# INTERNATIONAL POLICY

### **OVERVIEW**

Increased interactions among nations, especially in the areas of trade and commerce, have led to a tightly knit global community. At the same time, there are players on the world stage that have mistakenly confused increased globalization as necessitating a call for increased international governance through treaties and international bodies. Nowhere is this more prevalent than in the call for international environmental policy. Both at home under U.S. foreign policy and abroad in international treaties, misguided environmental policies are leading the diplomatic corps astray from its traditional charges of promoting peace through reduced violent conflict and prosperity through free trade. The biggest victims of this "greening" of foreign policy, ironically, are the poor people living in the developing nations and the planet's long-term environmental health.<sup>1</sup>

Take the Kyoto Protocol. Already, tension over Kyoto is evident as the United States demands that developing nations like China and India bear burdens equal to that of the developed world when it comes to emissions reduction. The developing world counters that it is just now entering its industrial revolution and deserves to enjoy the same unhindered chance at prosperity that the developed world enjoys. Developing nations have a point. Kyoto will keep them impoverished not only by barring them from using resources necessary to develop, but by undermining the development of market economies.

Instead of international regulation, we should promote free trade, which improves environmental quality by increasing the wealth:

- A 1992 study by economist Don Coursey of the University of Chicago found that a 10 percent increase in income resulted in a 25 percent increase in the demand for environmental amenities.<sup>2</sup>
- Economists Gene Grossman and Alan Krueger found similar evidence of a relationship between environmental quality and economic health. Their research discovered that countries increased sulfur dioxide (SO<sub>2</sub>) emissions until reaching a per-capita income of about \$9,000 (in 1998 dollars).<sup>3</sup> After that threshold was met, countries' SO<sub>2</sub> emissions declined.

The "greening" of foreign policy threatens the benefits of free trade by slowing, ending, and

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Gene M. Grossman and Alan B. Krueger, "Economic Growth and the Environment," Quarterly Journal of Economics CX, no. 2 (May 1995): 353-77.



<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>For information on how green politics have seriously contributed to human suffering, see Loraine Mooney and Roger Bate, eds., *Environmental Health* — *Third World Problems and First World Preoccupations* (Boston: Butterworth-Heinemann, 1999).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Don Coursey, "Demand for Environmental Quality," working paper (St. Louis, Mo.: Business, Law and Economics Center, Washington University, 1992). See also Don Coursey and Christopher Hartwell, *Environmental and Public Health Outcomes: An International and Historical Comparison* (Irving B. Harris Graduate School of Public Policy, University of Chicago), http://www.harrisschool.uchicago.edu/wp/00-10.html.

even reversing the trend toward free trade that developed over the course of the last century. For example, during the 1990s, the U.S. Congress refused to grant President Clinton "fast-track" authority to negotiate free trade agreements. Fast track forces Congress to vote on trade legislation submitted by the president without additional amendments and within 60 days. It makes it easier for the executive branch to negotiate trade deals with foreign nations. Congress denied President Clinton fast track because the administration was pushing authority that would allow him to include environmental and labor standards within free trade agreements. Congressional fear was warranted. In November 1999, Clinton signed Executive Order 13141, which directed the government to design strict environmental guidelines to which future trade agreements would be subjected. Congress's denial of fast track because of Clinton's actions has stalled the growth of wealth and subsequently the improvement of environmental health in poorer nations.

Congress was right to oppose the inclusion of green standards. Environmental standards in trade agreements export U.S. benchmarks to countries that cannot yet afford them. Poorer countries must first meet basic environmental and public health needs related to sanitation,<sup>4</sup> clean water, indoor air quality,<sup>5</sup> and a sufficient food supply.<sup>6</sup>

#### **Greening at State and Defense**

Both the Department of State and the Department of Defense (DOD) have suffered from diversionary environmental policy:

- In his 1997 National Security Strategy, President Clinton placed the countering of environmental damage as one of the "core national security objectives."
- A Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense position was created to deal solely with environmental issues in the early 1990s. Clinton elevated this position in 1993 to Deputy Under Secretary of Defense. It appears the position will continue in the Bush administration.
- The Department of State elevated the issues of a stabilized world population and a sustainable environment to an even keel with national security under its *United States Strategic Plan for Inter*national Affairs.

## The Greening of International Agencies

World trade, international political agencies, and international financial agencies also felt the pressure to leave their missions for greener pastures.

