis plants, cultivated illicitly in its territory"⁷⁰

The United Nations created an apparatus to ensure that signatories complied with the Conventions. The Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND) is the policy-making body operating under the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). The International Narcotics Control Board (INCB) controls convention compliance by issuing an annual report on the performance of each party. The UN International Drug Control Programme UNDCP was created in 1990 as the agency to implement projects promoting the objectives of the conventions and of the CND resolutions. The UN Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention (ODCCP) is the umbrella agency established at the end of the nineties to enhance inter-agency cooperation between UNDCP and the UN anti-crime department.

A UN General Assembly Special Session was convened on drugs in 1998. The Political Declaration from UNGASS; "Welcomes the global approach by the United Nations International Drug Control Programme to the elimination of illicit crops, and commit ourselves to working closely with the Programme to develop strategies with a view to eliminating or reducing significantly the illicit cultivation of the coca bush, the cannabis plant and the opium poppy by the year 2008."⁷¹

The Vienna Convention refers to the facilitating role the UN is to play in herbicide and biological research, yet the convention does not specify eradication methods for illicit crops. "The Parties shall also facilitate the exchange of scientific and technical information and the conduct of research concerning eradication" (Art. 14). The same article includes several words of precaution: "The measures adopted shall respect fundamental human rights and shall take due account of traditional licit uses, where there is historic evidence of such use, as well as the protection of the environment."

UN: Re-Affirm Versus Re-Assess

The UN anti-drug apparatus, historically, kept a distance from all US inspired and financed chemical operations. There has never been UN involvement with the actual implementation of aerial spraying operations. Over the 1980's debates and discourse within the UN Commission on Narcotic Drugs, developed in a direction acknowledging the 'shared responsibility' between the north and the south in addressing the global drug issue. It was widely recognized that the agricultural crisis in developing countries was a key factor in contributing to the expansion of the illegal economy and therefore developmental assistance was needed to provide viable alternatives to the peasant communities. The discourse also emphasized northern responsi-



Raw opium harvesting in Thailand

Tom Kramer

ility including the demand, chemical precursors used to process raw material, money laundering and synthetic drug production. In keeping with the discourse of 'shared responsibility,' in 1990 the UN founded its drug control programme (UNDCP) focusing on two priorities, demand reduction and alternative development.

The global War on Drugs became even more polarized in 1998. Given the continuous rise in consumption and production of illegal drugs, it is widely acknowledged that the drug control efforts of the last decade have failed. There are two schools of thought on the next stage and for some, the time has come to re-assess current anti-drug policies, even reconsider the foundations of the conventions. Others conclude there is a need to re-affirm the agreed principles or reinforce the commitment and political will to reach the stated objectives and apply current policies with more force to achieve concrete results. The two visions clashed at the United Nations General Assembly Special Session (UNGASS) on Drugs, which took place in June 1998, ten years after the adoption of the Vienna Convention.

The then newly appointed UNDCP director Pino Arlacchi, pushed the UNDCP into the camp to 're-affirm' the drug policy agenda. He did so with statements like, *'The War on Drugs has not been fought and lost, it has never really started.'* The UNGASS motto, *'A Drug Free World – We can do it!'* proposed by Arlacchi, reinforced his plan to eliminate drugs from the world within a decade. To reach that goal, UNDCP elaborated an ambitious plan called SCOPE, the Strategy for Coca and Opium Poppy Elimination by 2008. UNDCP expected UNGASS to approve SCOPE, which called for a mix of alternative development projects and forced eradication operations wiping out illicit crops in Colombia, Bolivia, Peru, Burma, Laos, Vietnam, Afghanistan and Pakistan, the eight countries where coca and opium production is concentrated.⁷² SCOPE brought back the 'Zero Option' rhetoric of total elimination, shifting the burden of responsibility back to the producing countries.

Serious obstacles, however, have prevented the rapid implementation of the intended strategies. First, UNDCP's SCOPE plan was not endorsed by UNGASS. At the Vienna preparatory meetings, the proposal was criticized harshly by several member states, which led UNDCP to reconsider presenting SCOPE to the General Assembly. Even though the political declaration supports some of its principles, since March 1998 the term SCOPE has disappeared from UNDCP documents and today, officially, it no longer exists. After having lost the opportunity to use UNGASS to re-assess current anti-drug policies, countries like Mexico and Colombia with support from several European countries and other like-minded nations including Australia and Canada tried to safeguard the concept of 'shared responsibility.' They ensured that the final declarations also reaffirmed the principles of a 'balanced approach', 'non-intervention in internal affairs', 'full respect for all human rights' and that articles referring to crop eradication 'stress the special importance of cooperation in alternative development' and pay 'special attention to protection of the environment.'⁷³

OAS/CICAD
Multilateral Evaluation
Mechanism
Hemispheric Report
1999-2000

"There is evidence that alternative development programs can only be successful insofar as they are part of a long-term comprehensive strategy linked to control and prevention."



Pulverizing of coca leaves in lab

Martin Jelsma



Republican representative Bill McCollum introduces the "Western Hemisphere Drug Elimination Act" to the House of Representatives in July 1998: "Everyone involved in fighting to control drug use in America agrees that the demand side is very important. Prevention, education, treatment and law enforcement are all critical elements of a successful anti-narcotics programme. But with the streets of our nation flooded with more cocaine and heroin at cheaper prices than at any time in our history no one should expect demand-side efforts to succeed until the supply of drugs coming into our nation from abroad is dramatically reduced. The \$2.3 billion authorization bill being introduced today is designed to provide the resources and the direction to wage a real war on drugs before they get to the borders of the United States. The Administration plan promulgated earlier this year calls for a reduction of illegal narcotics flowing from overseas by 50% in ten years. This is totally inadequate.

A New Escalation

Over this same period, a 're-affirmation' trend, even more severe than SCOPE, was taking place in the United States where very conservative drug warriors, especially within the Republican Party, held key positions in Congress. The 'Western Hemisphere Drug Elimination Act', approved by Congress in October 1998, was the prelude to the aid package to Plan Colombia two years later. Pressure increased in 1998 to intensify the chemical War on Drugs worldwide while resources were allocated for the promotion of a biological front. The DEA, in 1998, proposed a massive herbicide spraying programme across the United States using trichlopyr (Garlon), 2,4-D and glyphosate (Roundup). The plan was also intended to ameliorate the contradiction between active foreign operations and the absence of domestic fumigations. Apart from a brief experiment in South Dakota, only Hawaii, the state farthest from the US mainland, maintained an aerial eradication programme. To illustrate the plans, the DEA launched "Operation Red Rain" in 1998 in Oklahoma using Roundup with red dye to let the public know which plants had been sprayed in an attempt to control consumer fear. The nationwide DEA proposal to extend these operations beginning in 2001 is still under debate.

