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World Population Growth, Family Planning, and American Foreign Policy

The U.S. government position on world population growth as it emerged in the early 1960s was a fundamental departure in both content and commitment. We embraced the idea that one of the goals of American foreign policy should be the simultaneous reduction of *both* mortality and fertility across the Third World. It was not simply rhetoric. As the years passed, we committed a growing portion of our foreign aid to that end. The decision to link U.S. foreign-policy objectives with the subsidy of family planning and population control was truly exceptional in that it explicitly aimed at altering the demographic structure of foreign countries through long-term intervention. No nation had ever set in motion a foreign-policy initiative of such magnitude. Its ultimate goal was no less than to alter the basic fertility behavior of the entire Third World! Whether one views this goal as idealistic and naive or as arrogant and self-serving, the project was truly of herculean proportions.

It should not be surprising therefore that U.S. assistance for family planning programs overseas has engendered sharp opposition both at home and abroad. Initially it was fear of foreign domination and the implicit racist implication of such an initiative that brought an angry reaction from overseas. As time passed, hostility toward family planning declined across much of the Third World. As opposition declined overseas, however, the political forces opposing the subsidization of family planning programs in the United States increased. Ironically, domestic opposition forced a major reevaluation of U.S. policy in the Reagan administration at the same time worldwide support for population planning was finding its greatest support. More recently, with the election of Bill Clinton to the presidency, the policy pendulum has swung in

JOURNAL OF POLICY HISTORY, Vol. 7, No. 1, 1995.

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the other direction with renewed support for expanded family planning efforts.¹

In order to understand the shifting currents of controversy over the direction of U.S. population policy, it is necessary to gain a deeper historical perspective on the interrelationship between family planning, global resource utilization, and U.S. foreign policy since 1945. The reactions of policymakers to empirical information on population dynamics must be understood in terms of four historical and contextual dimensions:

1. The deep legacies of various “population ideologies” going back to the nineteenth century and merging, in the twentieth century, to form an uneasy mix of science, morality, and political economy.
2. The overriding constraints of American foreign policy in the post-war era, particularly our ongoing presumptions about the role of Third World nations in America’s Cold War ideology.
3. The continuing domestic debate over feminism, birth control, abortion, and what might be called “the politics of the family.”
4. And, after the late 1960s, a growing awareness of the global implications of environmental degradation and resource depletion.

Prelude to Policy: Defining the “Population Problem,” 1935–1958

The strategic implications of population growth in the balance-of-power equation have seldom gone unacknowledged by diplomats, generals, or politicians. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, for example, the foreign-policy elites of France, Germany, and Great Britain voiced apprehension over their declining fertility relative to that of their economic and political rivals.² The savage consequences of two bloody wars aggravated these concerns.

There is also a deeper, more subtle influence that demographic issues can have on the ongoing processes of foreign-policy decisionmaking. Less formulated, and more a matter of nationalistic ideology, the issue of population growth and national destiny can carry strong components of racial and ethnic bigotry. Although seldom using the technical language of the demographer, advocates of territorial expansion have often appealed vaguely to “internal” population pressures as limiting national growth and welfare. They assert that expansion is both necessary and inevitable. In the absence of expansion, political disorder, starvation, and

death will follow. When the “national demographic destiny” is thwarted, racial extinction is the only possible outcome.

Beyond expansionary militarism, the traditional response to perceived “demographic deficits” usually takes the form of domestic programs to stimulate population growth, such as promoting pronatalist, family-oriented legislation, limiting access to birth control and abortion, or placing restrictions on emigration.³ Less frequently, governments promote immigration schemes to bolster the ranks of soldiers and workers. (The latter option, however, often gave rise to racist claims that the “national blood” was being weakened.) On the other hand, directly affecting the size of the foreign populations was extremely difficult. Short of engaging in a war of attrition (which carries obvious consequences for one’s own population), one could only appeal to the gods for plague and famine to befall your adversaries (which, if we believe Greek tragedies, may fail to generate the desired results as well).

Not surprisingly, therefore, “home, hearth, and family” were primary components in the social ideology of nationalist rhetoric. Strong pro-family arguments buttressed support for most health and social services legislation. Moreover, because much of this assistance was aimed at mothers and children, the net effect was to encourage larger families. In Canada, for example, the Mothers’ Allowance Act was expanded in 1948 to the Family Allowance Act, which paid a monthly benefit to all families with children under the age of eighteen. Similarly, in the United States, the end of World War II brought a renewed emphasis on the American family. Following the unprecedented recruitment of women into the civilian labor force during the war, both government and industry leaders expended considerable effort encouraging female workers to return to the role of housewife and mother. The media portrayed women as happy homemakers caring for their children in the suburbs while their husbands toiled in factories and offices. It was more than simply domestic propaganda, however, that led Americans back to the family and fertility. The tax code heavily favored families with children, as did the subsidized home-loan programs. While there was clearly more than government policy at work, the “baby boom” of the immediate postwar certainly was aided and abetted by public-policy incentives.⁴

At the same time, the distribution of birth control was illegal throughout most of Europe and America. This had been the case, of course, for decades. And while these laws were infrequently enforced, they did serve to suppress open debate on the issue. Of equal importance, however, was the lack of truly effective means of birth control. Poorly funded and operating under a cloud of suspicion, research to find an effective and safe

means of contraception was still years away from success. (At this point, induced abortion was universally illegal.)

Although the birth-control movements in Britain, Canada, and the United States had been active for many years, they had made little progress in convincing politicians that the laws should be changed. Clearly, however, there was a subtle shift in public attitudes on the issue of birth control. The declining fertility rates in the two decades prior to the war suggested that most couples had found ways to control family size. Nonetheless, some uneasiness still surrounded public discussion of the subject.

The origins of the birth-control movement lay deep in the nineteenth century and over the years had attracted a variety of adherents. Malthusians, utopian socialists, activists for women's rights, civil libertarians, and advocates of sexual freedom all rallied to the cause. While they may not have shared a common goal, they could agree that open and free access to contraceptive information would produce positive benefits for both the individual and society. The major obstacle at the time was restrictive legislation that not only barred the distribution of birth-control devices but also restrained individuals from disseminating information about birth control and sexual reproduction. And so, much of the early effort of the birth-control crusaders was limited to litigation and legislative reform.

In the 1930s, however, the birth-control movement underwent major changes in both its ideology and its goals. The crusaders for unrestricted access to contraception such as Margaret Sanger no longer simply argued that laws limiting the distribution of birth control should be repealed (that was to be expected) but went on to advocate the inclusion of contraceptive education in New Deal maternal and child health programs.⁵ Indeed, advocates of family planning in the Roosevelt administration succeeded briefly in establishing government-sponsored birth-control programs in Puerto Rico, but opposition quickly forced Ernest Gruening, the chief administrator of Territories and Trusts, to abandon the program.⁶ Nonetheless, this subtle shift in the nature of the debate over birth control was to have a decisive impact in the postwar period. Increasingly the discussion was not over the issue of birth control per se, but whether it was appropriate for governments to sponsor its distribution.

At the same time (and perhaps linked to this shift in emphasis) was a growing internationalization of the birth-control movement. Birth-control advocates sought new adherents in India and Asia. Margaret Sanger expanded her itinerary to include India, Japan, and the Far East. While she was not always welcomed by government officials, she did find growing support among reform-minded elites.⁷ In 1935 the National Planning Com-

mittee of the Indian National Congress, headed by Jawaharlal Nehru, adopted a resolution supporting the idea of state-sponsored birth-control programs.⁸ Subsequently the Health Survey and Development Committee established by the Indian government would strongly recommend the free distribution of birth control in its influential 1946 report on the state of health in India.⁹ Perhaps not surprisingly, Bombay was the site of the founding of International Planned Parenthood in 1952.

Equally important on the academic side, a small but growing literature on world population problems predicted an "impending population crisis" in India, Japan, and China.¹⁰ In fact, with the consistent decline in fertility levels in Europe and America, it was only in the non-European world that the Malthusians could find support for their antinatalist arguments. Their concerns seemed to be confirmed by colonial officials who increasingly viewed rapid population growth as detrimental to effective colonial policy.¹¹

In the immediate postwar political environment, however, open debate on birth control was still considered outside political discourse. Among many conservatives it was still identified with leftist radicalism; among liberals it was associated with the rhetorical excesses of the prewar eugenics movements. But the forces for change were at hand.

