

## Haiti and El Salvador: depopulation laboratories

by Linda de Hoyos

President Reagan reported on Sept. 29 that he had signed a “memorandum of understanding” with the government of Haiti that would bar refugees from that country to the United States. The agreement is of questionable legality, given that it authorizes the U.S. Coast Guard to interdict refugee boats even before they enter U.S. territorial waters, and to “escort” them back to Haiti.

For the most part, those who are leaving Haiti are not exiles seeking political asylum. Haitians are fleeing an island whose economic level is now so low, that many Haitians would face imminent death by starvation if they were to remain in the country. More than 80 percent of the country’s pre-school children are suffering from malnutrition, according to a 1978 study. The portion now would be even higher. More than 80 percent of the population live at, or below, the economic level needed for subsistence. Given the current policies of the U.S. State Department, the International Monetary Fund, and the World Bank, the economic deprivation in Haiti promises to become worse, as its population of 6 million becomes increasingly desperate.

These facts are not unknown to the U.S. State Department. Behind the harsh reversal of American “open door” immigration policy formulated by the agreement with the Haiti government stands the Global 2000 policy of population reduction that staffers at the State Department, including the Secretary of State, have espoused.

Depopulation is State Department policy throughout Latin America. In a sense, the Reagan administration—under the advisement of the State Department and its unofficial advisers like William Paddock and Thomas

McMahon of the Environmental Fund—is carrying out a policy of “Vietnamization” in Central America, as some critics claim. That is the accurate term *if* the Vietnam War is not viewed simply as a humiliation for the United States, but as a policy of devastation and depopulation in Southeast Asia that led inevitably to the Kissinger agreement to turn the nation of Kampuchea over to Pol Pot and his Chinese advisers. The result was the murder of more than one-third of the Kampuchean population.

Today, “Vietnamization” is being implemented in the Caribbean and Central America along three definite tracks:

1. The fostering of political polarization between “left” and “right” leading to civil wars that bring with them the potential for American military involvement. Case in point: El Salvador.
2. The reliance on the conditionalities policies of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank to reduce nations to bankruptcy and economic chaos. Cases in point: Guyana, Nicaragua, and Costa Rica.
3. A refugee policy that—as in the Somalia starvation camps—has reduced the targeted population to a slow death. Cases in point: Haiti, El Salvador.

### A deadly refugee policy

Among those who are advising the State Department on the methods of population reduction, the Reagan administration’s agreement with Haiti is seen as a precedent to be applied to other nations as rapidly as possible. “This is exactly what we should be doing



*A peasant village on Haiti's northern coast.*

with the Salvadorans," commented Roger Connor of the Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR). "El Salvador is referred to as the first demographic war. They have tremendous land problems."

Thomas McMahon, the executive director of the Environmental Fund, concurs. "We've lost control of our border," McMahon told an interviewer. "This [the Haitian agreement] is just one feeble attempt to control one particular stream of immigration into this country."

In El Salvador, the refugee situation has reached crisis proportions. Although hundreds are dying weekly through the war-fighting, the El Salvador economy is in such shambles that the government is now shipping "unemployed workers" out to countries like Bolivia. Out of a total population of 4.8 million, it is estimated that there are now 600,000 Salvadoran refugees, either inside or outside of the country. That is over 12 percent of the population. Of these, 300,000 are thought to have fled across the borders into Central American countries and Mexico; another 100,000 have found their way into the United States; and over 200,000 refugees remain inside the country.

For population specialists like William Paddock and Thomas McMahon, this holocaust is simply a necessary result of "overpopulation."

"You have to remember that the violence in El Salvador is not new," says McMahon. "They had the highest murder rate in the hemisphere for years . . . and that is due to overpopulation. The country is definitely overpopulated. Anybody who thinks they are going to be able to make agrarian reform work there is very

## William Paddock's plantation economics

*William Paddock, the director of the Environmental Fund, is one of the founders of the genocide lobby in the United States. In 1973, he wrote a book, We Don't Know How, which put forward a scenario for the events now unfolding in Central America. Paddock gave the keynote speech in a seminar on "demographic and national security implications of the El Salvador revolution" organized by Henry Kissinger's networks in the Washington-based Georgetown's Center for Strategic and International Studies, Feb. 26. In that speech, he called for an "endless cycle" of warfare to reduce population in Central America. The 1973 book is based on Paddock's involvement in the region as an agronomist with the Agency for International Development (AID) under the State Department. Excerpts follow:*

El Salvador has been described as a demographic nightmare. . . . The Salvadorean soils normally resist erosion, but they have been so abused by excess population, the original potential of the land has been seriously reduced. Some nineteen species of local mammals . . . have become extinct. . . . And now the overwhelming population pressures have indeed reached the crisis point. . . . The consequences of an agricultural breakthrough without an accompanying breakthrough in population control are ominous. Agriculturalists (and I am one) too glibly damn modern medicine for trying to reduce mortality while striving to do exactly the same thing through improved agricultural technology. More food will certainly mean that more people will live, but this will accelerate the population explosion still more. . . .