The Uzbekistan project to find a fungus for opium poppy began in 1998, marking the beginning of the biological War on Drugs. By 2000, "Arrangements have been made to establish field experiments on effectiveness of bio fungus killing poppy in all five Central Asian states, but Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan refused to carry out this experiment, and justifying that small illicit plots of poppy on their territory can be eradicated by hand. The experiment in Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan will be made on three types of poppy cultivated in these republics."⁷⁶ Afghanistan is clearly the target of the project. A survey in three Central Asian states conducted in 1999 revealed that, "In the areas surveyed opium poppy was found on only about 3.6 ha."⁷⁷ The UN reported for the year 2000 a record harvest of 4,000 tons of opium from

Afghanistan, which is approximately 75% of the world supply. The Taliban officially imposed a ban on growing opium poppy and combined with a severe drought there was to a considerable reduction in early 2001.⁷⁸ The Taliban, however, are not likely to permit the use of fungi in Afghanistan. Tony White, formerly with the UNDCP, revealed on a BBC TV documentary, that the US and UK, as funders of this UNDCP project, tread dangerously close to biological warfare tactics. "I had it very recently from a source in the United States that at one point it was seriously considered trying to get the Afghan Government in exile in Islamabad to agree to the application of the pleospora fungus in Afghanistan where there is clearly a difficulty."⁷⁹



El Espectador

In the summer of 1999, David Sands, from Montana State University and Vice President of Ag/Bio Con. Company, working with Colonel Jim McDonough, a former top aide to US Drug Czar General McCaffrey and currently Florida's top drug official, proposed using the Fusarium Oxysporum fungus to eradicate marijuana growing in the Florida Everglades. The contradiction between foreign and domestic operations is significant here. "If we're going to ask, for example, the Colombians to do something," said Andy

Bernard, spokesman for the Florida Office of Drug Control, "we ought to have the guts to do it here as well."⁸⁰ The State Department was, at that moment, trying to pressure Colombia to use the Fusarium fungus for coca eradication but by canceling the Florida project due to public outrage the negotiating position of the US was severely weakened. The US Ambassador to Colombia Myles Frechette had once promised: "We are not going to ask the Colombians to use anything that is not used in the United States."⁸¹

FOLLOW THE MONEY

The Omnibus Spending Act, approved by US Congress in October 1998, earmarked \$23 million for improving the efficacy of aerial eradication agents. *"The Secretary of State, the Attorney General, the Secretary of Agriculture, the Secretary of Defence, the Director of the Office of National Drug Control Policy, and the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency are authorized to support the development and use of environmentally-approved herbicides to eliminate illicit narcotics crops, including coca, cannabis, and opium poppy, both in the United States and in foreign countries."* The Agricultural Research Service (ARS/USDA) received \$7.5 million from this fund to research chemical and bio-control methods for projects. These projects have *"significantly increased the effectiveness of the overall U.S. and Colombian coca eradication program"* by improving the spraying systems and by developing the new formula currently used, Roundup Ultra with the surfactant Cosmoflux. Greenhouse and field tests were carried out in Maryland, Hawaii and Colombia, with DEA collaboration.⁷⁴ The fund has also been used for projects to analyse, detect and estimate illicit crops in the US, Turkey and Mexico, and to *"improve the disease resistance, yield, and economic competitiveness of commercial crops that can be promoted as alternatives to the production of narcotics plants."*⁷⁵ Part of the fund, approximately \$12 million, was destined for the mycoherbicide projects of UNDCP and David Sands' company AG/Bio Con. Both Fusarium Oxysporum fungus programmes in Florida and Colombia were to be financed using this money, but the projects are currently stalled. The funds have not been reallocated and are on reserve should political opportunities allow these projects to be re-launched.

On the African continent escalation has also become apparent. In 1999, *"[w]ith assistance from the DEA and the regional narcotics officer assigned at the Embassy in South Africa, Pretoria, the Swazis arranged for the South African Police to spray herbicides on its illicit cannabis crops throughout the inaccessible regions of Swaziland. The South African Police used their helicopters to carry out this operation and eradicated a third of the country's cannabis crop."*⁸² And according to the same State Department yearly report, the Egyptian government is *"seeking to develop a herbicide eradication strategy"* to deal with opium poppy and cannabis growing in the regions of Sinai and Upper Egypt.

The plan put forth in our legislation is designed to cut the flow of drugs into our country by 80% within three years. It is the most dramatic, exhaustive, targeted effort ever conceived to stop the drug flow from Latin America. [... In Colombia] with the helicopters provided and other crop eradication enhancements, poppy crops can be totally eradicated and heroin production stopped almost immediately. Resources provided in the bill also cover what it takes to completely eradicate coca production in Colombia and destroy all the cocaine laboratories within the three year timetable envisioned."



Coca paste lab

Martin Jelsma

**UN International
Narcotics Control Board
Report for 2000**

"The Board welcomes the support provided by the Government of the United States to the Government of Colombia in the form of resources to implement Plan Colombia."

"European countries and Japan are considering making contributions to Colombia to be used for the social and humanitarian aspects.

The Board calls on Governments in South America to cooperate closely with the Government of Colombia in the execution of Plan Colombia."

The SCOPE vision for a regional approach reappeared and grand plans for Peru, Bolivia and Colombia were developed in 1998/99, while international donor conferences were scheduled for each country. President-elect Banzer, former dictator of Bolivia, presented his controversial 'Plan Dignity!' intended to entirely wipe out illegal coca crops in Bolivia within three years through forced manual eradication. The Chapare region has become fully militarized and severe clashes between government forces and coca-farmers have resulted in several deaths. The unprecedented mega-fumigations, or the backbone of Plan Colombia, are the most severe operations in this new escalation. The 'Push into Southern Colombia,' beginning in December 2000, fumigated 29,000 hectares of coca fields in the Putumayo in the first two months.

Throughout the international donor conferences for Plan Colombia the polarization between the 're-asses' and 're-affirm' camps resurfaced igniting the global controversy. Europe, expected to contribute the alternative development components of the Plan, took distance from the US 'carrot and stick' approach. US officials expressed their disappointment: *"Everyone was looking for the rest of the world, particularly the Europeans, to do the soft side. We have done the military side. You can't do one without the other."*⁸³ But, as the Austrian ambassador to Colombia explained: *"The military aid has been like putting a blue stocking in the wash with white clothes—everything comes out blue."*⁸⁴ A resolution adopted in the European Parliament in February 2001 against Plan Colombia was an almost unanimous vote—474 to one. The incompatible agendas of the US and Europe clearly stated in the resolution, *"Warns that Plan Colombia contains aspects that run counter to the cooperation strategies and projects to which the EU has already committed itself and jeopardise its cooperation programmes."* The resolution is crystal clear on the chemical spraying and the threat of a biological war stating 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."*⁸⁵



Anti-Narcotics battalion in Colombia

AN ALTERNATIVE POLICY

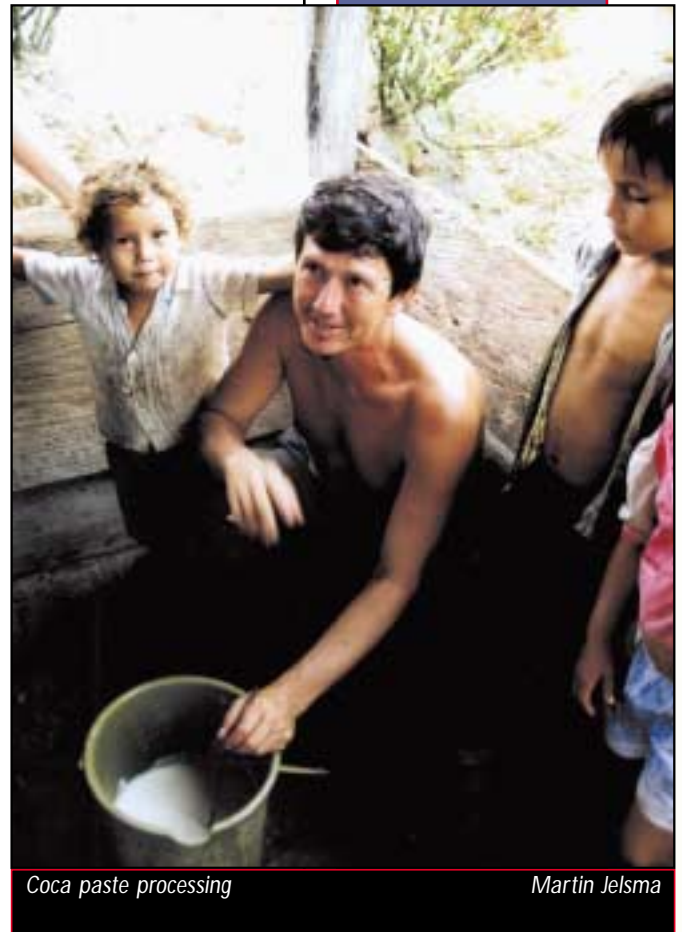
The starting point for a realistic, effective and just drug policy must be that a 'Zero Option' does not exist. Attempts to reach this illusionary goal by repressing production are doomed to fail and frustration from not reaching these goals leads to an increase in repressive tactics, worsening the situation. The time for 'deadline thinking,' is over, as should be evident from the long list of failed target dates including the UN Single Convention in 1961 when all coca was to be eliminated within 25 years and UNGASS's declaration made by Arlacchi that the world will be freed of all cocaine and heroin by 2008. Temporary or local reduction can be accomplished, and will be touted as promising examples, but the key issue is, as long as demand exists, the illegal market will adapt and accommodate to such changes. Production has shifted opium poppy from Turkey to Mexico, Pakistan to Afghanistan and from Thailand to Burma, Laos and Vietnam while marijuana crops move back and forth between Mexico and Colombia to US domestic cultivation and to Dutch greenhouses. Shifting coca crops from Peru and Bolivia to Colombia, and inside Colombia from the Guaviare to Putumayo is evidence that the supply accommodates demand. The laws of the market largely define the demand/supply equation. The demand and supply strategies must work in concert and have realistic frameworks. Forcing the equation out of balance by aggressive eradication does not work. Simple solutions do not exist in this policy field and many dramatic mistakes are made by those who think they do.