The 1940s brought important changes in what might be called the self-image of the birth-control movement as it evolved into the "planned parenthood" campaigns of the 1950s. The changes were not merely in name only among the various advocacy groups or simply a public relations gimmick. There was a slow evolution in ideology, which increasingly separated the image of birth control from its past (apparently so tainted by radicalism and feminism). A more genteel image of family planning was incorporated into a mythology of responsible middle-class family life, divorcing it from its more radical feminist roots.¹²

By the early 1950s, therefore, the issue of access to contraception could be legitimately discussed in two ways. At the aggregate level, it was a mechanism—a technological device—for controlling rapid population growth. The empirical settings for these discussions were usually India, China, Puerto Rico, or Japan. Regardless of whether one agreed or disagreed with the idea that intervention was appropriate or necessary, birth control was discussed in abstract terms, remote from the lives of the women who would be the recipients of such programmatic efforts. Although women's health issues were occasionally mentioned, the primary goal of birth-control advocates in this setting was population stabilization.

Ironically, at the individual level, the discourse shifted to a discussion of the stable, well-ordered suburban American family. In such a setting,

the planned parenthood ideology actually served to reinforce the traditional roles of women as homemakers in the patriarchal hierarchy of traditional family life. Contrary to the feminist rhetoric of earlier decades, birth control as “family planning” was not intended to free women to pursue their own destinies. Rather, it would make them more efficient housewives. With fewer children, the homemaker could better attend to the needs of her husband and family. While this position was (perhaps) an important public relations compromise and one that was necessary to legitimize discussions of birth-control use and distribution, it also served to suppress for nearly two decades a confrontation over the role of contraception and abortion in the ongoing debate over the role women in society.

Despite some liberalization of sentiment on the issue of family planning, however, much more would have to happen before policymakers and politicians could embrace the idea of overt intervention to reduce population growth at home or abroad. Such a major shift in public policy required first that population growth be viewed as a problem of major significance. Second, given the priorities of the immediate postwar era, the crisis posed by population growth needed to be linked to national security concerns if massive intervention was to be justified. Third, the experts who advised the policymakers (the demographers, sociologists, and economists) had to be convinced that the problem of rapid population growth was tractable—that intervention had a likely chance of success. And, finally, it had to be determined that the means available to resolve the problem were acceptable and legitimate instruments of public policy.

While public officials were reticent about speaking out on the issue of population control, a growing body of statistical evidence suggested that the world indeed was experiencing unprecedented rates of population growth. The postwar period brought a deluge of demographic data from around the world. Many of the newly emergent nations of Asia attempted the first complete census of their populations. Countries with long-established traditions of census-taking expanded both the breadth of coverage and improved the quality of their enumerations. More advanced methods of statistical analysis improved the quality of population estimates. And perhaps most important, international agencies such as the United Nations published, distributed, and continually updated statistical data on a host of health, economic, and population variables.

As demographic data were collected and analyzed, there could be little doubt that world population was growing rapidly. The accelerated growth of the postcolonial nations combined with the “baby boom” growth surge

in developed nations generated unparalleled results. While the fertility surge in the West was generally thought to be a temporary phenomenon, the population growth in Asia, Africa, and Latin America appeared to be a more fundamental problem. According to U.N. data, the annual growth rate of the world's population had remained relatively constant (about 1.0 percent for nearly two decades prior to the war. During that time the "developing regions" had moved slightly ahead of Europe and North America with a growth rate of nearly 1.2 percent. In the 1950s, however, the annual growth rate for the world jumped to 1.8 percent, with the rate for the developing areas exceeding 2.0 percent.

America's preeminent position in world politics and economy at the close of World War II combined with the rising tensions of the Cold War forced strategic planners to confront a variety of military, economic, and political questions, many of which involved some component of population dynamics. There was of course the argument that the war itself was in part driven by population pressures. Both German and Japanese expansionist rhetoric supported this notion. But the facts ran counter to such claims. Germany, Italy, and Imperial Japan had shown signs of a downward movement in their fertility rates, which were only slightly abated by very aggressive pronatalist policies. Nonetheless, the argument did awaken policymakers to the issue and rekindle a discussion on the relationship between population pressures and political violence.¹³

But the population issue emerged elsewhere in postwar policy discussions. For example, there was the problem of limited supplies of strategic materials. By the time the United States became involved in the war, the Axis countries had captured many of the major sources of tin, rubber, and oil or were on the doorstep of controlling the remaining areas. The abundant natural resources of the Americas had made the difference, but the message was clear. The United States had a strategic interest in the utilization of mineral and fuel resources not only at home but *worldwide*. "Conservation"—if you could call it that—became a strategic issue. The growing discord with Russia heightened these concerns because within the vast area of the Soviet Union were found many of the major untapped reserves of fuel and mineral deposits. To balance the resource ledger, policy planners looked to the colonial empires of our European allies.¹⁴

About the same time, however, another more altruistic argument for the conservation of world resources was being developed outside government circles. In the late 1940s we begin to find some of the seminal ideas that would form the basis of a new environmental movement in the 1960s. Fairfield Osborn's *Our Plundered Planet* and William Vogt's *The Road to Survival* both focused on the problems of overpopulation, resource

utilization, carrying capacity, and food production. Osborn was particularly forward looking, predicting many of the detrimental consequences of overdependence on fertilizers and insecticides.¹⁵ He warned that assuming an unending agricultural bounty was both naive and dangerous.

Osborn's critique came in the context of a food/population debate, which had raged since the turn of the century but was rekindled and hotly contested in the years immediately after the war.¹⁶ Many of the leading agriculturalists argued that the introduction of modern farming methods in Asia and the development of high-yield strains would resolve the problem of rising population levels. This argument was a particularly powerful one. Much of our foreign aid (PL-480) in this period (and later) focused on agricultural education and technology assistance supplemented by agricultural commodity transfers. The hope that America could feed the world would briefly allay fears that rapid population growth posed a world crisis. It was presumed that American foreign aid could close the gap while the developing economies of the postcolonial world reached sustained levels of growth.

American Aid, the Developing World, and Population Growth: The Benefactor's Dilemma

In the final analysis, U.S. attempts to assist the economic development of Asia, and subsequently South America and Africa, would bring the issue of population growth to light in all its immediacy. It is not surprising that the issue of population growth emerged so strongly in that period. Donor institutions, both public and private, were forced to confront the possibility that all their aid would be wasted in this rising sea of humanity. Foreign-aid programs expanded into the developing world with Truman's "Point Four" initiative; international agencies increased their support for health and agricultural projects, and a growing number of specialized private relief agencies sought to bring the "gift" of Western technology, knowledge, and expertise to the developing nations of the world. As fast as the international gift-giving grew, however, the needs of developing nations always seemed to outpace the flow of resources.

Outside government circles, the large philanthropic foundations were the first to confront the issue of population growth. Private foundations, such as the Rockefeller, Ford, and Carnegie foundations, sought to redefine their role in this environment of international philanthropic competition.¹⁷ The solutions to problems posed by poverty, deprivation, and political instability appeared less obvious than those confronted by founda-

tions before the war. Addressing population growth in particular posed a much more serious and complicated challenge. In the immediate postwar period, therefore, private foundations quietly sponsored several special missions to Asia and subsidized the occasional pilot projects to test the troubled waters of population control. But the conservative directors of the major foundations remained hesitant to make a full commitment to population assistance despite the recommendations of their staff officers.

