

Agriculture by Susan B. Cohen

EPA grabs for the globe

In what ought to be a last gasp, Carter's environmentalists have performed unnatural acts against disease and pest control.

Five days before leaving office, Jimmy Carter signed an executive order that amounts to an attempt at imposing the irrationality of the Environmental Protection Agency on the rest of the world. The Hazardous Substances Export Policy, which became law on Jan. 15, is the pet project of the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ), co-authors of the Carter *Global 2000* report that called for a one-billion-person reduction in the world's anticipated population.

The export control policy has four major provisions, only one of which concerns direct export control. The most deadly aspects of the policy, in the view of knowledgeable observers, are actually contained in the other three provisions. These establish a group within the State Department to pump scare propaganda about chemical and other products into developing-sector countries in particular. These provisions also direct all U.S. agencies to move to set up a "worldwide alert scheme" and an "international notification system" in every possible international forum.

The "hazard notification" unit in the State Department will centralize notification of foreign governments of all restrictions or bans placed on U.S. products, and indicate the particular "hazard" that are the grounds for the restriction. The same unit would also produce an annual summary of all regulatory actions taken.

In the words of Carter Special Assistant for Consumer Affairs Esther Peterson, the summary would "provide adequate information about hazardous substances for other governments to determine their own import policies."

A likely first target of the new policy, unless it is quickly struck down altogether, is DDT. The 1972 ban on DDT, culminated the first phase of the environmentalist assault on science and industry in the U.S., establishing the "authority" of the Environmental Defense Fund. William Ruckelshaus, EPA director at the time, confided to a friend as he made the decision to ban DDT, "There is no scientific basis for banning this chemical. This is a political decision."

Indeed, that there was no scientific evidence that warranted the ban became clear during months of hearings with presentations from U.S. and world health agencies and dozens of scientists. And, as studies showed, the potential consequences of the ban in terms of an immediate rise in human death and debilitation from the diseases DDT most effectively controls (malaria, typhus, yellow fever, and others) was the real hazard.

Yet the ban was declared, and production of DDT in the U.S. was curtailed, with the exception of one small company in southern California that depends entirely on exports through the United Nations' World Health Organization and to indi-

vidual countries, mostly in the underdeveloped sector, where DDT's ability to control murderous diseases as well as the insects that ravage food supplies is most critical.

The export ban would not only jeopardize the importing countries' populations; it would eliminate the sole American producer, leaving the nation helpless in any emergency. The United States would then be forced to rely on imports of DDT from the U.S.S.R.—which has built three more DDT manufacturing plants as we shut down ours!

None of this will come to pass if the Reagan mandate for a return to high-technology growth and development is carried through. As the skirmishing around the CEQ and EPA indicates, however, that will take a fight. EPA is still without a chief as EIR goes to print, after the agency's transition team, heavily pressured from inside and out by the zero-growth lobby's big guns around Ruckelshaus and former EPA director Russell Train, had tried to place Steven Jellinek in the directorship by fiat. Jellinek, an EPA administrator, is one of Train's activist protégés and a consultant to the new environmentalist umbrella group Train just set up to "get" the Reagan administration.

Jellinek was EPA's acting director for exactly two days, sources say, before Reagan's aides moved to upset that little game. Two reputable, competent individuals have been recommended for these important posts: Dr. Virgil Freed of Oregon State University for the EPA directorship, and Richard Main, the widely respected former director of the American Farm Bureau Federation's Natural Resources Division, for CEQ.