Supply Reduction Versus the Market

Influencing the market through state intervention can be explored if based on studies, which focus on how the different stages interact and how the mechanics of the illegal market work. Further research must continue in this area. Drug traffickers have developed their own specific tools for influencing the market. Their strategic investments are intended to prevent a rupture in the supply chain. For example, in anticipation of the Plan Colombia eradication operations in the Putumayo department, organized trafficking groups put several mechanisms in place to prepare for the crop displacement. They bought substantial areas of land in the northern Ecuadorian provinces of Sucumbios and Carchi bordering Colombia, artificially increased the price of coca paste in Northern Peru to stimulate peasants to plant coca and invested in new settlements, and offered employment and facilitated the migration process deeper into the Amazon. Improving the efficiency of policy and policy instruments will happen only when there is a better understanding of how these mechanisms operate within the entire drug production chain.

The logic of the current supply-reduction strategy is fundamentally flawed. The consequences of interdiction and eradication, the two pillars of the supply-reduction strategy, result in economic contradictions in the area of illicit crops. The interdiction strategy is intended to reduce the price at the crop level while the eradication strategy results in a price increase.

'Interdiction' strategy, aimed at preventing cocaine and heroin from leaving an area by blocking the illegal transport, is supposed to create a market surplus of coca paste and raw opium in the illicit crop areas. This should cause a price decrease whereby the harvesting of crops becomes less lucra-



Coca paste processing

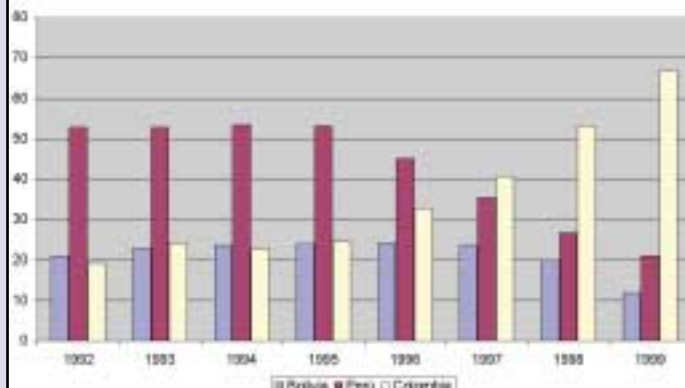
Martin Jelsma

DRUGS PRODUCTION CHAIN

There are three levels in the drug production chain although the distinctions and boundaries are not always absolute. Each level demands attention from specific policy units while government responsibility must be separated accordingly:

- 1 Production: All Activities related to the cultivation of drug crops including the harvest and rural production of raw material, coca paste and raw opium. The production processes are intimately related to socioeconomic conditions of the rural population, survival economics and the agricultural frontier. Policy-making and international cooperation on this level must assume a development approach, coordinated by agricultural, environmental and development authorities.
- 2 Trafficking: All activities related to the processing of raw materials into psychoactive substances, cocaine and heroin, including chemical precursors and money laundering, and the transporting and commercialisation of the end products. Policy-making and international cooperation for this level must assume a law enforcement approach, coordinated by judicial, police and financial control authorities, providing no other internationally agreed upon regulatory model addressing the complete drug chain has been developed .
- 3 Consumption: The social, health, and community problems related to abuse and addiction of illicit drugs. Policy-making at this level must assume a public health approach, coordinated by local, social and health authorities. International cooperation must focus on the exchange of experiences and best practices.

Participation per Country in Global Andean Coca Area
1992-1999



in percentages

tive to peasants therefore making substitution programmes a more attractive option. The 1995 Peruvian coca price crash and subsequent production decline was trumpeted as the success story of this interdiction strategy.⁸⁶ In contrast, 'eradication' destroys crops creating shortages in the local market and ultimately a price increase results. This increase in price makes coca and opium poppy an economically more attractive option for peasants. The viability of crop substitution programmes is dependant on the extent of the gap between the price farmers get for illicit and legal crops. As the price of illicit crops increase due to eradication, farmers see crop substitution programmes as less economically interesting.

Harm Reduction

Repressive methods, at either end of the spectrum, are counterproductive. Addicts and small producers should not be deprived of a subsistence living, nor should they be jailed. Developing prospects in life and creating the possibility to reduce the harm brought to themselves and to society is the real challenge. At the level of consumption, the focus must be on treatment options and prevention policies. There are specific Harm Reduction policies introduced at this level in several countries and at the municipal level including the decriminalization for the possession of quantities for individual consumption and free needle exchange to prevent the spread of diseases like AIDS. At the level of production, the focus must be on developing viable alternatives and policies aimed at preventing the 'migration to illegality' for those marginalized sectors of the population. Unlike the level of consumption, the Harm Reduction philosophy has not entered production policy debates. There should be specific Harm Reduction policies including the decriminalization of cultivation for subsistence quantities and specific measures to prevent environmental pollution and family health problems related to the handling of pesticides and precursor chemicals at the farm level.

The political space must be found to completely reassess the current anti-drug policies including the potential for the integration of new approaches to regulate the global drugs economy. This must be prioritized by the international community.

Drugs & Peace in Colombia

Paz Colombia, a broad platform of civil society including all significant trade and farmers unions, human rights and environmental organizations and indigenous peoples, urgently call for an independent evaluation of the current anti-drug policies and demand the immediate suspension of all aerial fumigations.

The starting point for Paz Colombia is that military confrontation and alternative development are incompatible. The peace process must be strengthened to resolve this incompatibility, which would lead to a political solution. Given that the illegal drugs economy is deeply entangled in the war, the debate on how to deal with illicit crops must be addressed at the peace negotiations. Within this complex setting, any proposed anti-drugs measure, must be determined firstly by its potential to contribute to conflict resolution and the de-escalation of the war, and only then with regards to hectare reduction targets.

Detailed proposals for an alternative drugs policy have been presented, which, if implemented and supported by the national and international community would reduce the harm caused by the current repressive approach and would safeguard the extremely fragile peace negotiations. The alternative proposal is based on five interdependent elements.⁸⁷

- 1 Suspend all forced eradication of illicit drug cultivation and establish agreements with affected communities setting specific conditions for manual eradication;
- 2 The decriminalization of small drug crop producers;
- 3 Alternative Development schemes and crop substitutions programmes must be gradual in adopting a phasing- in of new crops;
- 4 Affected communities at the local and regional levels must fully participate in developing criteria for substitution programmes in territorial and environmental planning;
- 5 Human rights and international humanitarian law must be fully respected by all parties and never compromised, particularly with respect to the connection between the illegal economy and the armed conflict.