Frustrated with this lack of action, a small group of scholars and population-control activists led by John D. Rockefeller III founded the Population Council in 1953. A "special-purpose" foundation, the Population Council subsequently found support from the Ford Foundation and the Rockefeller Brothers Fund. While its official mandate was to support research in both demography and reproductive biology, its unofficial purpose was to promote a consensus among academic, governmental, and cultural elites that population problems were not only pressing but were reaching crisis proportions. Although its directors avoided the inflammatory rhetoric of the birth-control advocacy groups, there was never any doubt about their strong conviction that rapid population growth posed a serious threat to economic and social progress in the developing nations of Asia, Africa, and South America.¹⁸

The importance of the nonprofit sector in this period cannot be underestimated. Despite their hesitance to sponsor family planning directly, private foundations provided the lion's share of support for demographic research prior to 1960. Perhaps most important for the institutional character of demography were the direct grants to population studies centers established at America's most prestigious universities.¹⁹ This network of centers served to reinforce a tightly bound community of scholars who had worked to legitimize the field in the late 1930s and 1940s.

Indeed what happened in the 1950s was the creation of a worldwide network of "population experts" that had a core body of knowledge and a common mode of discourse. These experts came to share a set of assumptions about how population dynamics worked, how the phenomenon was to be studied, and the terms under which intervention was appropriate. A small but powerful group of scholars forged a consistency in methodology, analysis, and language while at the same time establishing the credibility of demography as a policy science. The power to accomplish this task was based in large part on their relationship with the philanthropic community. Expanded federal funding for population studies after 1962 merely recapitulated and reinforced the agenda established by the foundations, population activists, and academic demographers in the 1950s.

The postwar era therefore brought renewed scholarly interest in popula-

tion dynamics as sociologists and economists confronted issues of modernization and economic development. There was of course a long tradition of discourse on the economic and societal effects of population growth that dated back at least as far as Thomas Malthus's infamous essay on population. The issue of Third World economic development and political stability brought a new urgency to an old scholarly debate.

The "Transition Model" as Demographic Theory and Public Policy: The Reemergence of the Malthusian Debate

In searching for the intellectual origins of the postwar debate over population issues, one of course arrives at the year 1789 and the publication of Rev. Thomas Malthus's *An Essay on Population*. Malthus's *Essay* combined a "scientific calculus" with moral righteousness and a strident political message. It posed a theory of population growth which argued that human beings were ultimately constrained by limited resources, but it was also an attack on sexual license and a political commentary on the state of the poor in England.²⁰ Despite his attention to the issues of his own time, Malthus's arguments were sufficiently rich in both their theoretical rigor and political implications that they nourished and sustained a debate that still exists today.

At least for nineteenth-century Europe, however, Thomas Malthus's prognostications appeared to have missed the mark. Technological advances, particularly in agriculture, meant productivity gains more than offset increases in population levels. Improvements in transportation technology and processing reduced the cost of food and increased its availability in remote urban markets. Growing trade with the United States, Canada, and, later, South America and Australia more than met any residual need for foodstuffs. But the United States, Canada, and Australia offered something else for Europe: a home for the many millions of Europeans who found no succor or sustenance in their homelands. The "safety valve" of emigration spared Europe a Malthusian crisis of major proportions. While millions of the indigenous peoples of the world would suffer as a consequence, colonial expansion balanced the "demographic equation" for Europe.

The final factor that was ultimately most important in subsequent discussion about long-term trends in population change, however, was the decline in fertility across Europe, which began in the seventeenth century and continued to the twentieth century. The "demographic transition," as it would subsequently be called, was a "natural readjustment" to the

Malthusian paradox. In fact, the demographic trends in Europe and North America were quite the opposite from those predicted by Malthus and his followers. Beginning in various parts of northern Europe as early as the 1600s and spreading to eastern and southern Europe in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was a process of fertility readjustment so profound that it completely altered the nature of discourse about population. By the end of the nineteenth century and well into the twentieth, the major concern of most governments in Europe was declining population, not growth.

The European experience would figure prominently in U.S. thinking about population growth and distribution in the postwar era. Reflecting on the changes that occurred in Europe over the past three centuries, demographers constructed a vision of population change that became the core component underlying most of modern demographic development theory. The basic idea was that during the course of economic development a set of interactive processes occurs that at first serves to accelerate population growth and, subsequently, promotes its decline. While the degree to which these processes are conditioned by time and place has become a source of constant debate, initially there seemed little doubt that what had occurred in Europe would *eventually* happen in the emerging nations of the Third World. The debatable question, however, was *when* would this process take place and under what *specific* conditions.

Most important for the postwar debate over population change in the Third World, in early modern Europe neither the *initial* decline in mortality nor the subsequent changes in fertility were the result of overt human intervention. Improvements in sanitation systems, the introduction of modern health practices, and the scientific discoveries affecting the control of disease all came later. While these factors served to sustain the continued decline in mortality into the era of high urban concentration, the trend was well established over a long period of time and was deeply embedded in changes in agricultural practices, shifts in dietary mix, and subtle changes in lifestyle. Likewise, the European *fertility transition* occurred in the absence of modern methods of birth control and in an atmosphere of widespread official and religious hostility to limiting births.

Although it was first articulated by demographer Warren Thompson in 1929,²¹ the policy implication of transition theory seemed remote. Most population scientists in Europe and North America were primarily concerned with declining populations in their respective countries. While the transition model remained a source of some lively intellectual discussion, it appeared to have little relevance to the issues that most demographers were addressing.

Although there were growing indications in the 1920s and 1930s that population levels in some areas of South Asia and the Far East had grown substantially, only in the postwar era did the consistency and quality of the data become sufficient to reveal these trends with any precision. The conclusion was unavoidable that outside Europe and (Anglo) North America, population growth was reaching levels that were never found in Europe during its “transition” period. Moreover, population growth was occurring without a concomitant rise in industrial development or any apparent shift in attitudes toward a Western belief system. In other words, mortality declines were the result of introducing Western advances in health science without the attendant economic and cultural adjustments that had accompanied the European fertility transition.

While it was possible to develop an adjunct to the theory that accounted for colonial situations, it took some effort to propose a policy solution.²² Initially most demographers assumed that the process of demographic transition that had marked the economic development of Europe in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries would occur elsewhere in the world, but *only* when the correlative mix of economic and cultural factors was in place. Calls for intervention to speed up the process were viewed as naive. As time passed, however, the deterministic assumptions underscoring these initial formulations of the transition model were challenged and, by the mid-1950s, many leading American demographers were changing their minds.²³ The modern world, they argued, was a profoundly different place than the world of eighteenth-century Western Europe. Biomedical technology in particular had altered the traditional progression of events associated with population growth and economic development. In a postcolonial world with rapidly declining mortality rates, it appeared that accelerating population growth rates could overwhelm fragile economies on the edge of “takeoff.”²⁴

Although it took professional demographers nearly a decade to change their minds completely, the influence of their old friends the birth controllers began to show itself. Unrestrained by the necessity to maintain scholarly consistency, birth-control advocates such as Margaret Sanger, William Vogt, and Dr. Clarence Gamble argued that it was merely a matter of education and access. “The people” (both at home and overseas) would embrace family planning if only given a chance. While direct intervention initially appeared inconsistent with the logic of the transition model, it seemed to make sense that we could alter the consequences of this mortality/fertility imbalance once again with Western intervention—this time with the systematic distribution of birth control. In this new intellectual environment, an interventionist population policy was not only

within the realm of possibility, it was necessary given the problems facing the newly emergent nations of the Third World. The debate now shifted to means rather than ends.

The key to intervention lay of course not only in the development of safe, effective, and inexpensive forms of birth control but also in the acceptance of family planning as a legitimate and appropriate means for *state-sponsored* population control. It is significant therefore that outside the government a diverse mix of people—businessmen, philanthropists, academicians, feminists, biologists, doctors, and public health officials—formed a loose association of pressure groups that brought the issue of family planning into legitimate public discourse.

Again, the growing respectability of the “family planning movement” in the 1950s seems particularly important. The changing public image of the movement as well as the retirement of some of its more controversial leadership made such groups as Planned Parenthood appear politically safe and therefore more acceptable. The popular mythology of the postwar American family—father, mother, and 2.5 children—obviously required some kind of fertility management. Middle-class responsibility and the “planned family” became linked in the mind of many Americans. In fact, this American vision of the “perfect family” mapped into a complex set of connections between Cold War ideology, the idealization of suburban home life, and the rhetoric of “responsible parenthood.” The latter component opened the way for a growing acceptability of birth control and identified it with the virtues of democracy and middle-class capitalism.²⁵

World Population Growth as a Public Policy Issue: The Transition Period, 1958–1968

Ultimately, the impress of Cold War politics was central in bringing the population growth issue into the realm of public policy and diplomacy. The presumption on the part of American officials was that communism was an ideology embraced by the wicked, the naive, the desperate, and the weak. The first could be dealt with by force of arms, the second, by propaganda (education?), and the last two, by American generosity, modern technology, and food and health assistance. But it was a race against time. If the Third World continued to be plagued by poverty, disease, and starvation, the success of communism seemed inevitable.