In spite of all that is written today criticizing the plantation system, there remains a major reason why this is the most economically feasible unit (and generally speaking the only unit) for cultivating the coastal tropics of Honduras . . . the United Fruit Company's . . . sales of bananas bring in 35 percent of all Honduras foreign exchange. . . . Honduras is a poor country. Think how much poorer it would be without El Pulpo ["the octopus," name given by Latin Americans to United Fruit].

Science and technology cannot compensate for the paucity of resources of a hungry nation. . . . As the benefits of technology are strewn throughout the undeveloped world, the crop that rises is not the beautiful flowers of progress but a host of evil soldiers more threatening than any previous problem.

naive. . . . You get a point where there probably is no answer.”

### **Prolonging the war**

It is certainly the case that the U.S. State Department is not looking for a solution to the El Salvador conflict. Secretary of State Haig has done everything within his power to prolong the war, spurning the offers of mediation presented.

Over recent months, Haig has increasingly brought in U.S. nonconventional “special forces,” such as the Green Berets, to advise and participate in military operations in both El Salvador and Honduras.

On Oct. 5, the Salvadoran military announced the launching of a “final offensive.” The elite Atlacatl brigade, armed with American-made weapons and trained by Green Berets, is employing the “hammer and anvil” tactics used in Vietnam to seal off jungle areas controlled by guerrillas on the border with Honduras while other troops sweep the area. The U.S. and Honduran navies are simultaneously carrying out maneuvers in the Caribbean.

The United States is participating in the maneuvers, despite assurances to Mexican President José López Portillo from President Reagan, during the Grand Rapids meeting Sept. 17, that the United States would send no more advisers or troops to El Salvador. At this meeting, López Portillo had urged Reagan to seek a mediated and negotiated solution to the crisis.

Panamanian President Aristides Royo, in a speech before the United Nations General Assembly Sept. 30, offered to be a mediator. The offer was favorably received by spokesmen for El Salvador’s Revolutionary Democratic Front (FDR) and the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN), who reported that they “accepted the mediation proposed by Aristides Royo,” and were prepared to “sit down and talk with the Duarte government.” Junta president Duarte—undoubtedly with approval from Haig—rejected the offer.

What is the next step for the U.S. State Department?

“You know what I would do if I were in power?” says Thomas McMahon. “I would just say this is not our problem. Let the Latin Americans handle it. We’ve got the OAS, let the Mexicans, Venezuelans, Colombians, Panamanians handle it.”

That is precisely what the State Department is doing, albeit without lessening U.S. involvement in the conflagration. In a press conference in Tegucigalpa, Honduras, Oct. 7, Col. Samuel Dickenson, director of the Interamerican Defense Board, boldly declared that the United States wants the Honduran military to intervene in El Salvador. “I don’t know how there can be peace in Honduras when it proclaims neutrality with aggressive neighbors like the Nicaraguans and with a guerrilla war like the one in El Salvador.”

## **How the IMF is wrecking Costa Rica**

by Dennis Small

The Central American nation of Costa Rica is quickly becoming a textbook case in how the International Monetary Fund can reduce a national economy to rubble and create terrorism and political chaos.

Since 1948, Costa Rica’s stability has earned it the widespread nickname of the Switzerland of Central America. The only one of the six nations of the isthmus which is a functioning parliamentary democracy, Costa Rica has no armed forces, and was almost free of domestic terrorism until the most recent period. With chaos and civil war surrounding it, Costa Rica has managed to remain remarkably free from violent polarization.

All that is now about to end.

Domestic terrorism is beginning to surface in the country. Reagan administration officials like U.N. Ambassador Jeane Kirkpatrick are encouraging the strengthening of the National Guard and other security forces to answer this challenge with stepped-up repression. Most importantly, the International Monetary Fund and the major commercial banks are refusing to roll over Costa Rica’s \$2.6 billion foreign debt, unless that country imposes draconian austerity measures—measures sure to produce widespread social unrest.

Already the government of President Rodrigo Carazo is a casualty of these developments. It will limp into the February 1982 presidential elections with the barest minimum of authority to govern the country. The probable victor in these elections will be social democrat Luis Alberto Monge; but he, too, will face the same underlying crisis that has politically shattered his predecessor.

### **IMF ‘terrorism’**

Costa Rica’s problem is very simply: it is bankrupt. This fact emerged into full public review in July, when the Carazo government telexed its principal creditors that it could not meet its payments on its foreign debt. Since then, Costa Rica has defaulted on \$120 million in debt service payments, and is expected to fall short by \$230 million more by the end of this year. Over the past 12 to 18 months, Costa Rica’s balance of payments has been shattered by a combination of: a) slumping international prices for its major crop, coffee; b) soaring