Commercial Plantations

The distinctions between policies directed toward small, medium and large-scale producers are becoming significant at this stage of the process. Colombian law does not differentiate between levels of involvement in illicit agriculture.⁸⁸ A decree, however, exempts peasants with no more than two hectares from being sprayed. Aerial fumigations are defended using the argument that they are only applied to 'commercial plantations' where 'small producers' are offered alternative development projects. Small farmers, including those

International Conference for Peace and Human Rights in Colombia. October 2000, Costa Rica

*PAZ COLOMBIA:
"Until now, no evaluation was made of the results of the strategy of forced eradication and of the spraying of plantations and no attempt has been made to explore a different paradigm that would consist in reducing the harms of illegal drugs and of the anti-drugs policies. Fumigations have made the search for alternative solutions impossible. If this threat continues the possibility of voluntary eradication might be lost."*



Cement sprinkled on pulverized coca, part of paste making process

Martin Jelsma



Coca leaves soaked in kerosene Martin Jelsma

cultivating legal crops, are however affected daily by the fumigations, as many well-documented examples illustrate. The Colombian Ombudsman receives hundreds of complaints from small farmers who have lost their legal crops to fumigations. They have demanded, in vain, compensation for their losses.⁸⁹

The policy framework is fundamentally flawed. A specific exception in the decree used to legitimate the practice of indiscriminate spraying notes that indications of dispersed, small plots of less than two hectares related to each other may be regarded as one big plot and therefore fumigated.⁹⁰ Satellite and aerial photography methods used to identify illicit crops do not distinguish several adjacent small plots maintained by different families from one larger plantation. Not all crops beyond two hectares should be considered 'commercial cultivation.' For example, the medium-sized, family-run finca, with three to ten hectares, or a few families collectively operating an area of 15 hectares, is an entire sector presently excluded from participating in alternative development schemes because their operations are considered commercial. Even with existing industrial size plantations, aerial fumigation is not the solution. Environmental destruction, health risks, crop displacement, and deforestation also affect industrial size operations even if drug traffickers control the plantations. The fate of the large sized plantations will, ultimately, depend on a political settlement between the government and guerrilla forces, but fumigating this sector of the illegal economy should not be part of the solution. In some cases, entire

villages, economically dependent on these large plantations including day laborers and the service sector, could be devastated. This is a particular sector within the drug production chain and requires a different approach than that proposed for small and medium farmers. If industrial plantations are fumigated the policy is legitimized, indiscriminate spraying occurs in practice, while crop displacement and the related collateral damage continues.

Manual Eradication



Coca paste processing lab Martin Jelsma

At the end of 2000 and at the beginning of 2001, several thousand coca farmers in the Putumayo, registered for agreements on manual eradication. Local governors and mayors facilitated negotiation with the government for their communities for months eventually achieving an agreement whereby families were offered \$900 per eradicated hectare and promises of infrastructure development, pro-

viding all coca was pulled out of the ground within one year. Like a Sword of Damocles hanging over the emergency talks the compromise was reached under extreme pressure of the announcement that massive fumigations would begin in accordance with Plan Colombia. After the first 500 families signed, a wave of unprecedented mass fumigations began on the 19th of December prompting many more peasants to sign up out of desperation at the last minute.



Rubber trees interplanted among coca bush

Martin Jelsma

Many communities have, already for several years, been working on elaborate alternative development proposals for their region. Local authorities and communities were outraged over the level of disregard and lack of flexibility shown in the negotiations on the side of the national government. Denying local authorities and organized communities ownership over or participation in their future, manual eradication programmes have flagrantly disregarded

these serious, community-derived efforts. The contracts disregard, absolutely, that communities know and understand their circumstances; that trust and respect are essential conditions for any successful development plan; and that communities should voluntarily proceed with agreements rather than be forced under threat of fumigation to accept the conditions of this manual eradication scheme.

The indigenous Cofán communities in southern Putumayo, for example, elaborated the 'Plan of Life,' a detailed, integrated plan for the future development of their land. The plan, like many others, showcased a community taking responsibility for their own destiny including their proposal for a viable development strategy, which would gradually diminish their economic dependence on illicit agriculture. They were trying to get support for it at the national and international levels but, in January 2001, the small plots of coca in Cofán territories were sprayed, destroying many food crops in the process. Fearing additional fumigation and in despair, they registered for the manual eradication scheme a week later.

Alternative Development

Many crop substitution and alternative development programmes in Colombia have failed because the central goal has been to reduce the actual number of illegal hectares over the shortest period of time. Creating realistic and dignified circumstances for communities dependent on an illicit crop economy has not been a fundamental starting point. Gradual reduction over a period of several years in accordance with locally-determined rural development plans, within realistic time frames, are essential elements for any alternative development project. Rather than forcing communities into tight eradication schedules the reduction targets must be dependent on the success of alternative development schemes. If within the target period this development does not guarantee dignified living conditions then the communities must be allowed to continue cultivating, at a subsistence level, their illicit crops. The burden of proof



Rubber tree leaves affected by spraying

In January 2001, the Colombian Environment Minister, Juan Mayr, announced the end of any further development of biological methods for coca eradication. He said, "Within the spectrum of solutions the road is cleared for agreed manual eradication, the solution that is least environmentally contaminating and most effective socially, given that it incorporates the will of the communities directly related to this illegal economic activity."⁹¹

*International
Conference for Peace
and Human Rights
in Colombia.
October 2000, Costa
Rica*

*"Paz Colombia
considers it has to be
based on an
independent evaluation
of the implementation
of anti-drugs policies an
particularly of forced
eradication practices. An
alternative policy has to
be based on an
adequate balance
between stimulating
development, dialogue
and community
participation, with
eradication activities
that establish clearly
the differences between
small and large
plantations. Regarding
illicit crops of small
peasant producers,
voluntary and manual
eradication has to be
privileged. They
proposed that the use
of biological agents
should be suspended
and coincided with the
representative of the
ELN that fumigation
operations have to be
suspended
immediately."*