Some demographers, such as Frank Notestein of the Princeton Population Center, and Dudley Kirk, who had been at the State Department's Office of Functional Intelligence before joining the staff at the Population

Council, were reluctant to rephrase their appeals for population-control measures in overt Cold War terms. They were worried that nonaligned nations such as India might view the call for population-control measures as just another propaganda ploy by the “imperialist West” rather than as a sincere expression of concern for the health and welfare of the Third World. Other demographers were not so restrained. Kingsley Davis, who throughout his career was a dominant actor in the field of demography, stated boldly that “the demographic problems of the underdeveloped countries, especially in areas of non-Western culture, make these nations more vulnerable to Communism.” He went on to argue that “an appropriate policy would be to control birth rates in addition to such activities as lowering death rates, the provision of technical assistance and economic aid. Such a combination of policies, if carried through effectively, would strengthen the Free World in its constant fight against encroachment.”²⁶

It was often left to nonprofessional “population activists,” however, to translate the guarded academic prose into overtly Cold War rhetoric. The most notable of these figures was Hugh Moore, the president of the Dixie Cup Corporation, who spent most of his sizable fortune on alerting the American public to the potential disaster awaiting the world if the population problem was not addressed immediately. Moore published a pamphlet entitled “The Population Bomb,” which had on its cover an exploding atomic bomb hurling people in all directions. The pamphlet was unabashed in making the direct connection between rapid population growth, social and economic disorder, communist aggression, and world war. Moore had two versions: one for domestic consumption, which was unrestrained in its message, and an edited version for international distribution. While the audience for Moore’s pamphlet was never intended to be demographic experts, it had considerable influence among Washington’s policy elite. It was, for example, assigned reading at the State Department’s Foreign Service School.

By the end of the decade, the connection between political disorder, subversion, and population pressures had been made by a number of demographers and population-control advocates. The political environment was ripe for the debate over population growth, family planning, and U.S. foreign policy to come out of the closet.

A major reassessment of U.S. foreign aid would establish the context for the first open discussion of world population growth by public officials. In the late 1950s a series of setbacks in international affairs (for example, the ill-fated Hungarian Revolution, Vice President Richard Nixon’s violent reception in Latin America, and the propaganda impact of *Sputnik*) led Congress once again to take a close look at the effectiveness of our

foreign-aid program. Responding to congressional calls for action, President Eisenhower appointed a “blue ribbon” committee, under the leadership of retired General William Draper, to examine the purpose and effectiveness of our foreign aid. Although the committee was officially delegated to look at military foreign aid, Draper read the committee’s mandate broadly to include an examination of both military and nonmilitary aid. One of the committee’s primary interests of course was the fate of the developing countries of Asia, Africa, and Latin America, which Draper viewed as the new battleground for the Cold War.

Breaking with the tradition of official silence on the subject, Draper briefly focused the committee’s attention on the problem of rapidly growing populations in Asia and Latin America.²⁷ With the assistance of Robert Cook of the Population Reference Bureau and Hugh Moore (each of whom had adopted the population-control movement as a personal cause), Draper produced a brief section in the final report in which he argued that rapid population growth could completely erode efforts at development and negate all our foreign-assistance efforts. Moreover, in an environment of rising expectations, sagging economic growth created ripe conditions for communist intrigue and political discord. While not all members of the committee were in agreement with Draper on including this section, the official recommendation was that the United States should provide assistance to developing nations that sought to control their population growth.

The obvious implication—that the United States should offer advice and, perhaps, the means to control fertility—was not lost on the public. Eisenhower, while accepting all other aspects of the report, publicly rejected the idea that the government should have any role in affecting population dynamics. What is interesting, however, is how quickly public policy did indeed change. Less than two years into the Kennedy administration, Richard Gardner, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for International Organization Affairs, signaled a major policy shift in a speech before the U.N. General Assembly announcing that the United States would support expanded programming in the area of population research with an aim toward linking it with development assistance.²⁸

Shortly thereafter, Congress took an active interest in the population problem. In 1965–66, Senator Ernest Gruening (Dem.-Alaska) held a series of congressional hearings to highlight the importance of the population crisis and to pressure the White House for more support of family planning programs in U.S. foreign-aid assistance. A parade of witnesses (from both the United States and the Third World) testified to the serious consequences of unrestricted population growth.²⁹ Many of the major

witnesses came from the foundation and NGO community, which had supported the development of demography and population research in the 1950s. The network-building of the previous decade was now paying off.

A parallel but not unrelated chain of events within the United Nations had finally broken international silence on the issue. Throughout the 1940s and 1950s there was considerable resistance to any effort that might expand the United Nations role in the area of population policy. Some expected that various U.N. statistical agencies should merely monitor global trends and report their findings. Moving beyond this prescribed role was resisted by both Catholic and Communist countries alike. Primarily through the efforts of Sweden and India, the "population issue" was finally placed on the agenda of the General Assembly in 1962.³⁰ The ensuing discussion opened the way for an expanded U.N. role in the area of population assistance. Finally, official international recognition of family planning as a basic right came in 1968, when the United Nations Conference on Human Rights (Tehran) declared that "parents have a basic human right to determine freely and responsibly the number and spacing of their children."³¹

Toward a Moment of Consensus: Family Planning and Population Control, 1967–1974

The period from 1967 to 1974 might be described as the "era of unrestrained enthusiasm" of government-sponsored family planning. International agencies, scientific societies, and national leadership constantly cited population growth as the most pressing problem of the age. President Lyndon Johnson seldom missed an opportunity to extol the wonders of "the Pill." President Richard Nixon sent the first-ever White House message on population to Congress in 1969. What is most impressive was the level of unanimity on the population issue. Leading Republicans as well as Democrats rallied to the cause. Religious leaders, civic groups, businessmen, and scientists all called for a vigorous commitment of both government and nonprofit funding to avoid a worldwide crisis.

Obviously the development of an effective oral contraceptive and an inexpensive IUD presented government officials with a "technological fix" to a problem that previously had seemed insurmountable. For many of the advocates of family planning it was now "merely a matter of education and logistics." The "demand" was assumed to be well established. Although in the late 1970s some experts would question the validity of this assumption, KAP (Knowledge-Attitude-Practice) surveys offered strong

confirmation of this bias.³² Reflecting a growing sense of urgency, the emphasis in practice was on “stand-alone” family planning services relatively independent of public health programs. In theory, unobstructed by bureaucratic interference, independent family planning operations could get birth-control pills, IUDs, and sterilization procedures to “the masses” as quickly as possible.

The late 1960s, therefore, brought a rapid acceleration of funding for population programs with a singular focus on fertility control. Although many of the major foundations had previously been hesitant to fund contraceptive research, they sought to make up for this deficit with aggressive efforts. The Ford Foundation, for example, pledged more than \$54 million between 1960 and 1970 and the Rockefeller Foundation, after a decade of discussing but not acting, had donated more than \$15 million by 1968.

As the decade passed, however, government funding played an increasingly important role in sponsoring demographic research and population-control programs. With public and congressional support growing, government appropriations for family planning and contraceptive services had risen to the unprecedented level of \$60 million by the end of the decade. Expenditures for distribution of contraceptives and family planning services in Third World countries were to become a major component for USAID’s budgetary allocation. Of the \$125.6 million allocated for population-related programs within USAID in 1974, for example, nearly 50 percent of the funds were earmarked for birth-control services. By the mid-1970s, family planning and population research fully dominated the USAID health budget.

