

Thwarting the “Zika Virus Threat” in America?

Aerial Deployment of Dangerous Pesticides

Corporate News Coverage of Aerial Pesticide Deployment Uses 'Expert' Sources with CDC, Government Ties. Blackout on Puerto Rico's federal lawsuit against CDC over Naled

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Major Western news media’s coverage of the alleged dangers posed by the Zika virus and “preventative” measures mandated by overreaching federal agencies is a textbook example of censorship by omission, intentional oversight of facts, and deference to questionable “expert” authority to assuage valid public concern over aerial deployment of dangerous pesticides.

This summer South Florida public health authorities under the direction of the Centers For Disease Control asserted that a handful of Zika cases warrants a mass aerial spraying campaign to protect the public and unborn, all of whom may be susceptible to microcephaly—a prenatal neurological condition characterized by deformation of the head.

The CDC proposed using the pesticide Naled to counter the Zika-bearing mosquito population. Naled is known to be harmful to human health and is banned in the European Union. Its effects via dermal contact and inhalation can resemble symptoms of Zika infection, and the compound may prove to be a very real cause of microcephaly. Despite public protests in Miami area officials have once again blindly capitulated to the CDC’s directives, initiating a second spraying campaign on September 9. The basic deduction that Naled’s effects and the much-dreaded Zika symptoms could be very easily confused is carefully avoided by the CDC and corporate news media alike.

Such news outlets would not have to look very far to find substantial evidence of Naled’s dangers that warrant public concerns over the US government’s eagerness to employ the pesticide. For example, in July after the CDC informed Puerto Rico it had unilaterally made a decision to use Naled to curtail the spread of Zika the [mayor of San Juan Puerto Rico sued the CDC in federal court](#) to prevent its use in the region that broadly went against the sentiments of Puerto Rican citizens.

The lawsuit brought by San Juan Mayor Carmen Yulin Cruz-Soto and the San Juan Municipality charges that the agency’s plan to spray the island with the purported anti-Zika pesticide Naled violates the federal Endangered Species Act and the National Environmental Policy Act.

“Multiple studies have demonstrated,” the complaint reads,

that exposure to Naled can cause respiratory complications, nausea, headaches, skin irritation and damage to the nervous system in humans, and could potentially cause irreparable harm to the fish and wildlife that live in the island's estuaries and ecosystems, which will directly affect the health, recreational, aesthetic, commercial and environmental interests of [San Juan]."

The lawsuit further explains how neither the CDC nor any other federal agency have carried out environmental impact studies for proposed actions "significantly affecting the quality of the human environment," or that may pose a threat to the welfare of any endangered or threatened species.

Aside from one [brief reference](#) of the San Juan lawsuit by CNN and more [detailed reportage](#) in the Latin American [TeleSUR](#) network upon its filing in July almost no major news media have covered the important case.

Rather than closely consider the legal and scientific facts concerning Naled presented in the suit which tend to reinforce popular concerns in the US, major media have routinely emphasized footage of protests in the street and on social media opposing the pesticide program that tends to make such objections appear irrational when contrasted with expert sources, including those with ties to the same government interests that have vigorously advocated Naled's use. Such framing techniques have been [long recognized](#) by media sociologists as a means to malign social activism in the public eye.

For example, a CBS News report highlights Dr. Aileen Marty, a medical professor at Florida International University whose areas of expertise include infectious diseases, and who most recently worked on the Ebola media and public health phenomenon. Marty maintains that Naled's use in South Florida is benign.

The "dose [sic] is so low and so fine a mist that it's almost impossible—not totally impossible—but almost impossible for any human to have any significant effect in the way that they're spraying and at the heights that it's being sprayed."

CBS correspondent [David Begnaud](#) fails to make clear that his expert source is a member of the State of Florida Medical Reserve Corps, where she the professor [headed up the recent federally-coordinated "surveillance program"](#) that has gone door-to-door throughout Miami neighborhoods collecting urine specimens to test for Zika. The academic's [FIU profile](#), states she is a graduate of the Navy War College and 25-year US Navy veteran who previously worked at the Uniformed Services Industry, the National Defense University, and "has also worked with and for elements of" the World Health Organization and an array of US lettered agencies, including the Department of Defense, the Department of Homeland Security, the Department of State, the Department of Agriculture, and the White House National Security Administration. Marty also has ties to the Department of Health and Human Services, the Centers For Disease Control, the National Institutes of Health, "and other government agencies.

Along these lines [CNN consulted P. Barry Ryan](#), a professor of environmental chemistry and public health at Emory University in Atlanta. While the video report initially highlights Ryan's skepticism of the pesticide's use in urban areas, it concludes on an affirmative note, that "Naled can carry risks, but not nearly as big as the risks posed by Zika."

Major news outlets' use of such sources to placate their viewerships while downplaying other important developments, not the least of which is the federal lawsuit brought by San Juan, suggests an intent to mislead and legitimize government measures regardless of how irrational and dangerous they may be. Such coverage makes it much easier for South Florida officials to capitulate to the CDC's directives than stand up to the agency's overreach, as Puerto Rico's public servants have done. One must ask exactly to what degree CDC-commissioned public relations maneuvers would differ from the "journalistic" efforts discussed above.

Political leaders including former Florida Republican presidential candidate Marco Rubio are vying for over \$1 billion in federal funding that will purportedly be used to further thwart the "Zika threat." If the CDC and local officials' activities in South Florida are any indication of future actions, these will likely include more intensified aerial bombardment of subject populations and environments with pesticides that have been long-proven injurious to human health.

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James F. Tracy was a tenured Associate Professor of Journalism and Media Studies at Florida Atlantic University from 2002 to 2016. He was fired by FAU ostensibly for violating the university's policies imposed on the free speech rights of faculty. Tracy has filed a federal civil rights lawsuit against the university, with trial set to begin November 27, 2017. Tracy received his PhD from University of Iowa. His work on media history, politics and culture has appeared in a wide variety of academic journals, edited volumes, and alternative news and opinion outlets. Additional information is available at [MemoryHoleBlog.com](#), [TracyLegalDefense.org](#), and [jamesftracy.wordpress.com](#).

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