

A "Pro-life" Population Delegation?

U.S. aid policies jeopardized by White House proposal for upcoming United Nations conference in Mexico City

Intense infighting is reported to be going on within the Administration over efforts by the White House to promote a right-wing, antiabortion agenda at the United Nations world population conference in Mexico City in August.

The White House has been circulating the draft of a position paper that population experts have described as a "catastrophe" that would infuriate developing nations and "isolate" the United States at the conference.

Basically, the paper asserts that the chief reason excess population seems to be a problem is that governments stifle economic growth by meddling too much in their internal economic affairs. It also contains a strong statement against abortion which "would cut out almost the entire family planning program," according to State Department population coordinator Richard Benedick.

The paper is unlikely to be adopted, at least in its present form. But it suggests that President Ronald Reagan plans to use the conference as an opportunity to throw a bone to his supporters from the far right.

Ordinarily the State Department would be responsible for preparing a position paper and recommending members of the American delegation, but in this case the White House appears to be proceeding unilaterally and under great secrecy. The paper was issued from the Office of Policy Development, headed by John Svahn. Carl Anderson of his staff reportedly prepared the document but when a State Department official questioned him on 30 May, Anderson allegedly said he knew nothing about it. The paper was sent to the State Department for comment the same day.

Supporters of United States population policy are also alarmed over the rumored selection of James Buckley as head of the American delegation. Surgeon General C. Everett Koop (supported by right-to-life groups) was an early candidate to head it, but State protested vigorously on the grounds that he was unfamiliar with development matters. Buckley, former under secretary of state for security affairs, science, and technology at the State Department, is currently head of Radio Free Europe in Munich. When at State, he devoted considerable effort to undermining the population office of the Agency for International De-

velopment (AID), according to department officials.

Buckley has reportedly accepted the position on the condition that he not be required to defend any policy that runs counter to his beliefs, which include strong opposition to abortion. He is also said to have indicated that he would like to bring along Julian Simon, an economist at the University of Maryland who has gained some notoriety for his view that the world needs more people. Simon has been actively seeking a place on the delegation. Another likely candidate for a Buckley delegation is Jacqueline Kasun, an economist at Humboldt State University in Arcata, California. Kasun, who was a consultant to Buckley when



James L. Buckley

May head U.S. delegation.

he was in the State Department, opposes U.S. support of family planning programs on the grounds that they are intrinsically coercive. Besides, she told *Science*, "there is no empirical evidence that population growth is exerting any undesirable physical or economic effects on the world."

Family planning groups point out that a Buckley delegation would represent a repudiation of 20 years of bipartisan-supported policies and a devastating setback to countries who look to the United States for aid and support.

Oddly enough, despite the furor, there does not appear to be much organized opposition to AID population policy. The intellectual basis for the latest round of criticism has been supplied primarily by an unlikely trio made up of Simon, a

libertarian who has taken no stand on abortion; Kasun; and Nick Eberstadt, a development expert and Democrat whom Buckley also called on for advice when he was at the State Department. Eberstadt thinks the government should be allowed to fund programs offering abortion. What the three appear to have in common is a conviction that family planning should be treated as a health measure rather than a means to reduce population, and should occupy a position subordinate to economic development.

The political opposition to AID population policy has been supplied by right-to-life groups who, through their powerful advocate in the Senate, Jesse Helms (R.-N.C.), have been attempting for years to gut the United States program. Helms in 1974 was responsible for the prohibition on U.S. funding of abortion services. The harassment has gained force since Reagan took office, and in 1981 the Office of Management and Budget tried to eliminate the population budget for fiscal year 1983. Intervention from former Secretary of State Alexander Haig and presidential counselor Edwin Meese Jr. reportedly saved the day.

Most recently, the House rejected an amendment to AID's population account that would have prevented the United States from contributing to the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA) and the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF). This was precipitated by reports of coercion in China's rigorous family planning program. UNFPA money goes to China but is used for data gathering and training, not provision of services. Although the United States is legally prohibited from supporting programs involving coercion, accusations have come up repeatedly since India's ill-fated compulsory sterilization program. India had some money from the IPPF (AID did not have a mission there).

According to Judie Brown of the American Life Lobby (ALL), AID's chief "pro-life" adversary, her group wants Simon to head the delegation if Koop is out of the picture. Just what Simon and ALL see in each other is puzzling. Simon personally dislikes abortion but he strongly opposes any government interference in individual reproductive decisions. He does not claim much familiarity with current population

programs around the world. He asserts that AID has supported coercion in the past, but he declines to take a stand with regard to AID support of international agencies.

In preparing for the conference, the White House has gotten itself in a position where it has to tread a fine line indeed if it wants to bestow a favor on its right-wing supporters while avoiding a storm of criticism.