 The World Bank, deservedly long blamed for projects that harm the environment such as the Sardar Sarovar Dam and numerous coal mines in India, now funds projects like a \$38.2 million loan and a \$5.4 million grant to encourage the use of natural gas and geothermal power as environmentally friendly power sources for Poland.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> For an overview of the most serious environmental health problems in the developing world, see Mooney and Bate, *Environmental Health — Third World Problems and First World Preoccupations*.



<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Waterborne illnesses are a leading killer in the developing world.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> With modern energy sources, people in Third-World countries could avoid burning dung and wood in their homes. This burning contributes to millions of respiratory illnesses every year.

Amendments to link International Monetary Fund (IMF) dollars to an analysis of countries' environmental efforts and incorporation of a system of green accounting into national balance sheets to account for depletion of natural resources have been introduced in the U.S. Congress.

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID), which was founded to help developing countries grow economically (as well as to fight communism), now has environmental objectives. It currently works on eliminating "environmentally unsound" energy production and use, and plans to lobby foreign governments to embrace environmental regulations.

#### The Greening of OECD

Formed after World War II, the purpose of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) was to assist the economic development of war ravaged Europe. OECD has since expanded to include economically developing countries that have democratic sytems of government. In recent years, OECD also has expanded its interests to international social and environmental policy. OECD has chosen to focus on a number of issues, including global warming, the loss of biodiversity, polluted groundwater, and persistent and toxic chemicals, even though these issues are covered in a variety of international organizations, including the World Health Organization (WHO) and various branches of the United Nations.

While such policies promise considerable adverse effects, our elected officials have limited control over the OECD policy-making process. OECD decisions are binding upon their members, including the United States.9 The World Trade Organization is likely to consider OECD decisions as binding on the United States, even when Congress has not ratified them. In addition, Congress often fails to use its power to check executive branch power.

Jennifer Zambone

— Bishop Grewell

<sup>9</sup> Article 5, Convention on the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, December 1960, http://www.oecd.org/about/origins/convention/conventn.htm.



OECD Online, "OECD Origins," accessed July 19, 2001, http://www.oecd.org/about/origins/index.htm.

<sup>8 &</sup>quot;Executive Summary," OECD Environmental Outlook, May 2001, http://www.oecd.org/env/outlook/ExecSumm.pdf.

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#### **Recommended Readings**

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## OZONE DEPLETION AND THE MONTREAL PROTOCOL

An international treaty called the "Montreal Protocol" has proven to be a costly overreaction to an exaggerated environmental concern. Under this treaty and the 1990 amendments to the Clean Air Act, the federal government banned production of chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs, a widely used class of refrigerants) and has placed restrictions on the manufacture and use of other compounds. The total cost of these measures may reach \$100 billion. Now that the CFC phaseout is complete, several other economically valuable chemicals are also being targeted for international regulation under the ozone treaty. Further restrictions are scientifically unwarranted and would exacerbate the already excessive burdens on consumers.

#### History

The Montreal Protocol was signed in 1987 in response to overstated claims that man-made chlorine was destroying the gaseous layer of ozone that shields the earth from ultraviolet-B radiation (UVB). The main concern was that continued use of CFCs was going to result in a massive increase in the amount of UVB reaching ground level. Many environmental activists, and some scientists, popularized alarmist claims of increasing skin cancers and cataracts, declining crop yields, destruction of the ocean food chain, and other human health and environmental effects linked to UVB. Consequently, the United States and other developed nations agreed to ban CFCs and other chemicals branded as depleting layers of ozone.

It is becoming increasingly clear that scientific reality falls far short of the rhetoric on which the ozone treaty was based.<sup>2</sup> Only modest and temporary thinning of the ozone layer has been measured worldwide. Ozone depletion is most marked over Antarctica during the months of September through November, a heavily publicized phenomenon called the "ozone hole." But this seasonal event is limited to the South Pole and has no impact whatsoever on people living in the United States.

Most importantly, actual measurements of UVB do not reveal a long-term increase at ground level.<sup>3</sup> No published research has documented any actual human health or environmental damage attributable to ozone depletion. Even the Antarctic ozone hole has had only negligible effects on the Antarctic ecosystem. The shrill predictions from environmental activists have proven false.<sup>4</sup> In sum, ozone depletion is a real but greatly overblown concern.

## **Outstanding Issues**

While costly and unnecessary steps have already been taken to implement the ozone treaty, some agencies are demanding even more stringent measures. The Environmental Protection Agency

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> See Oliver Schein et al., "Ocular and Dermatologic Health Effects of Ultraviolet Radiation Exposure from the Ozone Hole in Southern Chile," *American Journal of Public Health* 85, no. 4 (April 1995): 546-50.