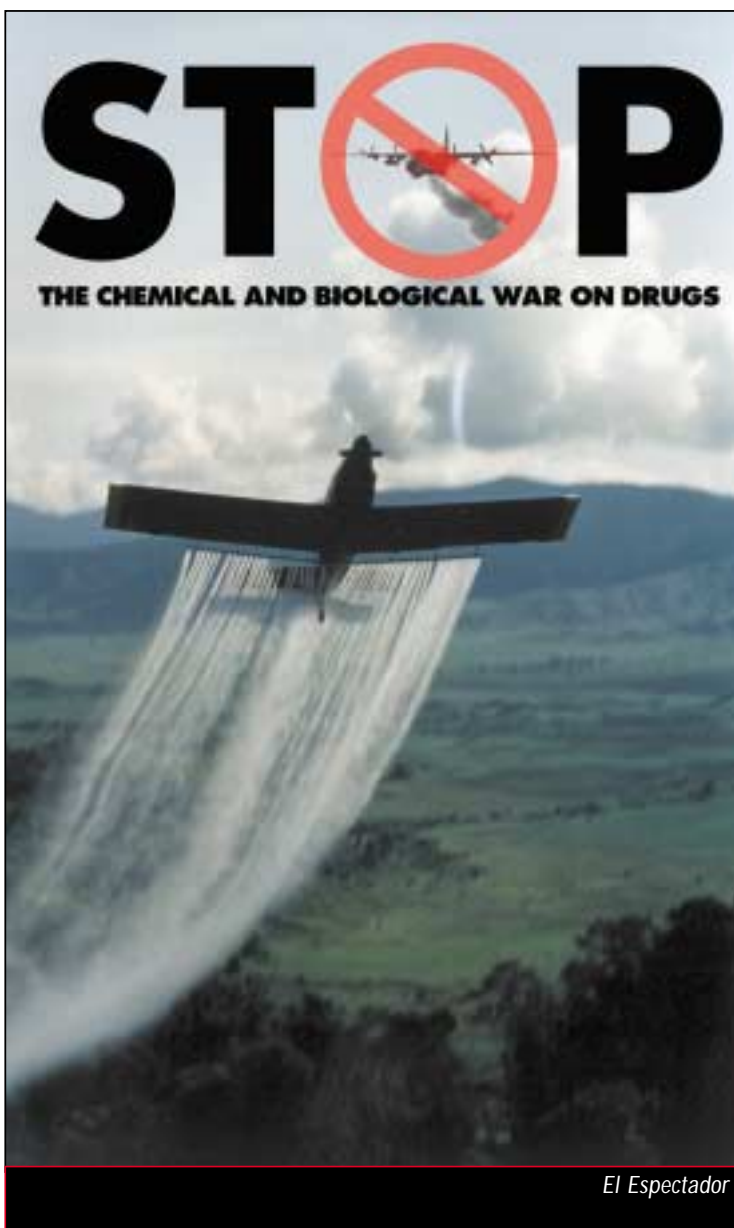


must be reversed. No longer should communities have to 'prove their willingness to substitute,' but the government and the international community should have to 'prove the viability of alternatives,' before peasant and indigenous communities risk losing the foundation of their fragile survival economy. It has been virtually impossible to experiment with such gradual scenarios because the few in existence have largely been destroyed by aerial fumigations.

A Global Ban

The fumigations set in motion a vicious circle of human, social and environmental destruction. In the course of the cycle human rights are violated, the legitimacy of the state is eroded, alternative development is aborted, peasant support for the guerrilla increases, the war extends to new areas, and the War on Drugs is entangled with counterinsurgency objectives.

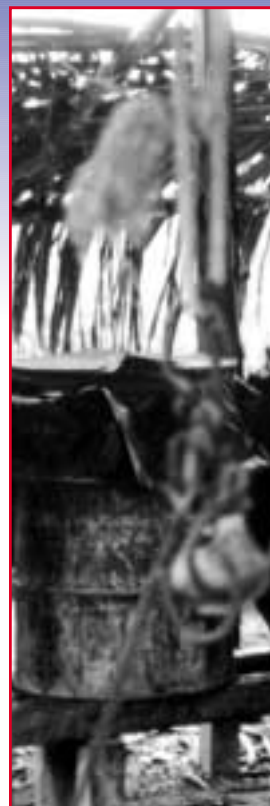
A worldwide campaign calls for the end of these harmful and inefficient forced eradication practices. Break the Vicious Circle of aerial fumigations, environmental destruction and the armed conflict in Colombia. Stop the chemical and biological War on Drugs.



El Espectador

FOOTNOTES

- 1 Ricardo Vargas Meza, "Fumigación y Conflicto: Políticas antidrogas y deslegitimación del estado en Colombia," Tercer Mundo Editores, Bogotá November 1999, isbn 958-601-874-1. This book is the outcome of a joint *Transnational Institute-Acción Andina* research project on the socio-environmental consequences of aerial fumigations and their impact on the armed conflict in Colombia.
- 2 *Los cultivos de marijuana en la Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta: una reflexión sobre los métodos de eradicación*; Fundación Pro-Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta; Santa Marta, November 1993.
- 3 Coffee grows at an altitude between 1.200 and 1.900 m; opium poppy grows at altitudes between 1.800 and 3.000 m.
- 4 Figure taken from *International Narcotics Control Strategy Report 1999*; Bureau for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, U.S. Department of State Washington, DC, March 2000.
- 5 Ibid. The Colombian government maintains for coca a figure for 1999 of 106.000 hectares.
- 6 During Samper's presidency, 68% of fumigated hectares were located in four municipalities, Miraflores, El Retorno, San José and Calamar in the department of Guaviare. Some 17% were located in the Caquetá, largely in the Medio y Bajo Caguán area; and 12% in Meta and 2% in Putumayo. The most affected municipalities in Caquetá were: Solita, Cartagena del Chairá, Milán, Solano, Valparaíso, Curillo and Puerto Rico. For Meta they were: Puerto Rico, Mapiripán, Vistahermosa and Puerto Concordia. In Putumayo up till 1998 only the municipality of Puerto Guzmán had been heavily targeted.
- 7 *Report on the Effects on Human Health and Safety of Herbicides Used in the Colombian Aerial Spray Program*, US Department of State Bureau for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, Washington D.C., 23 January 2001.
- 8 *Monsanto: A Checkered History*, by Brian Tokar; *The Ecologist*, Vol. 28, No 5, Sept/Oct 1998.
- 9 *Procedimientos técnico-ambientales para la eradicación de cultivos ilícitos de coca en la Amazonia y Orinoquia colombiana*; Ministerio de Justicia, Dirección de Estupefacientes, Bogotá, 22 November 1994.
- 10 For detailed examples of all these effects, see the results of the case study undertaken by Rodrigo Velaidez in the Medio y Bajo Caguán region, in "Fumigación y Conflicto" (see note 1).
- 11 *To Colombians, Drug War is a Toxic Foe*, by Larry Rohter, New York Times, 1 May 2000, quoting the US Embassy official in Bogotá who supervises the spraying programme. Similar statements are found in the 'Fact Sheet' on *The Aerial Eradication of Illicit Crops: Answers to Frequently Asked Questions*, released on 17 January 2001 by the U.S. State Department's Bureau for Western Hemisphere Affairs. The Transnational Institute, Acción Andina and Rapalmira responded with a 'Counter Fact Sheet' available at: www.tni.org/drugs
- 12 *El glifosato cae mal en el Cauca*, *El Tiempo*, Bogotá, 30 July 1999.
- 13 *To Colombians, Drug War is a Toxic Foe*, by Larry Rohter, New York Times, 1 May 2000.
- 14 *Gek van de Jeuk (Driven Mad by Itch)*, by Marjon van Royen, NRC Handelsblad 28 December 2000.
- 15 According to figures of the *Consultoría para los Derechos Humanos y Desplazamiento* (Codhes) between August of 1994 and June 1998, no less than 726.000 people were internally displaced as a result of the war, adding to the 700.000 displaced Colombians between 1985 and 1994. For 1999 Codhes reported a number of 288,127 displaced, and for 2000 a number of more than 300,000.
- 16 Personal visit to several affected fincas, in El Jordán, Jardín and Camelias, Cartagena del Chairá, Caquetá, January 1999; and a meeting in Florencia, Caquetá, December 1999. Gerardo Moreno, along with several other families in this heavily fumigated region, officially filed a suit to get compensation for their losses, which was denied. A total of at least 42 families involved in the alternative development programmes under the direction of the *San Isidro* Parish in *Remolino del Caguán* were seriously damaged.
- 17 The figure was mentioned by a representative of the Bureau of Refugee Programmes of the State Department, in a meeting with Colombian NGOs on 14 February 2000. *El Tiempo*, Bogotá 23 February 2000.
- 18 *Details of \$1.3b in antidrug aid to colombia prompt questions*, Boston Globe 10 February 2000.
- 19 In the department of Vaupés 45.2% of the population is indigenous; in Vichada 89%, consisting of eight ethnic groups distributed into 41 reservations that occupy 34.6% of the territory; and in Guainía 50% of the populations is indigenous divided into 18 reservations.
- 20 *Diplomatic Mail for Peace No 8*, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Colombia, Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs, 23 July 1999.
- 21 Colombia's forests are the home of 55,000 plant species, one-third of which are endemic. Over 2,000 plant species have yet to be identified, and an even greater number have yet to be analyzed for potential curative purposes. The country also possesses 358 mammal species, 15 percent of the world's primates, and 18 percent of the world's birds. Trade and Environment Database (TED): www.american.edu/projects/mandala/TED The Foreign Ministry estimates that "210 species of mammals, 600 species of birds, 170 species of reptiles, 100 amphibious and more than 600 species of fish are potentially exposed to extinction" (see note 15).
- 22 The total area of the Colombian Amazon is 40 million hectares, of which 29 are rainforest; the Orinoco basin covers 25 million hectares, with 3.5 of them rainforest.
- 23 *Olora a desierto en la Amazonia y Orinoquia*, *El Espectador*, 16 September 1998.
- 24 *Report of the Expert Group Meeting on Environmentally Safe Methods for the Eradication of Illicit Narcotic Plants*, held at Vienna from 4 to 8 December 1989; Commission on Narcotic Drugs, E/CN.7/1990/CRP.7, 14 December 1989.
- 25 Dow AgroSciences is a subsidiary of Dow Chemical Co., the same corporation that manufactured the controversial defoliant Agent Orange during the Vietnam War. Tebuthiuron granules, sold commercially as Spike 20P, should be used "carefully and in controlled situations," Dow cautioned, because "it can be very risky in situations where terrain has slopes, rainfall is significant, desirable plants are nearby and application is made under



