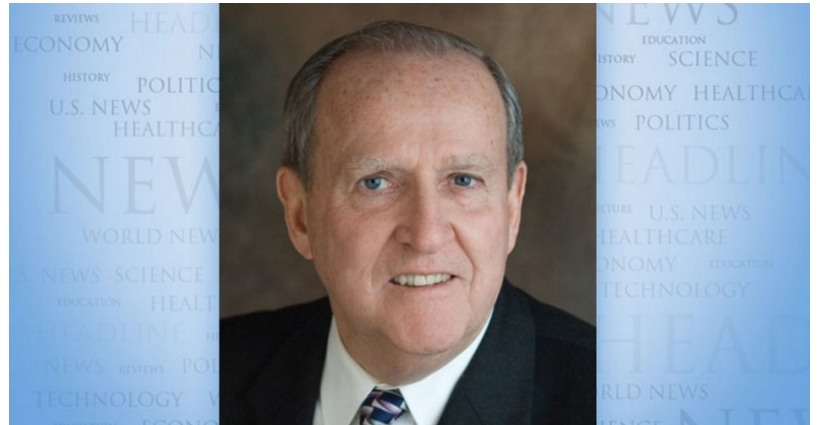




Written by [John F. McManus](#) on August 6, 2016

## Does Zika Warrant Bringing Back DDT?

Jane Orient, M.D., serves as the Executive Director of the American Association of Physicians and Surgeons (AAPS). This Arizona-based organization attracts conservative-thinking doctors and frequently finds itself in disagreement with the well-known American Medical Association.



Dr. Orient has issued a call to start using [DDT in the fight against the Zika virus](#). Her stand places her in marked contrast to an assortment of leftist environmentalists and their political allies. To them, DDT is harmful. But examination of the claims that DDT adversely affects people, plant life, and fish shows the worries to be unreasonable if not completely false.

Created in 1874 by a German chemist, dichlorodiphenyltrichloroethane wasn't found to be an effective insecticide until 1939 when Swiss chemist Paul Müller started publicizing its usefulness as an eradicator of mosquitoes and various vermin. Müller justifiably won the 1948 Nobel Prize "for his discovery of the high efficiency of DDT as a contact poison against several anthropods."

Soon after the acknowledgement of Müller's work, use of DDT became widespread. Typhus that had ravaged U.S. forces during World War II was largely eliminated. In the United States, sickness and death caused by malaria shrank from 15,000 cases in 1947 to compete eradication by 1951. The use of DDT in Africa and elsewhere proved sensationally effective against malaria and other mosquito borne diseases. The [use of DDT](#), says Dr. Orient, probably saved 500,000,000 lives without killing anyone."

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In 1962, however, Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* gave birth to a campaign against DDT that has led to the substance being banned for use in the United States and much of the world. Carson predicted that vegetation would disappear, fish would no longer be found in rivers and streams, birds would no longer be found, and people would face grave dangers. DDT became Enemy Number One and its use became illegal in 1972 via an EPA mandate. Soon, the United Nations joined the U.S. in condemning DDT and using it ceased in many parts of the world.

In Florida today, frantic efforts to eradicate the Zika virus have dominated our nation's print and electronic media. Numerous athletes have declined to participate in the Olympic Games over fear of mosquito bites transmitting the Zika virus and more. To combat the threat, medical authorities are turning to everything but DDT.

"If we do nothing," says Dr. Orient, "a lot of people will get Zika [and] some will get Guillain Barre Syndrome which causes a potentially fatal paralysis." Labeling as a "step above nothing" the current strategy of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC) — don't get pregnant, wear long sleeve clothing, and apply a mosquito repellent — she laments the refusal to employ DDT to deal with the problem.



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Everything offered by the CDC and others isn't working very well according to the AAPS leader. What would work? With a willingness to stick her neck out, Dr. Orient says it may be "the height of political incorrectness to suggest trying DDT." But that's what she believes would be effective.

Why did the ban on DDT develop and become virtually mandatory? Population control seems to be the hidden goal of some. In the 1960s, Environmental Defense Fund leader Dr. Charles Wurster claimed there were already too many people on earth. He proposed banning DDT "as a way to get rid of them." In his syndicated column, Walter Williams noted that Malthusian Club founder Alexander King had written in 1990: "So my chief quarrel with DDT, in hindsight, is that it has greatly added to the population problem." In November 1991, the Paris-based *UNESCO Courier* published the proposal of famed oceanographer Jacques Cousteau, who called for action to "eliminate 350,000 people per day" as the way to counter population growth. Others claiming to be environmentalists have issued similarly outrageous statements.

The existing [ban on DDT should be terminated](#). Perhaps the current scare presented by the Zika virus will lead again to the use of this remarkable and safe substance.

*John F. McManus is president emeritus of [The John Birch Society](#). This column appeared originally at the [insideJBS](#) blog and is reprinted here with permission.*



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