<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Ben Lieberman, *The High Cost of Cool: The Economic Impact of the CFC Phaseout in the United States* (Washington, D.C.: Competitive Enterprise Institute, June 1994), http://www.cei.org/PDFs/cost\_of\_cool.pdf.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Ben Lieberman, *Doomsday Déjà Vu: Ozone Depletion's Lessons for Global Warming* (Washington, D.C.: Competitive Enterprise Institute, October 1998); Fred Singer, "(N)O<sub>2</sub> Problem," *Public Interest* 36 (Summer 1994): 73-76; http://www.cei.org/MonoReader.asp?ID=72.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> See Joseph Scotto et al., "Biologically Effective Ultraviolet Radiation: Surface Measurements in the United States, 1974 to 1985," *Science* 239 (12 February 1988): 762-64; David Correll et al., "Spectral Ultraviolet-B Radiation Fluxes at the Earth's Surface: Long Term Variations at 39N, 77W," *Journal of Geophysical Research* 97, no. D7 (20 May 1992): 7579-91; John Frederick et al., "Trends and Interannual Variations in Erythemal Sunlight, 1978-1993," *Photochemistry and Photobiology* 62, no. 3 (September 1995): 476-484; Elizabeth Weatherhead, "Analysis of Long-term Behavior of Ultraviolet Radiation Measured by Rebertson-Berger Meters at 14 Sites in the United States," *Journal of Geophysical Research* 102, no. D7 (20 April 1997): 8737-8754.

(EPA) and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) have indicated their intention to eliminate all uses of CFCs as propellants in metered dose inhalers (MDIs), the devices that provide relief for asthmatics. Cheap, reliable, and highly effective inhalers are vital to the lives of millions of asthmatic children and adults. Currently, CFC use in MDIs is the only exception to the overall CFC ban under the ozone treaty. Inhalers use a minuscule amount of CFCs, and most physicians say that CFC-free versions are not yet ready to take their place. In addition, the most promising substitute for CFCs in inhalers is under attack as a greenhouse gas. EPA and FDA should be stopped from prematurely ending CFC use in MDIs.

Ozone treaty negotiators have considered accelerating the deadline for phasing out hydrochlorofluorocarbons (HCFCs), a class of refrigerants related to CFCs, even though their effect on the ozone layer is insignificant. Widely used in residential air-conditioning and as CFC substitutes in many applications, HCFCs are scheduled to be phased out after 2010. However, several environmental groups, with the support of some European governments, would like to amend the Montreal Protocol to restrict HCFCs sooner. Such a move would greatly increase the cost of air-conditioning in the United States. Studies have consistently shown that air-conditioning saves lives during periods of extreme heat. The public's need for affordable air-conditioning must be protected.

Methyl bromide, the widely used crop fumigant, also has been targeted under the ozone treaty. It was scheduled to be banned under the Clean Air Act by 2001. However, in one of the first successful counterattacks to ozone hysteria, Congress inserted a provision in the 1998 appropriations bill to move the deadline back to 2005. Even that may not be enough to protect the many farmers and others who need methyl bromide, as well as the millions of consumers who benefit from lower costs and higher quality of methyl bromide-protected perishables. Further steps should be taken to guarantee that farmers have adequate supplies of this important compound.

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### Recommended Readings

Lieberman, Ben. *The High Cost of Cool: The Economic Impact of the CFC Phaseout in the United States*. Washington, D.C.: The Competitive Enterprise Institute, June 1994, http://www.cei.org/MonoReader.asp?ID=486.

Ben Lieberman. *Doomsday Déjà Vu: Ozone Depletion's Lessons for Global Warming*. Washington, D.C.: Competitive Enterprise Institute, October 1998, http://www.cei.org/MonoReader.asp?ID=72.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Ben Lieberman, "EPA's Asthma Miasma," *CEI On Point* (Washington D.C.: Competitive Enterprise Institute, 2 April 1998), http://www.cei.org/OnPointReader.asp?ID=49.



### **POPULATION**

In his 1798 Essay on the Principle of Population, Thomas Malthus argued that human population growth would eventually outstrip the earth's capacity to support mankind, leading to mass starvation. Following that tradition, several prognosticators from the 1960s and 1970s predicted that a rising population would lead to increasing natural resource scarcity and rising commodity prices, causing severe environmental degradation and mass starvation in the near future. The evidence shows, however, that they have been wrong.