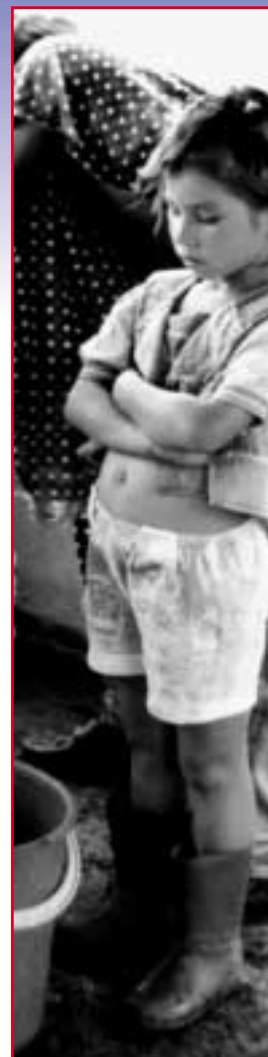
- less than ideal circumstances." *Colombia to Test Herbicide Against Coca Crops*, The New York Times, June 20, 1998
- 26 See: "Las Farc quieren romper con narcos", El Espectador, 26 July 1998; *Drug Eradication Programme Fails*, Associated Press, 16 August, 1998; *Colombian Farmers Cultivating More Coca Crops Than Ever*, The Houston Chronicle, 23 August 1998; *Colombia Fights its Dependence on Coca Economy*, The Miami Herald, 31 August 1998; and *Colombia's way to halt drugs and war at once*, Christian Science Monitor 16 Sept 1998.
- 27 *Solución integral para narcocultivos*, El Colombiano, Medellín, 17 January 2001.
- 28 *Defensor del Pueblo critica fumigaciones*, El Espectador, Bogotá, 18 February 2001.
- 29 Philip Chicola, director of Andean Affairs at the State Department, quoted in: *Cuatro ases de Pastrana en busca de la paz*, El Espectador 5 de enero de 1999
- 30 Statement of Rand Beers, Assistant Secretary of State, Bureau for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, before the Senate Caucus on International Narcotics Control. September 21, 1999
- 31 Statement of chairman of the House Appropriations Committee C.W. Bill Young (Republican, Florida), when the committee approved the emergency aid package for Colombia of \$1.7 billion. Boston Globe 10 March 2000.
- 32 El Tiempo, Bogotá, 1 March 2000.
- 33 United Nations International Drug Control Programme, Project of the Government of Colombia; Project Document *Experimental testing and further development of an environmentally safe biological control agent for coca eradication*. Vienna, February 1999, p. 8. This is an initial draft for the project contract, still without a project number.
- 34 Congress of the United States, August 3, 1999; Letter to president Clinton signed by J. Dennis Hastert and Trent Lott.
- 35 UNDCP: Colombia and the microherbicide programme. A. Beers – Arlacchi Telecon May 10 1999. (FOIA Document Number: 1999STATE091579.)
- 36 See note 24, paragraph 49.
- 37 UNDCP Project Document AD/RER/98/C37. Several fungi are being tested, but the main focus now is on *Pleospora papaveracea*.
- 38 *At heroin's source, hope rises for a way to cut opium crops*, The Christian Science Monitor, 18 March 1998.



Martin Jelsma

- 39 See for example: *Fungus Eyed As Drug Crop Killer*, Associated Press 22 October 1998; *Biological Roulette: The Drug War's Fungal Solution?*, Covert Action Quarterly, Washington, Spring 1998.
- 40 *Marijuana-Eating Fungus Seen as Potent Weapon, but at What Cost?* The New York Times, Rick Bragg, July 27, 1999.
- 41 See for details: *Fusarium fungus: Issues worthy of consideration regarding the projected deployment of a mycoherbicide in Colombia*; Jeremy Bigwood & Sharon Stevenson; Independent Researchers; Jan 7, 2000.
- 42 *Summary of Ongoing Projects*, Dr. Bryan A. Bailey, USDA website: www.barc.usda.gov/psi/bpd1/staff.htm.
- 43 USDA/ARS document #0000064222 (1995), quoted in: *Biological Roulette: The Drug War's Fungal Solution?*, Covert Action Quarterly, Washington, Spring 1998.
- 44 *Report of the Expert Group Meeting on Environmentally Safe Methods for the Eradication of Illicit Narcotic Plants*,

