

Seeds of Occupation and India's "Stockholm Syndrome": GMO and Monsanto-Bayer's "Strategic Presence in India"

By [Colin Todhunter](#)

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In political terms, most people might tend to associate the word 'occupation' with a (foreign) military presence that controls a region or country. Any such occupation may not necessarily imply troops visibly patrolling the streets. It can be much subtler. Take Britain, for instance. The Guardian journalist [Seumas Milne says](#) that the US's six military bases, dozens of secretive facilities and 10,000 military personnel in Britain effectively tie the country's foreign policy into the agenda of the US empire and its endless wars.

The vast majority of Brits do not regard this as an 'occupation'. They might feel they are being 'protected' by the US with which Britain has a 'special relationship'. Such is the Stockholm syndrome.

The population is spun a yarn that the US, Britain and the wider NATO project are in any case forces for good in an unpredictable and dangerous world (despite the actual reality which suggests the [complete opposite](#)). With the US having a strong military presence in [so many other countries](#) across the world, that's certainly a lot of very 'special relationships'.

But occupation can take many forms. It does not necessarily imply a military presence or military domination. For example, in India right now, there is a drive to get genetically modified (GM) mustard sanctioned for commercial cultivation; this would be the first GM food crop to be grown in the country. Unfortunately, this push for GM is based on a [flawed premise](#) and an agenda steeped in [fraud and unremitting regulatory delinquency](#), and any green light to go ahead would open the floodgates for more unnecessary and damaging GM food crops.

The arguments being put forward to justify the entry of GM food crops is that they would enhance productivity, make a positive contribution to farmers' livelihoods and be better for the environment. All such claims have been shown to be [bogus](#) (with the opposite being true in each case) or at the very least are highly questionable.

GM mustard in India is ultimately a [Bayer construct](#), and, given the proposed takeover/merger with St Louis-based Monsanto, US interests would benefit from its commercialisation. The Monsanto-Bayer marriage would not only be convenient for the US in Europe (providing it with a much improved strategic foothold there, given that Bayer is Swiss based), but it would also (through Bayer's GM mustard) provide it with the opportunity to further penetrate Indian agriculture.

Monsanto already has a firm strategic presence in India. It has to an extent become

the [modern-day East India company](#). The Bayer merger can only serve to further the purposes of those in the US who have always regarded GM biotechnology in more geopolitical terms as a means for securing greater control of global agriculture (via patented GM seeds and proprietary inputs) in [much the same way](#) the 'Green Revolution' did.

In broad terms, US geopolitical strategy has seen the exporting of a strident neoliberalism across the globe underpinned by a devastating militarism. For example, aside from Monsanto's well-documented [links to the US military](#), its seeds conveniently followed hot on the heels into [Ukraine](#) on the back of a US-instigated coup and into [Iraq](#) after Washington's invasion. The reality behind the globalisation agenda (that transnational agribusiness [drives and exploits](#)) is an imposed form of capitalism that results in [destruction and war](#) for those who attempt to remain independent or structural violence (poverty, inequality, 'austerity', etc) via [privatisation and deregulation](#) for millions in countries that acquiesce.

Part of this structural violence involves the toxic inputs of transnational agribusiness and the imposition of an [unsustainable model of Green Revolution farming](#). The result is huge profits for the agritech/agribusiness cartel and a public burdened with massive [environmental, social and health costs](#). As if that isn't bad enough, it must be remembered that the Green Revolution (of which GM represents phase two) is ultimately based on the [pilfering of peasants' seeds](#) that were developed over generations.

Once a country loses control of its seeds and thus its food and agriculture to outside forces, it becomes more deeply integrated into a globalised system of dependency (in some instances, ensuring they become complete [basket cases](#) dependent on the US), a process that could be accelerated by trade deals like the TTIP (Europe), TPA (Asia) and KIA (India), which would allow Washington to extend and further cement its political and economic influence over entire regions.

India's apparent willingness to hand over its seeds and thus its food sovereignty to foreign interests is steeped in its acceptance of the West's neoliberalism. Whether this entails complying with ['enabling the business of agriculture'](#), an unremitting faith in 'foreign direct investment' ([displacing its existing model of production with a destructive model that would benefit foreign corporations](#)) or complying with the criteria for ['ease of doing business'](#), it is ironically being carried out under the auspices of a ruling BJP whose nationalistic rhetoric helped it gain power.

[Report after report](#) has indicated that small farmers using low-input, ecologically-friendly methods are key to feeding populations in countries like India. And a series of high-level reports (listed [here](#)) in India have advised against adopting the GM route.

Given [the hold](#) that the World Bank has on India, the [revolving door](#) between the WB/IMF and India's institutions and the influence of foreign interests and corporations within the agriculture sector, it all begs the question: are sections of the Indian political elite suffering a severe bout of Stockholm syndrome?

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Articles by: [Colin Todhunter](#)

About the author:

Colin Todhunter is an extensively published independent writer and former social policy researcher. Originally from the UK, he has spent many years in India. His website is www.colintodhunter.com
https://twitter.com/colin_todhunter

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