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Central Intelligence Agency

Sen Bradley



Washington, D.C. 20505

14 JUL 1989

The Honorable Bill Bradley  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Bradley:

Regarding your question about the use of viruses to attack coca, Agency experts [redacted] advised me that while it is probably true that viruses could be used to attack coca plants, none of the viruses implicated as pathogens of coca have been determined to attack only coca. Additionally, to our knowledge there have been no experiments on the use of viruses to control coca. There are other pathogens, particularly fungi and insect biocontrols, that have been studied for use against coca and other drug crops. While these studies indicate that pathogen and insect biocontrols have the potential to be effective in suppressing narcotics crop production, there are serious drawbacks and concerns that require extensive research and evaluation before they can be seriously considered for implementation. [redacted]

(b)(1)  
(b)(3)

To date, the most promising biocontrol method has been developed for use against marijuana. The method uses pollen, instead of pathogens or insects, to reduce the quality and economic value of marijuana harvests. The method simply uses pollen harvested from low potency marijuana plants to pollinate marijuana fields. In addition to reducing the quality and value of the marijuana crop, this method genetically ruins the seed stock harvested from the pollinated fields which is in turn used to plant the next season's crop. An added benefit of this method is that it is virtually risk free, since the pollen occurs naturally in the environment and does not interact with any other plant but marijuana. Similar methods of control are under consideration for coca and opium poppy. [redacted]

If you have additional questions I would be glad to have one of our officers from the DCI Counternarcotics Center, who is an expert on the subject of biocontrols, brief you in detail. [redacted]

Sincerely,

[redacted]  
Richard J. Keri

Deputy Director of Central Intelligence

*The Counternarcotics Center follows these activities but we are not pursuing except to keep State, DEA and Bennett informed.*

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