- held at Vienna from 4 to 8 December 1989; Commission on Narcotic Drugs E/CN.7/1990/CRP.7, 14 December 1989, paragraphs 43 and 50.
- 45 *Formas Alternativas, integrales y productivas de protección de la biodiversidad en las zonas afectadas por cultivos de coca y su erradicación*, Ministerio del Medio Ambiente, Instituto Humboldt and Instituto Amazónico de Investigaciones Científicas – SINCHI, Bogotá July 2000; project draft.
- 46 *Por qué rechazamos el hongo*, by Juan Mayr, Colombian Minister of Environment, in: *Revista Cambio*, Bogotá 24-31 July 2000.
- 47 *Decreto Supremo Nro. 004-2000-AG*, Peru, Ministerio de Agricultura, 24 de marzo del 2000, "Article 1°.- It is prohibited the use of chemical agricultural pesticides, related substances, biological agents and products in coca plantations (*Erythroxylum coca*)."
- 48 *Registro oficial N. 140, Acuerdo Ministerial*, 14 August 2000, Ministerio de Agricultura y Ganadería, Ecuador; "Art.1.- Prohibit the entrance and use of the pathogen *Fusarium Oxysporum*, in the whole national territory, in order to preserve public health, animal health and the ecosystem in general."
- 49 Declaration released in Lima, Peru, Sept. 7, 2000 of the II Ordinary Meeting of the Andean Committee of Environmental Authorities - CAAAM, held in the city of Lima, the 5th and 6th of September, 2000.
- 50 UNDCP/690, Bogotá 18 August 2000, letter to Doctor José Fernando Castro Caicedo, Defensor del Pueblo, signed by Klaus Nyholm, UNDCP representative for Colombia and Ecuador; in: *Los Cultivos Ilícitos, Política Mundial y Realidad en Colombia*, Defensoría del Pueblo, Bogotá August 2000, pp. 165/166.
- 51 *United Nations Pulls Out of Plans to Use Anti-Drug Biological Weapons in South America*, Press release from Acción Andina (Bogotá), Sunshine Project (US/Germany), and the Transnational Institute (Amsterdam), 13 November 2000.
- 52 *Colombia no producirá hongo contra la coca*, *El Tiempo*, Bogotá, 26 de enero de 2001
- 53 NGO statement distributed at the First Meeting of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Cartagena Protocol, 11-15 December 2000, Montpellier, France. See: www.sunshine-project.org
- 54 US assistant secretary of State, Rand Beers, interviewed in: *Britain's secret War on Drugs*, BBC-1 Panorama, 2 October 2000.
- 55 *Herbicidas contra marijuana en E.U.*, *El Espectador*, Bogotá, 5 October 1984.
- 56 *Front lines of mexican drug war a danger zone*, by Andrew Winning, Reuters 18 Feb 1999.
- 57 *La Jornada* and *Reforma*, México D.F., both newspapers had reports on the incident in their 5 and 6 August 2000 issues. Eradication brigades of of Federal Judicial Police and the Federal Attorney General's Office (PGR - *Procuraduría General de la República*) were responsible for the operation and confirmed the use of Paraquat.
- 58 *1998 Marijuana Crop Report – An Evaluation of Marijuana Production, Value, and Eradication Efforts in the United States*; Jon Gettman and Paul Armentano, National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws (NORML), October 1998.
- 59 Surveys have revealed that almost all marijuana eradicated by the DEA is actually 'ditchweed', wild growing hemp. Ditchweed is a leftover from the government-subsidized World War II "Hemp for Victory" campaign to stimulate rope-fiber production in the US. Feral hemp, which has several industrial uses, is produced legally in countries around the world and is a strain of cannabis that contains too little (less than 1%) of the psychoactive THC to make it attractive for pot smokers. US policy makes no legal distinction between the various strains of the cannabis plant, boosting public eradication statistics that show no difference between ditchweed and marijuana cultivated for consumption. In 1996, a Vermont State Auditor's report evaluating the DEA's eradication efforts revealed that over 99% of the 422,716,526 total marijuana plants eliminated nationwide by the agency were 'ditchweed'; see: Public comments of Paul Armentano (NORML), presented on 27 May 1998 to the United States Department of Agriculture. DEA statistics on 1997 indicate that 237 million ditchweed plants were eradicated compared to 4 million cultivated marijuana plants; 1997 Domestic Cannabis Eradication/Suppression Programme, Monthly Statistical report, Washington D.C., DEA 1998.
- 60 In amendment to Section 481 of the Foreign Assistance Act, senator Charles Percy proposed the ban in 1979. On 15 December 1981 the 'Percy Amendment' was overruled again by Congress.
- 61 The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) had licensed Chevron to oversee distribution of paraquat to the US agricultural chemical industry. Chevron bought its paraquat from Imperial Chemical Industries, a British company that manufactured the herbicide in Bayport, Texas; see *Miami Herald*, 12 July 1982. Meanwhile, EPA has placed paraquat on its restricted list no longer permitting its use on US soil.
- 62 Phil Peters, director of the Georgia Bureau of Investigation, quoted in: *Miami Herald*, 12 July 1982.
- 63 *Back Yard Brawl in Drug War*, by Douglas Jehl; *LA Times*, Wednesday, May 16, 1990.
- 64 *DEA Herbicide Under Fire from Hawaii Residents*, NORML Special Report, 12 November 1996.
- 65 U.S. Department of Justice, Drug Enforcement Administration, Cannabis Investigation Section. 1990 Domestic Cannabis Eradication/Suppression Programme. Washington, D.C., DEA, 1991, pg. 3. Quoted in: *Petition to the DEA to Reschedule Marijuana, Petition for Repeal of a Rule*, Jon Gettman, Petitioner July 10, 1995.
- 66 *Drug agency on defensive at hearing on pot spraying*, by Mary Adamski, in *Honolulu Star-Bulletin*, 16 May 1998
- 67 *International Narcotics Control Strategy Report 1998*; Bureau for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, U.S. Department of State; Washington, DC, February 1999.
- 68 Bolivia, 'Law 1008' (Ley del régimen de la coca y sustancias controladas), 19 July 1988, Article 18.
- 69 UN Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs, 1961, as amended by the 1972 Protocol; Artículo 26-2.
- 70 UN Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances, 19 December 1988; Article 14-2.
- 71 Political Declaration, UN General Assembly Special Session, 9th Plenary Meeting, 10 June 1998, A/RES/S-20/2/Article 19.
- 72 For a detailed critique of SCOPE, see: *Estrategia mundial antidrogas: barniz de un colapso*, Tom Blickman (TNI), *Revista Acción Andina* nr 2, Junio 1998; or on the TNI website: www.tni.org/drugs
- 73 See the Political Declaration of UNGASS (A/RES/S-20/2, 9th Plenary Meeting, 10 June 1998), art. 18; and United Nations General Assembly resolution *International cooperation against the world drug problem*, A/RES/53/115, 85th Plenary Meeting, 9 December 1998, art. 1.



- 74 Weed Science Laboratory Project 1275-22000-178-00D "Strategies of Controlling Narcotic Plant Production", headed by Charles Helling. "Objectives: 1) Evaluate and refine herbicide-adjuvant-carrier systems for controlling narcotic plant production; 2) determine environmental fate of pesticides and their environmental impact in conjunction with narcotic crop eradication; 3) elucidate biochemical or physiological responses to herbicide systems as related to illicit plant control; 4) determine genetic, environmental and management parameters that control alkaloid content in narcotic plants." See: <http://www.barc.usda.gov/psi/wsl/proj178.html>
- 75 Public Law 105-277, 105th Congress, omnibus consolidated and emergency appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 1999, Sec. 832: Authorization of appropriations for Agricultural Research Service counterdrug research and development activities.
- 76 UNDCP Situation Reports – Uzbekistan, January 2000.
- 77 Annual Report: 1999, ODCCP Regional Office for Central Asia, Tashkent 2000.
- 78 Afghanistan Opium Said Wiped Out, Associated Press, 15 February 2001.
- 79 Britain's secret War on Drugs, BBC-1 Panorama, 2 October 2000.
- 80 Drug Control or Biowarfare?, Sharon Stevenson and Jeremy Bigwood, Mother Jones, 3 May 2000.
- 81 Drug Crops Ravaging Colombia, by Juanita Darling, Los Angeles Times, Monday, August 11, 1997
- 82 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report 1999, Bureau for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, U.S. Department of State, Washington, DC, March 2000.
- 83 Europe's Aid Plan for Colombia Falls Short of Drug War's Goals, New York Times, 25 October 2000.
- 84 Marianne da Costa de Moraes, quoted in: Europeans Scale Back Colombian Drug Aid, Washington Post, 19 October 2000.
- 85 European Parliament resolution on Plan Colombia and support for the peace process in Colombia, B5-0087/2001, 1 February 2001.
- 86 See for an analysis and critique: The Drug War in the Skies – The U.S. 'Air Bridge Denial' Strategy: the Success of a Failure, Findings of a Research Project of the 'Drugs & Democracy Programme,' Acción Andina and Transnational Institute, May 1999.
- 87 Cultivos Ilícitos y proceso de paz en Colombia: Una propuesta de cambio en la estrategia antidrogas hacia la solución política del conflicto, Acción Andina and TNI, June 2000. For more background, the full text of the proposal in Spanish and an executive summary in English: <http://www.tni.org/drugs/>
- 88 Defined in article 32 of Law 30 of 1986, small, medium and large scale producers are all punishable alike with a minimum of four years imprisonment (up to a maximum of 12), excluding the possibility of a suspended sentence.
- 89 Los cultivos ilícitos, Política mundial y realidad en Colombia, Defensoría del Pueblo, Bogotá, August 2000.
- 90 Resolution No. 0005, of the National Narcotics Council of 11 August 2000 to modify resolution 0001 of 11 February 1994. Article 3: "Also object of aerial spraying with glyphosate are areas of illicit cultivation where it is established that cultivation is fractioned and/or mixed with licit crops, ways of cultivation that are used to evade the actions of the eradication programme with the herbicide."
- 91 Colombia no producirá hongo contra la coca, El Tiempo, Bogotá, 26 January 2001.