The infusion of public funding revealed the degree to which national security interests had been fused with the idea of population control in the Third World. There seems little doubt that Cold War imperatives served in large part to justify these expenditures. But a word of caution is necessary. The merger of national security interests with population-growth issues did not occur in a political vacuum, nor was it a sudden transformation. One should not overstate the influence of strategic concerns on the implementation of population policies abroad. As with many areas of foreign-aid assistance, our motives were mixed. Certainly one sees increasing references to health issues as well as environmental issues. At least in this early period, however, the major justification was in terms of promoting economic growth and preserving political stability.

Signaling the growing importance of population control in U.S. foreign-policy efforts, the National Security Council under President Nixon prepared National Security Study Memorandum 200, which out-

lined the detailed justification for U.S. support for population programming worldwide. The crude Cold War logic of the late 1950s was replaced by a detailed analysis of the political, economic, and environmental consequences of rapid population growth. The issue of political instability was discussed, but, not surprisingly, the OPEC oil crisis brought the issue of strategic materials again to the forefront. It was not simply a military question anymore. The fundamental health of the U.S. economy was at risk if we did not focus greater attention on world population and resource issues. NSSM 200, and the "Action Memorandum" that followed, finally (and officially) merged the issue of population control with national security at the highest level.³³

The emphasis on resource issues in NSSM 200 reflected a renewed concern for natural-resource issues both inside and outside the government. In fact, the merger of the population-control movement with the growing environmental awareness of the late 1960s and early 1970s not only expanded the base of support but made the crusade for universal family planning all the more pressing.

Books such as Paul Ehrlich's *The Population Bomb*, William and Paul Paddock's *Famine—1975*, Joseph Tydings's *Born to Starve*, and Georg Borgstrom's *The Hungry Planet* presented a picture of impending doom triggered by overpopulation and diminishing resources.³⁴ The new environmental movement perceived not one but a cluster of interrelated problems involving population growth and limited resources. The world, the environmentalists argued, faced an impending crisis of monumental proportions. Sophisticated computer models and technical jargon offered scientific credibility to the catastrophe argument, which is, at its core, quite simple: human populations have grown so enormously and continue to expand so rapidly that, despite our technological capabilities, we would soon exhaust the planet's capacity to support us. Attendant to this rapid growth in population was also the growing abuse of the natural environment, which will only serve to hasten an impending crisis for all mankind. The logic was simple and deadly. Given this perspective, solutions of only the most drastic sort were worthy of consideration.

The rhetoric of imminent disaster declined over the next decade as the environmental movement became more sophisticated in its analysis of resource issues. Its immediate effect, however, was to encourage further the growing American commitment to population control as part of its foreign-aid program. The crisis mentality combined with a growing concern over degradation of the environment and depletion of the world's resources added to the sense of mission felt by U.S. family planning workers overseas.

Unfortunately, the strident rhetoric of the late 1960s and early 1970s had another, more detrimental effect. With its emphasis on the immediacy of the threat and the necessity for aggressive intervention, the stage was set for a resurgence in the political strength of the opponents of population policy. As the decade passed without a worldwide catastrophe, those who had originally voiced suspicion felt they were vindicated. Some critics went further, however. They argued that it had not been simply a case of exaggeration; the fact that no serious crisis had developed suggested that the claims of impending disaster were without any factual basis whatsoever.

But at the time, it *appeared* that the voices calling for worldwide population reduction were strong, clear, and, most important, unified. For the advocates of family planning assistance abroad, the American mission went far beyond the pragmatic goals of strategic policy. The call for population control, formerly justified either in terms of national security or, less often, as a public health issue, merged with a set of issues involving the world's ecology, ultimately, the preservation of the species. Seldom could American strategic objectives be so easily merged with a humanitarian mission of global importance.

Coming Apart: Growing Dissent on the Population Issue, 1974–1980

Just as the triumphant advocates of population control naively presumed an “international consensus” on the issue of family planning, the opposition, which was briefly muted by the choirs of support for family planning assistance, again reasserted itself. Indeed, any presumption that the world was on its way to consensus on population policies would be shattered at the United Nations International Conference on population held in Bucharest in 1974.

The Bucharest meeting departed from its predecessors in a number of important ways. While previous international meetings on population sponsored by the United Nations had aimed primarily at the presentation of recent scientific research, the 1974 Conference was intended to establish a basic plan for population policies in the decade to come. Each country was represented by an “official delegation” empowered to speak for its government. Unlike earlier world population conferences, NGOs, scientific delegations, and advocacy groups no longer had a place at the “official” gathering, so they held a separate conclave. The deliberations in this latter forum proved to be particularly vociferous.

Much to the surprise of American and European delegations, a coalition of Latin American, African, and Eastern European representatives presented a decidedly different interpretation of the population crisis.³⁵ The group argued that the primary problem was global inequalities in wealth and income, which were only incidentally related to rapid population growth. Ironically, two delegations, which on all other matters had little in common, the Vatican and the People's Republic of China, joined with this group in criticizing the Western industrialized nations for not addressing the "real" development issue—inequality between north and south.

It is important to recognize, however, that not all Third World delegations subscribed to this extreme position. Indeed, many of the "middle of the road" delegations made a consistent effort to strike a balance between calls for expanded family planning efforts and the need for broad-based development programs tailored to the needs of each country. While the voices for compromise would ultimately prevail, the acrimony engendered by the debate in Bucharest would have a decided effect on the policy discourse in the ensuing decade.

The opposition to the proposed World Population Plan of Action was partly a reaction to extremist antinatalist rhetoric emanating from the United States. While most U.S. aid officials were more circumspect in their pronouncements, many of America's leading population-control advocates argued that the voluntary approach might not be sufficient.³⁶ Calls for coercive measures, while not representative of official policy, tended to reinforce the deepest fears of Asians, Africans, and Latin Americans—that they would be the unwilling target of U.S.-sponsored efforts at population control.

When we look back at the vehement international opposition to U.S.-sponsored birth-control campaigns in the early 1970s, we must keep in mind that as the population-crisis message filtered through the popular press, it often became simplistic and myopic. The tempered, qualified tone of the conference report and scholarly article was stripped away and reduced to pat phrases and simplistic slogans. Most professional demographers continued to caution that population programs should be part of a larger development effort, but the complexity of the problem was too often lost in the rhetoric of worst-case scenarios. It was not just a case of sensationalist journalism, however. All too frequently the public discourse of Washington bureaucrats and politicians was as simplistic as it was monolithic in its conception. In the face of dire messages of gloom and doom, it is not surprising that Americans took refuge in a technological fix. If we could get "the Pill" to the people, the problem would solve

itself. It was simply a matter of implementing sound advertizing techniques, operational analysis, and logistics.

Viewed from overseas, there appeared to be little or no concern for intrinsic religious, national, or cultural differences. The presumption was that the "problem" was the same regardless of location and the solution was the same regardless of the people involved. Although American aid officials in the field were seldom so blunt, to the many observers in the Third World the primary message emanating from Washington was as rude as it was racist.

Despite the heated rhetoric of the Bucharest conference, however, the World Population Plan for Action was accepted and over the next decade a quiet transition began to occur. With increasing frequency, Third World governments came to accept the legitimacy of family planning. For countries such as Mexico, where family planning programs had initially been in the hands of private voluntary organizations, government-sponsored nationwide programs became the norm. In many African countries family planning, although remaining in the domain of private donor agencies, was increasingly merged with comprehensive health programs. For a few more conservative regimes in the Third World, it was a more modest gesture—simply allowing private family planning organizations to operate unobstructed. Regardless, the trend over the decade was toward a recognition of the need for family planning in national development schemes.³⁷

At the same time, however, in North America the political pendulum was swinging back toward a reevaluation of the role of population program assistance in U.S. foreign policy. Although there had never been a moment of complete unanimity on the family planning issue, as the 1970s passed the opposition movement, diverse in both its politics and its goals, grew in strength. Whether it was on the right or on the left of the American political spectrum, the basic thrust of its critique was that population growth was only marginally related to the serious social and economic problems facing the Third World.

