

Human Rights and Peace Forum

on

US Plan Colombia:

A U.S. legacy of fumigation, human suffering and environmental destruction

On April 6th, 2001, at the College of Santa Fe peace and human rights activists met with grassroots activist Carlos Alberto Palacios, who under death threats to him and his family, risked all to tell his story. His account of the devastation of Putumayo, Colombia, the displacement of the people, the killing of flora and fauna and the contamination of the earth recounts the acts of genocide perpetrated with US money on the campesinos of Colombia.

The following pictures depict the devastation of the fumigation of the area of Putumayo, Colombia, once a dense tropical rainforest, now the only thing that grows is the Coca.



Green growth is coca plants - the only remaining vegetation after once verdant jungle is sprayed with herbicide

Many of the Campesinos' family and especially the children are suffering from the direct effects of the fumigation. Here is a child with rashes and blisters from the chemical. Also notice that the mother has the same irritations. Many people can not make the journey to show human rights workers their conditions. Often the father makes the efforts to report his families' welfare.



According to reports, this man here has never grown Coca yet his 4 acres of bananas/plantains were destroyed. Most all the sustainable crops are gone. This action is forcing displacements of people to the larger cities from their lands, with food crops destroyed, the people are starving. This has created many barrios in the cities and life conditions are not much better. Any outside attempts to remediate the lands and help with economic development outside of the drug cartels reach are met with death threats by many of the political factions; one life is worthless and especially outsiders.

The fumigation started the first week of January and still continues. Over 160,000 farm animals have died according to the human rights leaders in the area. Since the rainforest has been destroyed countless animals have died. The birds were the first to go.

As one Copan Indian States *"What would the traditional Medicine, the trees and plants, say if they had a voice."*

As one traumatized, starving child draws a picture of the violence of Blackhawk helicopters flying over, on the helicopters the child draws the letters, USA - "What will that child think when he knows what USA means".

This is an eye witness account of the devastation of southern Colombia - all in the name of corporate oil interests, and the possibility of building another canal linking the Pacific and the Caribbean Oceans, all couched in the name of the "War on Drugs".



Monkey stands out in stark contrast to what remains of his native habitat.



Blackened remains of jungle undergrowth

What can you do to help?

Contact your Congressional Representatives and Senators.

Please write, email, fax and call.

Email addresses:

Rep. Tom Udall: tom.udall@mail.house.gov

Rep. Heather Wilson: heather.wilson@mail.house.gov

Rep. Joseph Skeen; joseph.skeen@mail.house.gov

Sen. Bingaman:

senator_bingaman@bingaman.senator.gov

Sen. Domenici:

senator_domenici@domenici.senator.gov



Write the Colombian President:

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Dr. Gusatavo Bell Lemus
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