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di Aldo Bernardini,

Bush "Developing Illegal Bioterror Weapons" for Offensive Use

Sherwood Ross, t r u t h o u t | Guest Contributor

Wednesday 20 December 2006

In violation of the US Code and international law, the Bush administration is spending more money (in inflation-adjusted dollars) to develop illegal, offensive germ warfare than the \$2 billion spent in World War II on the Manhattan Project to make the atomic bomb.

So says Francis Boyle, the professor of international law who drafted the Biological Weapons Anti-Terrorism Act of 1989 enacted by Congress. He states the Pentagon "is now gearing up to fight and 'win' biological warfare" pursuant to two Bush national strategy directives adopted "without public knowledge and review" in 2002.

The Pentagon's Chemical and Biological Defense Program was revised in 2003 to implement those directives, endorsing "first-use" strike of chemical and biological weapons (CBW) in war, says Boyle, who teaches at the University of Illinois, Champaign.

Terming the action "the proverbial smoking gun," Boyle said the mission of the controversial CBW program "has been altered to permit development of offensive capability in chemical and biological weapons!" [Original italics.]

The same directives, Boyle charges in his book *Biowarfare and Terrorism* (Clarity Press), "unconstitutionally usurp and nullify the right and the power of the United States Congress to declare war, in gross and blatant violation of Article 1, Section 8, Clause 11 of the United States Constitution."

For fiscal years 2001-2004, the federal government funded \$14.5 billion "for ostensibly 'civilian' biowarfare-related work alone," a "truly staggering" sum, Boyle wrote.

Another \$5.6 billion was voted for "the deceptively-named 'Project BioShield,'" under which Homeland Security is stockpiling vaccines and drugs to fight anthrax, smallpox and other bioterror agents, wrote Boyle. Protection of the civilian population is, he said, "one of the fundamental requirements for effectively waging biowarfare."

The Washington Post reported December 12 that both houses of Congress this month passed legislation "considered by many to be an effort to salvage

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La XX Assemblea Generale dell'ONU (1965) dichiara "la legittimità della lotta da parte dei popoli sotto oppressione coloniale, per esercitare il loro diritto all'autodeterminazione e all'indipendenza". Inoltre, l'Assemblea invita "tutti gli Stati a fornire assistenza morale e materiale ai movimenti di liberazione nazionale nei territori coloniali".

:: ONU - Risoluzione 1514

"L'Assemblea Generale dichiara che: la soggezione dei popoli a dominio straniero, conquista e asservimento costituisce una negazione dei diritti umani fondamentali, è contraria alla Carta delle Nazioni Unite ed è un impedimento alla promozione della pace e della cooperazione mondiali. Tutti i popoli hanno diritto all'autodeterminazione; in virtù di tale diritto essi devono liberamente determinare il loro status politico e liberamente perseguire il loro sviluppo economico, sociale e culturale".

:: Convenzione di Ginevra, Protocollo Addizionale I (1977):

La lotta armata può essere usata, come ultima risorsa, come mezzo per esercitare il diritto all'autodeterminazione.

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In base allo Statuto del Tribunale penale internazionale, sono definiti "crimini di guerra":
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the two-year-old Project BioShield, which has been marked by delays and operational problems." When President Bush signs it into law, it will allocate \$1 billion more over three years for additional research "to pump more money into the private sector sooner."

"The enormous amounts of money" purportedly dedicated to "civilian defense" that are now "dramatically and increasingly" being spent," Boyle writes, "betray this administration's effort to be able to embark on offensive campaigns using biowarfare."

By pouring huge sums into university and private-sector laboratories, Boyle charged, federal spending has diverted the US biotech industry to biowarfare.

According to Rutgers University molecular biologist Richard Ebright, over 300 scientific institutions and 12,000 individuals have access to pathogens suitable for biowarfare and terrorism. Ebright found that the number of National Institute of Health grants to research infectious diseases with biowarfare potential has shot up from 33 in 1995-2000 to 497.

Academic biowarfare participation involving the abuse of DNA genetic engineering since the late 1980s has become "patently obvious," Boyle said. "American universities have a long history of willingly permitting their research agendas, researchers, institutes, and laboratories to be co-opted, corrupted, and perverted by the Pentagon and the CIA."

"These despicable death-scientists were arming the Pentagon with the component units necessary to produce a massive array of ... genetically-engineered biological weapons," Boyle said.

In a forward to Boyle's book, Jonathan King, a professor of molecular biology at Massachusetts Institute of Technology, wrote that "the growing bioterror programs represent a significant emerging danger to our own population" and "threaten international relations among nations."

While such programs "are always called defensive," King said, "with biological weapons, defensive and offensive programs overlap almost completely."

Boyle contends the US is "in breach" of both the Biological Weapons and Chemical Weapons conventions and US domestic criminal law. In February 2003, for example, the US granted itself a patent on an illegal long-range biological-weapons grenade.

Boyle said other countries grasp the military implications of US germ-warfare actions and will respond in kind. "The world will soon witness a de facto biological arms race among the major biotech states under the guise of 'defense,' and despite the requirements of the Biological Warfare Convention."

"The massive proliferation of biowarfare technology and facilities, as well as trained scientists and technicians all over the United States, courtesy of the Neo-Con Bush Jr. administration will render a catastrophic biowarfare or bioterrorist incident or accident a statistical certainty," Boyle warned.

As far back as September 2001, according to a report in the New York Times titled "US Pushes Germ Warfare Limits," critics were concerned that "the research comes close to violating a global 1972 treaty that bans such weapons." But US officials responded at the time that they were more worried about understanding the threat of germ warfare and devising possible defenses.

The 1972 treaty, which the US signed, forbids developing weapons that spread disease, such as anthrax, regarded as "ideal" for germ warfare.

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Master "Enrico Mattei in Medio Oriente", Università di Teramo

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According to an article in the Baltimore Chronicle & Sentinel of last September 28, Milton Leitenberg, a veteran arms-control advocate at the University of Maryland, said the government was spending billions on germ warfare with almost no analysis of threat. He said claims terrorists will use the weapons have been "deliberately exaggerated."

In March of the previous year, 750 US biologists signed a letter protesting what they saw as the excessive study of bioterror threats.

The Pentagon has not responded to the charges made by Boyle in this article.

Sherwood Ross is a Virginia-based free-lance writer on political and military issues. Contact him at sherwoodr1@yahoo.com.

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