The cause of unobtrusiveness will surely suffer if anything resembling the White House draft position paper is adopted for use in Mexico City. The White House analysis, seven pages long, explains that the postwar population boom "provoked an overreaction by some," because it coincided with two

negative factors. The first was "governmental control of economies, a pathology which spread throughout the developing world with sufficient virulence to keep much of it from developing further." Agricultural price-fixing, taxes on industry, and "dependency on the state . . . disrupted the natural mechanism for slowing population growth." The pattern seen in the Western industrialized democracies, says the paper, "would already be well under way in many nations" if economies had been allowed free rein.

The second negative factor identified in the analysis is "an outbreak of anti-intellectualism" in the Western world, "which attacked science, technology, and the very concept of material prog-

ress." This "pseudoscientific pessimism" contributed to the "demographic overreaction" of the last two decades.

In short, population programs may be advisable in some cases, but they are no substitute for economic reforms and "the rapid and responsible development of natural resources." The paper also dismisses population growth as a cause of unemployment, illegal migration, and drought-induced famine.

The paper does not suggest how shortsighted foreign governments should be induced to change. The only specific policy declaration it contains is that this country is against coercion and that it will no longer contribute "directly or indirectly" to any family planning programs that advocate abortion.—**CONSTANCE HOLDEN**

Congress Turns Cold on Fusion

A 5-percent drop in research funds brings competition between basic science and machine building

The U.S. fusion program will be hit with a budget cut this summer that could delay the next big experiment and affect most laboratories in the field. Both houses of Congress picked fusion as an easy target, protecting river and dam projects in the same funding bill. The Administration is making no rescue effort. An actual reduction of 5 or 6 percent for fusion research is expected.

This presents the fusion community with a dilemma. It may trim or cancel a number of small research projects to keep the big machines running at speed or else postpone the most exciting and glamorous experiments until later. There is a possibility that the present schedule could be maintained by forming joint efforts with other nations, but U.S. and European scientists so far have shown little interest in genuine collaboration. It is more exciting to compete.

There is a tendency in government R&D for expensive hardware to take on a life of its own. This is happening now in fusion research, where new discoveries seem to come only by tinkering with large devices. The research is unavoidably dominated by machines because the goal is to package intense stellar conditions on earth. Fusion reactors will have to withstand extreme electromagnetic and radioactive stresses, not to mention the hottest and coldest temperatures man can create.

While intimately technological, fusion

research at the same time has a fantastic quality that sets it apart from other hardware-bound efforts. The thing to be studied (a small, steady fusion "burn") has never been seen in nature. Thus, fusion scientists are engaged in a paradoxical venture—trying to analyze a phenomenon that has not been observed, by observing it in a machine that has not been invented.

The remoteness and the escalating costs of fusion research make officials uneasy. This Administration has tried to reduce the number of energy demonstration projects in the budget, concentrating instead on science, according to a White House aide: "The trouble is that fusion is very expensive for the good science you get out." George A. Keyworth, II, the President's science adviser, told an audience in February that he advocates a "balanced fusion program" that is attuned to "the economic forces of the marketplace" and linked in "close partnership" with industry. He also spoke of the need for restraint in building new devices.

As Congress prepared to take a slice out of the U.S. fusion program this June, many of the leaders in the field were meeting at the Princeton Plasma Physics Laboratory to go over plans for the next machine they plan to build. Called the Tokamak Fusion Core Experiment (TFCX), it would be the first to ignite a self-sustaining burn. Princeton now man-

ages the largest U.S. machine, the Tokamak Fusion Test Reactor or TFTR, which is supposed to produce a nonsustained burst of fusion fire in 1986, at least 3 years ahead of the European competition. According to a preliminary estimate by J. R. Thompson of Princeton, the new TFCX would cost between \$700 million and \$1.3 billion. This is already a large price, and such estimates have a way of creeping up as construction gets under way.

The 1984 budget for magnetic fusion, the main category of research and the one likely to succeed in the near term, is \$470 million. That is about half the cost of the TFCX being conjured up at Princeton. The Administration asked for \$13 million more for fusion in 1985—barely enough to keep life signs flickering, the fusionists told Congress. The House was not moved; it voted to slash the request by \$64 million. The Senate was gentler, cutting only \$13 million. The compromise, due 4 July, will be painful, whatever the amount.

The Princeton conferees were keenly aware of the news from Washington, down to the last comma and adjective in the appropriations bill. But they seemed intent on keeping it at bay. Planning for the TFCX went forward without a hiccup. It is supposed to be operational in the early 1990's. No one cared to dwell on the message that came from both sides of Capitol Hill, that the ignition