For the leftists, the real problem was to be found in the nature of worldwide capitalist exploitation. The solution was socialist revolution, not family planning. Karen Michaelson, a leftist anthropologist, in a restatement of the traditional Marxist position on population growth, argued that "overpopulation is not a matter of too many people, but of unequal distribution of resources. The fundamental issue is not population control, but control over resources."³⁸

For the diehard capitalist, of course, it was the lack of economic incen-

tives that gave rise to both poverty and *moments* of overpopulation. Embracing the free enterprise system without unnecessary government meddling would automatically bring the problems associated with population growth into check. Like Julian Simon, his conservative American counterpart, the Tory economist Peter T. Bauer concluded: "Allegations or apprehensions of adverse or even disastrous results of population growth are unfounded. They rest on seriously defective analysis of the determinants of economic performance [and] they misconceive the conduct of the peoples of LDCs [lesser developed countries]."³⁹

For *religious* conservatives who opposed most current methods of birth control, the "problem" was one of unChristian-like behavior and greed. The religious challenge merged the presumption of positive technological advances common among conservative economists with a critique of economic and social inequality similar to that of the socialists. The difference of course was the call to spiritual awakening, which both of the other schools would have found naive. Pope Paul VI summarized this view in his famous declaration: "[We] need to multiply bread so that it suffices for the tables of mankind rather than to rely on measures which diminish the number of guests at the banquet of life."⁴⁰

A final source of criticism came from feminists, who saw U.S.-sponsored family planning programs as heavy-handed and unconcerned with the real needs of women. As one feminist put it, "Improvements in living standards and the position of women, via more equitable social and economic development [would] motivate people to want fewer children."⁴¹ It was not that they opposed contraception *per se*; rather, they felt that family planning should be part of a comprehensive effort to empower women.

The reaction of feminist groups to U.S.-sponsored family planning programs was perhaps the most disquieting for program administrators who often justified their efforts in terms of women's rights. Over the decade, however, there had been a growing number of reports that in the enthusiasm to bring population growth under control, basic rights for women were frequently abridged.⁴² Moreover, family planning practitioners *seemed* more concerned with the efficiency of birth-control programs rather than with their humanity. All too often a male-dominated public health and foreign-aid establishment seemed insensitive to the basic needs of women in the Third World. For feminists it was not merely a question of *access* to birth control but an essential issue of freedom and equality. The historical evidence showed conclusively that, if women's status improved, women would seek out appropriate methods of birth

control voluntarily. Coercion was not only inappropriate from a human rights standpoint, but in a properly constructed development program it was quite unnecessary.

The emergence of the feminist critique of population-control programs found its origins in the movement for women's rights, which had gained strength both within the United States and overseas since the mid-1960s. However, given the ways in which the family planning ideology of the 1950s had been embedded in the economic development logic of the period, the "woman perspective" had been slow to emerge. The idea that access to safe and effective contraception was an inalienable right found recognition in various U.N. declarations, but the idea that women should have an overt role in the development process was resisted by many of the administrators at USAID and the United Nations.

The closing years of the 1970s brought choirs of criticism from outside the "population policy establishment."⁴³ But an erosion of confidence occurred from within as well. There was a growing disagreement among economists and demographers over whether population growth was in fact an important factor in economic development.⁴⁴ Perhaps not surprisingly, as the quality of data improved and the techniques of analysis became more sophisticated, the demographic theories that posited a negative relationship between economic development and rapid population growth failed to find consistent validity. (Ironically, the pronouncements that had initially justified the inordinate investment in demographic research were increasingly called into question.)

Despite the ongoing debate among academics, however, within policy circles it was not a question of whether family planning was a legitimate component of U.S. foreign-aid efforts. That debate had been settled for nearly two decades. Rather, the debate was over emphasis, strategy, and means. To what extent should the United States *insist* that population programs be part of a recipient nation's development strategy? For example, should U.S. foreign aid be contingent on a pledge to reduce population growth? Should family planning programs be separate from existing health and social services institutions focusing all their resources on a single goal: the overall reduction of fertility? Or should family planning be seen as simply one part of an effective child and maternal health program? If the result is a reduction in fertility, so be it, but the goal should be healthy women and children and not necessarily maximizing population control. (This was the view of many Third World health officials as well as feminists in Europe and North America.)

While funding for family planning activities continued to increase, administrative tensions within USAID's population program served fur-

ther to weaken the resolve of the family planning movement internationally.⁴⁵ The stage was set for an attempt by conservatives to reverse the tide and return to the passive pronatalism of the 1940s.

The Reagan–Bush Era: “The More People, the Better”

The effectiveness of the opposition groups of foreign-policy decision-makers of course varied substantially. It was not the left-wing arguments or the feminist critique of American population programs abroad that moved the Reagan administration to alter the U.S. position on family planning. Rather, it was the influence of conservative Christian lobbying groups combined with an influential noninterventionist argument advocated by free-market economists.

Signaling the triumph of the “no crisis scenario,” Ambassador James Buckley’s official statement to the World Population Conference in Mexico City in 1984 de-emphasized the importance of population growth as a barrier to economic development. Buckley cited poorly conceived development policies and a stifling of free enterprise as the root cause of economic stagnation in the Third World.⁴⁶ Thus for Reagan strategists population growth was a “neutral” variable having neither positive nor negative consequences for economic development.

The Mexico City Doctrine, as it would subsequently be called, had another dimension quite independent of the demographic theories it espoused. It had a decidedly moral component as well. Buckley also announced that only those groups and agencies that made no reference to or support of abortion rights would receive U.S. aid. This would be the case even if U.S. funds were segregated to assure that they were not part of the abortion side of the programmatic effort.

Naturally the U.S. position was interpreted as a reversal of America’s long-standing position on world population growth. Although many U.S. government agencies would continue to argue that Third World population growth posed a serious strategic challenge, the Reagan White House sought to curtail all population-assistance funding through USAID as well as terminating support of U.N. population activities. Despite congressional resistance to reducing U.S. commitments to family planning programs overseas, the overall effect was to send a message to the world of growing indifference to population problems.⁴⁷

The leadership in many Third World nations greeted this policy reversal with consternation. After all, it had been primarily the United States

that led them to believe that fertility reduction was an important component of sound development planning. If they had been attentive to domestic politics in the United States over the previous ten years, they might have anticipated the apparent shift in policy. Domestically, it was not simply the changing statistics of world population growth that served to affect support for population control. Although American public opinion generally supported the integration of family planning assistance with foreign-policy objectives throughout this period, the public continued to be deeply divided on the question of means. Particularly important was (and is) the lack of domestic consensus on the abortion issue.

Despite the passage of the Helms Amendment in 1974 (prohibiting foreign-aid funds for abortion), there was continuing suspicion on the part of the anti-abortion lobby that AID funds were secretly assisting the overseas "abortion industry." Moreover, many of these conservative Christian groups also flatly opposed support for contraception in any form. The growing political power of these constituencies within the Republican party did not bode well for the future of population aid. The election of Ronald Reagan therefore brought a group of anti-interventionists to the White House who sought to end a bipartisan foreign-policy initiative that now spanned nearly two decades.

As a result, for most of the 1980s the U.S. government presented a mixed message on population issues. While the pronatalist rhetoric of the Reagan administration continued over the decade for a variety of reasons, U.S. funding for family planning continued to flow into Third World projects. Administration efforts to delay or block funding continued to meet strong opposition in the Democratically controlled Congress, which had succeeded in increasing family planning allocations by the mid-1980s. Moreover, since career AID and State Department officials remained loyal to the population-control doctrines that had dominated U.S. foreign policy for nearly two decades, the right-wing ideological pronouncements by President Reagan's political appointees would not fundamentally alter the day-to-day decisionmaking of project directors and mission officers. Finally, even in the absence of U.S. funding at the United Nations, many of our allies, who continued to support the idea that rapid population growth was a serious threat, increased their assistance and to some extent offset the deficit.

The tensions over the population issue would remain. With his veto of Congress's first version of the 1989 Foreign Aid Bill, President George Bush continued the policies of the Reagan administration in opposing any financial assistance for the United Nations Fund for Population Activities. Only after Congress was willing to compromise on White House-

imposed restrictions on population aid would the President sign the foreign-aid package into law. In doing so, President Bush (like his predecessor) cited the role of UNFPA in the controversial Chinese birth-control program. His veto also signaled that, despite an increase in the USAID commitment to family planning activities overseas, the United States would not return its unrestrained support for population-control programs that prevailed in the late 1960s and early 1970s.