## **Food Supply**

- Per capita grain supplies have increased by more than 22 percent since 1950,<sup>3</sup> and food prices have dropped, indicating abundance, not greater scarcity.
- These gains are not just confined to industrialized countries. Developing countries have also experienced impressive gains. The rate of increase in food production in poor countries has been more than double the rate of population growth.<sup>4</sup>
- In 1950, average grain yield was only 1.1 tons per hectare.<sup>5</sup> By 1992, grain yield more than doubled to 2.8 tons per hectare.<sup>6</sup>

## Why Population Trends Are Not Alarming

- In 1950, the average number of children born per woman stood at about five. Now, that number stands at 2.7.7
- All regions of the world are experiencing a decline in fertility rates.<sup>8</sup>
- The U.N. Population Division (UNPD) estimates that 64 countries and territories, or about 44
  percent of the world's population, are already experiencing subreplacement levels of fertility.<sup>9</sup>
- Moreover, the world's less developed regions experienced a drop in fertility from six children per woman in 1960 to three per woman in 1990.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> United Nations Population Division, *1998 Revision of World Population Estimates and Projections* (New York: United Nations, 1998), http://www.un.org/esa/population/worldpop1998.htm.



<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Thomas Malthus, An Essay on the Principle of Population (New York: Penguin, 1985).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Worst among these was Paul Ehlich, who suggested that one solution could entail putting chemicals into the water supply to involuntarily sterilize the population. Paul Erhlich, *The Population Bomb* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1968), 135-36.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Number derived from FAO Production Yearbook 2000. Data available at http://apps.fao.org/page/form?collection=Production.

Crops.Primary&Domain=Production&servlet=1&language=EN&hostname=apps.fao.org&version=default.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Dennis Avery, "Saving the Planet with Pesticides" in *The True State of the Planet*, ed. Ronald Bailey (N.Y.: Free Press, 1995), 55.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Food and Agricultural Organization, FAO Production Yearbook 1970 (Rome: FAO, 1970).

<sup>6</sup>lbid., http://apps1.fao.org/servlet/XteServlet.Jrun?Areas=862&Items=1717&Elements=41&Years=2000&Format=Table

<sup>&</sup>amp;Xaxis=Years&Yaxis=Countries&Aggregate=&Calculate=&Domaine=SUA&ItemTypes=Production.Crops.Primary&Language=&UserName=

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> United Nations Population Division, 2000 Revision of World Population Estimates and Projections (New York: United Nations, 2000), http://www.un.org/esa/population/wpp2000.htm.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> Ibid. In the past 25 years, the following regions have experienced a decline in the number of children per couple: Africa: from 6.6. to 5.27; Asia: from 5.1 to 2.7; Latin America and the Caribbean: from 5.0 to 2.69.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> Ibid. See also Nicholas Eberstadt, "The Population Implosion," Foreign Policy (1 March 2001), 42.

- If current trends in declining fertility continue, the world's population could reach a peak of 7.47 billion people in 2050 and then decline by 120 million people in the next 10 years.<sup>11</sup>
- The decline in the population growth rate continues to occur at about 30 percent per generation. 12
- Higher estimates have the world's population reaching a high of between 8.9 billion and 10.7 billion people after which the population will decline.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> United Nations Population Division, *1998 Revision of World Population Estimates and Projections*.



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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> Ibid. See also Eberstadt, "World Population Prospects for the Twenty-first Century," 81.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> Ibid.

### POPS CONVENTION

About two-fifths of the population (or 2.1 billion people) is at risk from mosquito-borne diseases every year, according to the World Health Organization. In Africa alone, 1.5 to 2.7 million people — mostly children — die from one mosquito-borne disease — malaria. The best available tool for controlling the spread of malaria is the pesticide DDT, which, if used in limited amounts in and around homes, prevents mosquitoes from entering and infecting inhabitants. While such limited use does not affect public health and wildlife, an international effort to ban DDT worldwide has placed this critical tool in jeopardy. The Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) is slated to ban a group of chemicals, including DDT. While the convention delegates did eventually relent and include some language to allow limited use of DDT temporarily (until better options come along for malaria control), regulations on its use may impede developing nations' access to this life-saving resource.