Martin Jelsma

THE 'DRUGS & DEMOCRACY' PROGRAMME

The 'Drugs & Democracy' programme is a joint venture of the Transnational Institute (TNI) and Acción Andina (a platform of NGOs and individuals in the Andes), in cooperation with the Washington Office on Latin America (WOLA) and a team of researchers in Latin America. Since 1996, the D&D programme has conducted investigations, published research findings and organized activities for the purpose of education, advocacy and debate.

The focus is on the socio-economic and political impact of the illicit drugs economy and present anti-drugs policies. The aim of the programme is to stimulate a re-assessment of conventional repressive policy approaches and propose policies based on principles consistent with a commitment to harm reduction, fair trade, development, democracy, human rights and conflict prevention. Over a dozen conferences, seminars and panel debates have been organized in Latin America, Europe and the USA to further this aim. TNI maintains a daily electronic news service providing articles on drugs issues from international media and relevant policy and NGO documents. Acción Andina publishes a bi-monthly *International Bulletin* and a half-yearly *Revista*.

The first phase of the programme established a project team with members in Bolivia, Peru, Colombia, Ecuador, Venezuela, Uruguay, Brazil, Argentina, Mexico, Guatemala, Puerto Rico, Honduras, Costa Rica, Panama, the United States and the Netherlands. The project's first publication, *"Democracy, Human Rights and Militarism in the War on Drugs in Latin America"* was awarded the Premio Simón Bolívar by the Latin American Parliament in October 1997. The second publication was issued by WOLA under the title: *"Reluctant Recruits: the US Military and the War on Drugs."* A third publication *"Crime in Uniform: Corruption and Impunity in Latin America"*, published in November 1997 in Bolivia, contains case studies documenting the involvement of military and police in drug trafficking. *"Centroamérica: gobernabilidad y narcotráfico"*, was launched in December 1997 in Honduras under the auspices of the United Nations Universidad de la Paz and the Honduran human rights centre CEDOH. The first phase of the programme concluded in 1998 with the book *"Democracias bajo fuego: drogas y poder en América Latina"*, which assessed the damage to the Latin American democratisation process caught in the crossfire between drug trafficking and drug enforcement.

The D&D programme undertook a major effort to ensure that critical voices were heard at the UNGASS on Drugs in June 1998, working in close cooperation with the European NGO Council on Drugs and Development (ENCOD) and the International Coalition of NGOs for a Just and Effective Drug Policy (ICN). A successful campaign was launched against the endorsement of UNDCP's Strategy for Coca and Opium Poppy Elimination (SCOPE). A briefing paper on the issue was published in April 1998: *"Caught in the Crossfire: Developing countries, the UNDCP and the War on Drugs."*

The D&D programme's second phase culminated in 1999 with the publication of two detailed studies focused on anti-drug operations: *"The Drug War in the Skies. The US 'Air Bridge Denial' Strategy: The Success of a Failure,"* a critical assessment of military interdiction operations in the Andean-Amazon region; and *"Fumigación y Conflicto: Políticas antidrogas y deslegitimación del estado en Colombia,"* which detailed the environmental and social impact of aerial chemical fumigations of drug related crops in Colombia. In 2000/2001 the programme has devoted special attention to the drugs factor as a catalyst in the armed conflict in Colombia. The focus has been on working with peasant communities to develop a proposal for an alternative drugs policy that could enhance the prospects for a negotiated peace. A debate document, *"Cultivos ilícitos y proceso de paz en Colombia,"* was released in June 2000. Additionally, the programme researches the coca growing regions in Peru and Bolivia with the intention of developing a conflict prevention scenario; develops a 'Harm Reduction' policy proposal for the production side of the drug chain; closely monitors the 'post-Panama' restructuring of the US military anti-drugs infrastructure in Latin America and the establishment of 'Forward Operating Locations' in Ecuador, El Salvador and Aruba/Curaçao; and campaigns against the use of chemical and biological agents in the War on Drugs.

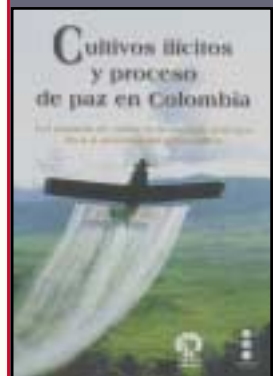
For more information: www.tni.org/drugs

CONTACTS

Transnational Institute
Martin Jelsma
mjelsma@tni.org
Tel: +31-20-662 66 08
Fax: +31-20-675 71 76

Acción Andina
Cochabamba, Bolivia
andina@albatros.cnb.net
Tel/fax: +591-4-446 705

Acción Andina in
Colombia
Ricardo Vargas Meza
rivarome@colomsat.net.co
Tel: +57-1-285 78 37



Useful websites

www.tni.org/drugs

Website of the Drugs & Democracy programme of the Transnational Institute (TNI) and Acción Andina. Special sections on Drugs & Peace in Colombia, chemical fumigations, the biological War on Drugs, Europe & Plan Colombia, Forward Operating Locations. Many sources referred to in this brochure can be found on this site.

www.encod.net

The European NGO Council on Drugs and Development (ENCOD) is a network of non-governmental organisations and citizens from the Council of European countries who are concerned about impact on developing countries of the illegal drugs trade and international policies to control it. "A world with effective drugs policies, we can do it...."

www.wola.org

The Washington Office on Latin America (WOLA) is a non-profit organisation promoting human rights, democracy and social and economic justice in Latin America. WOLA is committed to seeing U.S. policy toward Colombia that is centered on respect for human rights and support for the peace process, rather than on militarized counternarcotics efforts that fuel Colombia's conflict while failing to reduce the flow of drugs.

www.ciponline.org/colombia/aid

Center for International Policy (CIP) in Washington. Colombia's conflict and human rights crisis are worsening, and U.S. military and police aid is rising fast. As the United States deepens its involvement in Colombia, this website offers a central source of information and analysis.

www.usfumigation.org

Special site on fumigations in Colombia and the Third World, maintained by Jeremy Bigwood.

mycoherbicide.net

A site dedicated to the open investigation of mycoherbicides, by Sharon Stevenson and Jeremy Bigwood. This site attempts to consider many aspects of the proposed and actual use of mycoherbicides against drug crops: i.e. marijuana, coca, and opium, including issues of mutability and toxicity.

www.sunshine-project.org

The Sunshine Project is a nonprofit bringing information to light on potential abuses of biotechnology. The Project is concerned misuse of some science may undermine agreements on peace, disarmament, and the environment. Through research, awareness building, and advocacy, the Sunshine Project stands for international consensus that advances in health, agriculture, and microbiology should not be used to harm people or their environment.

www.kolumbien-aktuell.ch

Arbeitsgruppe Schweiz-Kolumbien (ASK), information on Colombia and fumigations in Spanish and German.

www.ips-dc.org/drugspolicy.htm

The Institute for Policy Studies (IPS) Drug Policy Project in Washington advocates for reform by reaching out to non-traditional allies and employing innovative tactics to promote a sustainable, constitutional, and humane drug control policy.

www.ecuanex.apc.org/accion/

Acción Ecológica, an ecology organization in Ecuador committed to defend the collective rights to live in a healthy environment. Special focus on giving support to communities undergoing social-environmental conflicts. Member of international networks like Oilwatch, Friends of Earth, World Rainforest Movement.

www.amazonalliance.org

The Amazon Alliance for Indigenous and Traditional Peoples of the Amazon Basin is an initiative born out of the partnership between indigenous and traditional peoples of the Amazon and groups and individuals who share their concerns for the future of the Amazon and its peoples.

www.ceudes.org

Corporación Unidades Democráticas para el Desarrollo (CEUDES), a Colombian team of experts from social, environment and health sciences, aiming to strengthen social participation in the peace process. Special web site section on illicit crops, substitution and eradication.

www.montananorml.org/msudocs

Montana NORML (National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws) has filed a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request with five U.S. Government agencies in an attempt to retrieve all information pertaining to the study and use of the cannabis killing fungus, *Fusarium Oxysporum*.