Conflict or Compromise: Global Population and Resource Issues in the 1990s

At his confirmation hearings in January 1993, Secretary of State Warren M. Christopher cited the heightened importance of environmental issues in the conduct of foreign policy in the 1990s. His statements were of course consistent with the positions taken by the Clinton–Gore team throughout their campaign. In their book, *Putting People First*, they state boldly that “environmental protection is fundamental to America’s national security.”⁴⁸

Much of the logic that informed these views was drawn from Vice President Gore’s book, *Earth in the Balance*.⁴⁹ While it should not be read as a policy document for the Clinton administration, the book can be seen as a basis for a new direction in environmental affairs at both the domestic and international levels. While specific policies and programs are currently being delineated, the broad outlines are clear. Departing from the inclinations of the previous twelve years, the Clinton administration is likely to take a more active role at the international level in the areas of environmental regulation, population planning, and natural-resource conservation.

In the opening weeks of the administration, the restrictions mandated by the Reagan–Bush “Mexico City Doctrine” were reversed. Assistance to the United Nations Population Fund was restored (\$14.5 million in fiscal 1993 and \$40 million projected for 1994). Although the pressures of deficit reduction forced cutbacks in many U.S. foreign-aid programs, the recommended allocation for population was increased by \$185 million (FY 1995). Clearly the administration is on record as a strong supporter of increasing population planning assistance.

In preparing for the 1994 United Nations Conference on Population and Development in Cairo, the State Department sought to redefine the population issue in terms that will meet the demands of various constituencies. This has proven to be more difficult than expected. Although the

opponents of subsidized family planning no longer hold sway, tensions between population-control advocates among environmentalists and feminists concerned with women's status in the Third World threaten to undermine attempts to build a coalition.

The world has changed radically since the United States first embraced family planning as an important component of its foreign-aid program. The changing power relationship between the United States and the former Soviet Union signaled the death knell for the Cold War logic that initially had justified America's family planning crusade. Rephrased, the national-security argument proceeds much differently now. Regardless of the demise of Soviet communism, *American interests are still ill-served by economic and political disorder.* In a world torn by ethnic, religious, and national tensions, forced migrations can have explosive consequences. There is bound to be continuing concern over global environmental issues as well. There also seems little doubt that population density and growth are key factors in conditioning not only resource utilization but levels of pollution. Another traditional justification for America's "contraceptive diplomacy" was the widely held presumption that an effective family planning program can hasten the onset of sustained economic growth, or, at the very least, remove one of the major barriers to growth. While demographers and economists are in much less agreement on the viability of this assumption, it is likely to remain an important political justification for population assistance in the future.

A final justification for continuing U.S. population program assistance is on the grounds of improving the health of women and children in the Third World. Although often presented as an afterthought in the early days of the population-control crusade, it is now perhaps the primary justification for many of the advocates of U.S. subsidized family planning. In the final analysis, they may be the most compelling justification.

Unlike most foreign-policy issues, however, international population policies impinge directly on deeply personal concerns. If recent history can be our guide, it appears that the major constraining dimension on how we approach these issues is not only domestic in its origins but almost theological in its manifestations. Whether we like it or not, the ongoing debate over birth control, abortion, and what might be called "the politics of the family" will continue to have profound effects on our continuing discussions of population growth, economic development, and resource utilization. Each of these areas engenders highly charged rhetoric, and when combined, there is an unfortunate tendency for the discourse to be muddled and confused.

Obviously, both the historical and the cultural context determine how

population issues are defined. Whether population growth, for example, is viewed as a good thing or a bad thing has changed in recent decades. Given the various perspectives on the population problem itself, it is hardly surprising that tensions arise over both the goals and the mechanisms of population policies. Ideology, theology, and political philosophy help to define *both* the empirical issues as well as the nature of the moralistic debates that so often accompany the implementation of policy.

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Notes

1. Research for this essay was funded by grants from the Social Science Research Council, the Rockefeller Archive Center, and the Graduate School of the University of Wisconsin. None of these institutions is responsible for the opinions expressed. I wish to thank Wendy Sundby for her editorial assistance in the final preparation of the manuscript.

2. Michael S. Teitelbaum and J. M. Winters, *Fear of Population Decline* (Orlando, 1985).

3. D. V. Glass, *The Struggle for Population* (Oxford, 1936) and *Population Policies and Movements in Europe* (Oxford, 1940).

4. For a discussion of the pro-family social and political environment in the United States during the 1940s and 1950s, see Steven Mintz and Susan Kellogg, *Domestic Revolutions: A Social History of the American Family* (New York, 1988), 177–94; Landon Jones, *Great Expectations: America and the Baby Boom* (New York, 1980), 11–35. For Canada, see Keith G. Banting, *The Welfare State and Canadian Federalism* (Kingston, Ontario, 1982), *passim*. For France and comparisons elsewhere, see Alfred Sauvy, *General Theory of Population* (New York, 1969). See also Marcel Leroy, *Population and World Politics: The Interrelationships Between Demographic Factors and International Relations* (Leiden, 1978), 11–17.

5. James Reed, *The Birth Control Movement and American Society: From Private Vice to Public Virtue* (Princeton, 1984), 263–69; David M. Kennedy, *Birth Control in America: The Career of Margaret Sanger* (New Haven, 1970), 259–67.

6. Annett B. Ramirez de Arellano and Conrad Seipp, *Colonialism, Catholicism, and Contraception: A History of Birth Control in Puerto Rico* (Chapel Hill, 1983), 30–56; H. B. Presser, *Sterilization and Fertility Decline in Puerto Rico*, Population Monograph Series, no. 13 (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1973).

7. Ellen Chesler, *Woman of Valor: Margaret Sanger and the Birth Control Movement in America* (New York, 1993), 355–70; Reed, *The Birth Control Movement and American Society*, chap. 22.

8. S. Chandrasekhar, *Population and Planned Parenthood in India* (London, 1955), 75–78.

9. *Report of the Health Survey and Development Committee* (New Delhi, 1946), 2:486–87.

10. W. R. Crocker, *The Japanese Population Problem: The Coming Crisis* (New York, 1931); Etienne Dennery, *Asia's Teeming Millions, and Its Problems for the West* (London, 1931); A. M. Carr-Saunders, *World Population: Past Growth and Present Trends* (Oxford, 1936, 1937), 260–94, 220–29.

11. David M. Anderson, "Depression, Dust Bowl, Demography, and Drought: The Colonial State and Soil Conservation in East Africa During the 1930s," *African Affairs* 83 (1984): 321–41.

12. Elaine Tyler May, *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era* (New

York, 1988), 135–61; Phyllis T. Piotrow, *World Population Crisis: The United States Response* (New York, 1973), 15–17; Chesler, *Woman of Valor*, 371–95.

13. Warren S. Thompson, *Population and Peace in the Pacific* (Chicago, 1946); John U. Nef, *War and Human Progress: An Essay on the Rise of Industrial Civilization* (Cambridge, Mass., 1950); Gaston Bouthoul, *Les Guerres: Éléments de Polémologie* (Paris, 1951).

14. In the records of the Economic Cooperation Administration (a predecessor of USAID) are files dealing directly with the development of the colonial area held by our European allies. The strategic materials problem is only one of a number of issues that concern U.S. development planners. A complete listing would be impossible here. As an initial entry into this material, see Record Group 469, "Strategic Materials," Box 12 (one of three), Overseas Territories Division, Subject Files (1949–51), Special Representative in Europe (National Archives, Washington, D.C.).

15. William Vogt, *Road to Survival* (New York, 1948); Fairfield Osborn, *Our Plundered Planet* (Boston, 1948). See also Osborn's *The Limits of the Earth* (Boston, 1953).

16. The division between the "agricultural optimist" and the "population growth pessimists" has been a constant in the great population debate since the time of Malthus. Early in the twentieth century the food-crisis argument was posed by Warren S. Thompson, *Population: A Study in Malthusianism* (New York, 1915), and Edward M. East, *Mankind at the Crossroads* (New York, 1924). These works, however, often muddled the food/resource argument with the eugenics issues of race and differential mortality. In the postwar period that debate reemerged, this time more technical in style and much less eugenic in tone. See Theodore W. Schultz, ed., *Food for the World* (Chicago, 1945); London International Assembly Conference Report, *Freedom from Want of Food* (London, 1944); United Nations, *The State of Food and Agriculture* (Rome, 1953).