## Regulatory History

The United Nations Environment Program's Global Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) is a multilateral legal instrument that seeks to ban 12 chemicals — DDT, aldrin, dieldrin, endrin, chlordane, heptachlor, hexachlorobenzene, mirex, toxaphene, polychlorinated biphenyls, dioxins, and furans.<sup>3</sup> The International POPs Elimination Network, a network of more than 150 environmental organizations, helped UNEP to design the treaty.<sup>4</sup> Five negotiating meetings have been held since 1997, in Montreal, Nairobi, Geneva, Bonn, and Johannesburg. Once signed by 60 parties, POPs will be a global, legally binding instrument.

POPs delegates and observers met in Johannesburg, South Africa, in December 2000 at the final meeting of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC-5). The purpose of INC-5 was to complete negotiations on all remaining outstanding issues and produce an effective agreement that will successfully ban certain POPs and reduce POPs emissions on a global scale. The Bush administration announced on April 19, 2001, that it will sign the treaty,<sup>5</sup> but noted the importance of an exemption for DDT because of its use for controlling malaria. The Bush Administration has since signed the treaty and will seek Senate ratification.

## POPs As Defined by the Government

According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), persistent organic pollutants are "highly stable organic compounds used as pesticides or in industry. They are also generated unintentionally as the byproduct of combustion and industrial processes." EPA claims that "POPs are a special problem because they persist in the environment, accumulate in the fatty tissues of most living organisms, and are toxic to humans and wildlife."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Office of Pesticide Programs, "New Protocol on Persistent Organic Pollutants Negotiated Under the UN Economic Commission for Europe's Convention on Long-Range Transboundary Air Pollution" (Washington, D.C.: U.S. EPA, April 1998), http://www.epa.gov/oppfead1/international/lrtap2pg.htm.



<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> World Health Organization, *Tropical Diseases, Progress in Research, 1989-1990, Tenth Programme Report* (Geneva: UNDP/World Bank/WHO, 1991), http://www.chem.unep.ch/pops/indxhtms/ifcsall.html#4.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> The UNEP's POPs Web site is located at http://irptc.unep.ch/pops.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> International POPs Elimination Network, Provisional POPs Elimination Platform, Endorsing Organizations as of 7/19/99, http://www.psrus.org/IPEN\_Endorse.htm, accessed 25 March 2001.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> White House press release, 19 April 2001, http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2001/04/20010419-2.html.

While this brief focuses on the dangers of limiting DDT use, it also is important to note problems with the POPs convention in general. The convention seeks to ban substances that developed nations no longer use, and, hence, it has little implications for their citizens. However, as the DDT case illustrates, developing nations may still have important uses, and many of the claims about dangers are questionable. Used properly, many of these products could help developing nations progress economically and free them from poverty. Moreover, this convention is the first of potentially many more that will ban chemical products — some of which will force larger sacrifices for developing and developed nations alike.

## **Urgent Need for DDT and Malaria Control**

Scientist Paul Herman Muller discovered the insecticide properties of DDT and was awarded the 1948 Nobel Prize for his discovery. DDT was hailed as a major public health achievement because it provided an affordable way to manage major public health risks carried by mosquitoes, lice, and other vectors. DDT consequently became a key part of anti-malaria efforts worldwide.

Yet DDT was demonized by the environmental movement beginning with the publication of Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring*. In 1972, the U.S. EPA discontinued registering DDT for use in the United States based largely on concerns that it posed a threat to wildlife and unproven claims about public health risks. Ironically, the reduction of DDT use worldwide had done more to imperil public health than could have possibly been imagined.

- For example, South Africa nearly eradicated malaria-carrying mosquitoes when it used DDT, but cases soared again after the nation caved to environmental activists, who pressed the country to switch to another pesticide. Cases rose from 4,117 in 1995 to 27,238 by 1999 (or possibly as many as 120,000 if one considers pharmacy records).9
- Dr. Don Roberts et al., demonstrates that "Separate analyses of data from 1993 to 1995 showed that countries that have recently discontinued their spray programs are reporting large increases in malaria incidence. Ecuador, which has increased use of DDT since 1993, is the only country reporting a large reduction (61%) in malaria rates since 1993."

DDT is an essential tool for many nations to control malaria-carrying mosquitoes. The World Health Organization observes:

• "For many malaria-affected countries, responsible DDT use is a vital strategy for preventing malaria transmission and controlling epidemics. Countries continue to use DDT primarily because they cannot afford reliable alternatives or do not have the capacity to develop them."

<sup>11 &</sup>quot;DDT Still Has a Health Role, RBM/WHO Position on DDT, WHO's Roll Back Malaria Project," http://www.rbm.who.int, accessed 12 March 2001.



<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> Rachel Carson, *Silent Spring* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1962).