17. J. B. Sharpless, "The Rockefeller Foundation, the Population Council, and the Groundwork for New Population Policies," *Rockefeller Archive Center Newsletter* (Fall 1993): 1–4; Reed, *The Birth Control Movement and American Society*, 283–89; John E. Harr and Peter J. Johnson, *The Rockefeller Century* (New York, 1988), chap. 23.

18. Population Council, *The Population Council: A Chronicle of the First Twenty-five Years, 1952–1977* (New York, 1978); John Harr and Peter Johnson, *The Rockefeller Conscience* (New York, 1991), chap. 3.

19. John Caldwell and Pat Caldwell, *Limiting Population Growth and the Ford Foundation Contribution* (Dover, N.H., 1986), 59–128, 143–50.

20. Actually two essays form the basis of the "Malthusian tradition": the "first essay," of 1798, entitled *An Essay on the Principle of Population as it Affects the Further Improvement of Society* (Harmondsworth, 1970), and the "second essay," *An Essay on the Principles of Population* (London, 1803).

21. Warren Thompson, "Population," *American Journal of Sociology* 34 (May 1929): 959–75.

22. See, for example, Frank W. Notestein, "Summary of the Demographic Background of Problems of Undeveloped Areas," in *International Approaches to Problems of Underdeveloped Areas* (New York, 1948).

23. Dennis Hodgson, "Demography as Social Science and Policy Science," *Population and Development Review* 9 (March 1983): 1–34.

24. Perhaps the most influential contribution to this controversy was the work of two economists, Ansley Coale and Edgar Hoover, who sought to calibrate the economic consequences of continued population growth in India; see *Population Growth and Economic Development in Low-Income Countries* (Princeton, 1958). The book's influence on the theoretical debate over economic development and population growth cannot be underestimated. It is the "first footnote" in nearly all the subsequent academic literature. Its importance to government officials is shown by the fact that the Population Council distributed this book free to policymakers, demographers, and politicians throughout the Third World in the years following its publication.

25. May, *Homeward Bound*, 150–51.

26. Kingsley Davis, "Population and Power in the Free World," in J. Spengler and O. D. Duncan, eds., *Population Theory and Policy* (Chicago, 1956), 356. See also Kingsley Davis, "The Political Impact of New Population Trends," *Foreign Affairs Quarterly* 36 (January 1958): 296, and Philip M. Hauser, ed., Preface, *Population and World Politics* (Glencoe, Ill., 1958), 14–15.

27. William Draper et al., President's Committee to Study the United States Military Assistance Program, *Final Report* (Washington, D.C., 1959), 94–97. For a detailed discussion of the background to the Draper Committee, see Piotrow, *World Population Crisis*, chap. 4.

28. The speech was reprinted as *Population Growth: A World Problem, Statement of U.S. Policy* (U.S. Department of State, January 1963). See also Richard N. Gardner, "The Politics of Population: A Blueprint for International Cooperation," *Department of State Bulletin* (10 June 1963).

29. U.S. Senate, "Population Crisis," *Hearings Before the Subcommittee on Foreign Aid Expenditures of the Committee on Government Operations, 90th Congress, November 2, 1967–February 1, 1968 [Published in Four Parts]* (Washington, D.C., 1967–68). For background on the Gruening Hearings, see Ernest Gruening, *Many Battles: The Autobiography of Ernest Gruening* (New York, 1973), and Piotrow, *World Population Crisis*, chap. 11.

30. Richard Symonds and Michael Carder, *The United Nations and the Population Question, 1945–1970* (London, 1973).

31. United Nations, *Final Act of the International Conference on Human Rights, Tehran, April 22 to May 13, 1968*, U.N. Doc A/Conf. 32/41, para. 16.

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33. U.S. National Archives, Record Group 237 [Documents and Memoranda of the National Security Council], NSSM 200, "Implications of Worldwide Population Growth for U.S. Security and Overseas Interests" (10 December 1974), declassified, 1989.

34. Paul Ehrlich, *The Population Bomb* (New York, rev. ed., 1971); William and Paul Paddock, *Famine 1975* (Boston, 1967); Joseph Tydings, *Born to Starve* (New York, 1970); Georg Borgstrom, *The Hungry Planet* (New York, 1967).

35. Jason L. Finkle and Barbara B. Crane, "The Politics of Bucharest: Population, Development, and the New International Economic Order," *Population and Development Review* 1 (September 1975): 87–113.

36. The argument for coercion is stated boldly in Ehrlich's *Population Bomb*, but the basic logic is detailed in a famous essay by Garrett Hardin, "The Tragedy of the Commons," *Science* 180 (December 1969): 1243–48.

37. For a review of trends in family planning policies, see W. Parker Mauldin and John A. Ross, "Family Planning Programs: Efforts and Results, 1982–89," *Studies in Family Planning* 22 (November–December 1991): 350–67.

38. Karen L. Michaelson, "Population Theory and the Political Economy of Population Processes," in *And the Poor Get Children*, Karen L. Michaelson, ed. (New York, 1981), 19.

39. P[eter] J. Bauer, *Equality, the Third World, and Economic Delusion* (Cambridge, Mass., 1981), 64. See also Julian Simon, *The Ultimate Resource* (Princeton, 1981); J. Simon, *The Economics of Population Growth* (Princeton, 1977).

40. Pope Paul VI, "Address to the General Assembly," *United Nations*, 20th Session, 1965; 1347th Plenary Meeting, 4.

41. Betsy Hartmann, *Reproductive Rights and Wrongs: The Global Politics of Population Control and Contraceptive Choice* (New York, 1987), xiv.

42. Bonnie Mass, *Population Target: The Political Economy of Population Control in Latin America* (Toronto, 1976); Hartmann, *Reproductive Rights and Wrongs*, 217–20, 237–41; Donald Warwick, "The Ethics of Population Control," in Godfrey Roberts, ed., *Population Policy: Contemporary Issues* (New York, 1990), 21–37; Francis Rolt, *Pills, Policies, and Profit* (London, 1985).

43. The idea of an international conspiracy to assure the continuation of neo-Malthusian propaganda is discussed by Julian Simon in "The Population, Corruption, and Reform," in G. Roberts, ed., *Population Policy: Contemporary Issues*, 39–59.

44. For a review of this debate and its relationship to ecological issues, see Nathan Keyfitz, "Population and Development Within the Ecosphere: One View of the Literature," *Population Index* 57 (Spring 1991): 5–22.

45. An enormous amount of bureaucratic energy was expended in the controversy surrounding the ouster of Dr. Rei Ravenholt, who had served as director of the Population Program at USAID since the Johnson years. His controversial style had offended many in the family planning community. His removal in the Carter years corresponded with a reorganization of the Population Program, which gave more power to USAID regional directors. See Peter J. Donaldson, *Nature Against Us: The United States and the World Population Crisis* (Chapel Hill, 1990), 76–92.

46. James L. Buckley, "U.S. Commitment to International Population Planning," a statement presented to the International Conference on Population, Mexico City, 8 August 1984, Current Policy no. 604 (Washington, D.C., 1984). See also Jason L. Finkle and Barbara B. Crane, "Ideology and Politics at Mexico City: The United States at the 1984 International Conference on Population," *Population and Development Review* 11 (March 1985): 1–28; Ian Pool, "From Bucharest to Mexico: The Politics of International Population Conferences," *New Zealand Population Review* 11 (1985): 52–63.

47. Sharon Camp and C. R. Lasher, "International Family Planning Policy: A Chronicle of the Reagan Years," *Working Paper* (DRAFT COPY), Population Crisis Committee (Washington, D.C., 1989).

48. Bill Clinton and Al Gore, *Putting People First: How We Can All Change America* (New York, 1992), 93–99.

49. Al Gore, *Earth in the Balance: Ecology and the Human Spirit* (Boston, 1992), 307–14.