<sup>8 &</sup>quot;DDT Ban Takes Effect," EPA press release, 31 December 1972, http://www.epa.gov/history/topics/ddt/01.htm.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> Amir Attaran and Rajendra Maharaj, "Doctoring Malaria, Badly: The Global Campaign to Ban DDT," *British Medical Journal*, no. 321 (2 December 2000): 1403-5, http://bmj.com/cgi/content/full/321/7273/1403#resp1.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> Donald R. Roberts et al., "DDT, Global Strategies, and a Malaria Control Crisis in South America," *Emerging Infectious Diseases* 13, no. 3 (July-September 1997), http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/eid/vol3no3/roberts.htm. See also Amir Attaran et al., "Balancing Risks on the Backs of the Poor," *Nature Medicine* 6 (2000): 729-31.

#### Limited DDT Use Is Safe for Wildlife and Humans

Despite what activists have claimed, the science demonstrates that limited DDT use is safe. It has been applied to U.S. troops to protect them from typhus and other vectors, poured on Nazi victims to relieve them of disease-carrying lice, and applied in homes worldwide, without adverse effects. As A.G. Smith of the MRC Toxicology Unit of Leicester University says, "There is no strong evidence for any associated cancer risk among people exposed to DDT except perhaps among workers who may have been exposed to DDT plus other chemicals."

To control for malaria, public health authorities spray DDT on the interior walls of buildings. DDT then kills mosquitoes as they land on the walls, but studies indicate that DDT may be even more effective at reducing the number of mosquitoes entering homes. This method is particularly effective at protecting public health because mosquitoes feed largely at night when people are inside. However, there are no concerns about adverse impacts to wildlife because DDT is used in very low levels and contained in and around homes.

## POPs Restrictions on DDT Could Imperil Public Health

Because international officials finally have acknowledged the critical importance of DDT, it was listed for an exemption on Annex B of the POPs treaty. This exemption allows for country-based exemptions for production and usage of DDT.<sup>13</sup> Nevertheless, countries must comply with the restrictions and reporting requirements of Part II, Annex B, of the agreement.<sup>14</sup> The increased reporting requirements of the POPs convention,<sup>15</sup> however, mean that countries that already lack resources will face onerous and costly reporting requirements if they choose to use DDT in their public health programs. The reality of this requirement is that an even smaller amount of their scarce resources will be dedicated to preventing malaria.

And despite DDT's listing as restricted, but not banned, environmental groups will continue to pressure developing world governments and international health and aid agencies to eliminate DDT from public health programs. Such groups often advocate the use of DDT alternatives. However, there is *no alternative* to DDT that poor countries can switch to without encountering significant new costs that cannot be met out of their current health budgets.

## International Aid Programs Jeopardize Malaria Control

Eradication of DDT is infeasible in most developing countries where DDT is used in public health programs. Their public health programs are wholly or partly reliant on funding from overseas aid agencies. Since many donor countries frown on DDT, aid agencies are very reluctant to countenance its use in other countries. Belize, Mozambique, and Bolivia stopped using DDT in their public health programs, because they feared the loss of aid from international agencies. <sup>16</sup> It is highly likely that other countries also have succumbed to these pressures.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup> Richard Tren and Roger Bate, When Politics Kills: Malaria and the DDT Story (Washington, D.C.: Competitive Enterprise Institute, 2000).



<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> A.G. Smith, "How Toxic Is DDT?" Lancet (22 July 2000): 267-68.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> UNEP/POPS/INC.5/7, http://irptc.unep.ch/pops/POPs\_Inc/INC\_5/finalreport/en/inc5efinrep.PDF, 35-38.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> Ibid., 58.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup> See http://irtpc.unep.ch (UNEP/POPS/INC.5/1, 31) for a description of the reporting requirements proposed in the POPS process for DDT.

The U.S. Agency for International Development maintains an anti-DDT stance, stating that "USAID supports activities related to the development and/or implementation of alternatives to DDT use in indoor residual spraying, as well as efforts for overall improvement of malaria prevention and control."

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#### **Recommended Readings**

Goklany, Indur M. Applying the Precautionary Principle to DDT, http://www.fightingmalaria.org/ddt\_and\_pp.pdf.

Tren, Richard and Roger Bate. *When Politics Kills: Malaria and the DDT Story.* Washington, D.C.: Competitive Enterprise Institute, 2000, http://www.cei.org/PDFs/malaria.pdf.

Another very useful resource is www.fightingmalaria.org.



