

author Yahya Siddyk issued a challenge to a European colonial establishment that had “conquered by the force of the cannon,” but had since “exhausted its vital force by two or three centuries of hyper-extension.” Noting that “the present spirit of Islam is a portentous fact, for its numerical strength is very great,” Siddyk predicted “a revolution without parallel in the world’s annals.” This threat to the colonial empire was duly noted by author Lothrop Stoddard in a 1922 book appropriately named *The Rising Tide of Color Against White World-Supremacy*.¹²

The perceived threat to British “sovereignty” over its captive territories had reached fever pitch by the time the United Nations was established. Indeed, a history of the U.N.’s population work notes that in 1946, a Royal Commission on Population had publicly cautioned that “the decline of the population of the West in relation to that of Asia ‘might be decisive in its effects on the prestige and influence of the West. . . . The question is not merely one of military strength and security: It merges into more fundamental issues of the maintenance and extension of western views and culture.’ ”¹³

Predictably, it was the British and the Americans who led the fight to include a Population Commission under the umbrella of the U.N. Economic and Social Council (Ecosoc).¹⁴ The Population Commission, in turn, became administratively linked to the General Assembly through the Population Division, which was headed by an American, Dr. Frank Notestein, formerly the director of the Princeton Office of Population Research.

Notestein possessed more than a passing familiarity with the western interest in population control. Indeed, he was one of its most prominent spokespersons. At an April 1944 conference sponsored by the Milbank Memorial Fund in New York, Notestein argued forcefully against a program of economic and industrial development in the Southern Hemisphere in the absence of accompanying policies of fertility control.

“Such a program,” said Notestein, “would yield populations that would be larger and stronger than those that would arise from the perpetuation of past policies. By launching a program of modernization the now dominant powers would in effect be creating a future world in which their own peoples would become progressively smaller minorities, and possess a progressively smaller proportion of the world’s wealth and power. The determination of national policy toward the undeveloped regions must be made in the light of that fact.”¹⁵

Penetrating the adversary

The Americans, the British, and other governments, having a vested interest in spreading birth control to the Southern Hemisphere, were fully conscious of the sensitivity of the birth control issue. A documented history of the population control program in China, prepared by the U.S. government-funded East-West Communication Institute in Honolulu, describes early rejection of birth control by Mao Zedong.

Policy conferences: the art of betrayal

The international conference format of “experts,” public officials, and other policymakers is essential to the promotion of birth control in developing nations. In no area is the conference more important than in bridging the gap between conventional spiritual beliefs and the adoption of public policies advocated by the West to help stem the growth of population.

Under a classic scenario, a conference is initiated by some major institution involved in the population program—the U.S. Agency for International Development, the World Bank, the United Nations, or a combination of institutions. But the donor invariably selects a local organization to serve as its “official” host.

Such a meeting is ordinarily billed as a forum for the presentation of all points of view. But the foreign donor takes care to ensure that participants advocating its own ideology are predominant. Since the donor agency is in control of the conference itself, it is able to define the outcome as a “broad consensus” in favor of birth limits. The slanted information produced by the conference then forms the basis for background material that can be distributed to government ministries, universities, the news media, the general public, and, of course, to other conferences.

On Sept. 16, 1949, two weeks before launching the People’s Republic, Mao announced his official view that China’s large population “is a very good thing.” He specifically attacked western proposals to introduce birth control as “a means of killing the Chinese people without shedding blood,” and predicted a future nation “where life will be abundant and culture will flourish.”¹⁶ Mao’s remarks not only illustrate an opinion prevalent among “Third World” leaders of the time, but also reveal the presence of overtures from the West to curb Asian fertility in the period immediately following World War II.

The fact that such initiatives were attempted at the same time in the colonial world, is evident from comments made by demographer Alfred Sauvy the same year: “It creates a very disagreeable impression to see people who are white, European, or of European origin, trying to sow the seeds of sterility in populations that are about to escape from under their domination.”¹⁷

To accommodate the reservations—not to mention the outright hostility that existed in the developing world toward the imposition of population control by rich countries—Pop-

A typical meeting of this sort was convened in Indonesia on Feb. 19-24, 1990 as the International Congress on Islam and Population Policy. Its sponsor was the Al-Azhar University International Islamic Population Center in Cairo, a group established and bankrolled by the United Nations Population Fund.

A memorandum from the files of an American aid contractor specializing in sexual sterilization advises that the meeting demonstrated a "positive shift" in opinion in favor of western family planning. These changes in attitude, adds the April 6, 1990 report, "are related to continuously educating and informing religious leaders on the various dimensions of the population problem, and the health conditions of the child and mother in case of unplanned growth of the population, so that they can interpret Islamic teaching differently."

The memorandum, written by Zein Khairullah for the New York-based Association for Voluntary Surgical Contraception, describes the purpose of the 1990 conference as to "develop a plan of action to encourage cooperation among countries in the Muslim world in the area of development and population" and to explore "alternatives and options for the formulation of population policy in the framework of national development in the Muslim world during the 1990s."

Conference recommendations, in the words of the same communiqué, included immediate action to assure the "propagation of Islamic values . . . including the eradication of misconceptions of Islamic attitudes toward pop-

ulation issues." The memorandum adds: "The congress further urges all Muslim countries to formulate population policies according to country specific needs, and integrate these policies into development plans and giving them [sic] high priority."

The highlight of the 1990 conference was the approval of the Aceh Declaration, which called upon "all Muslim Communities the world over to initiate and/or promote a concerted and coordinated effort in the fields of population policies and population programs."

The same old faces

Conferences like the one in Indonesia are held up to the rest of the world as major political events. That is their reason for existence. But, ironically, the same "experts" and "opinion leaders" seem to surface at most of them.

The 1990 Congress, in fact, was the second such meeting that had taken place in Indonesia. An earlier and smaller one was held there six years before. Indeed, according to a 1984 report in the International Planned Parenthood Federation's journal, *People*, the 1984 gathering was the outgrowth of yet another rendezvous which took place in Seoul, South Korea in 1980. The South Korea forum, says IPPF, officially created the congress, placing it under the direction of one Prof. Abdel Rahim Omran, an Egyptian living in the United States, who was a key figure in the conspiracy to plant revised religious documents about Islam and birth control in teaching institutions in Nigeria during the late 1980s.

ulation Division chief Notestein proposed a double-edged strategy. First, he urged the use of extensive propaganda for limiting births as part of a broader "health" strategy, and, second, he recommended the recruitment of a cadre of "native" elites who would adopt western views as their own and help to influence domestic policy.

"It is important that specific and widespread propaganda be directed to developing an interest in the health and welfare of children rather than in large families for their own sake," Notestein insisted in his 1944 presentation to the Milbank Memorial Fund conference. "Such education would also involve propaganda in favor of controlled fertility as an integral part of a public health program." He added that it will be necessary "to develop a native leadership that will acquire new values rapidly and serve as a medium for their diffusion. To this end native political leaders, civil servants, and native middle classes are needed."¹⁸

Notestein's blueprint for psychological influence peddling and group penetration remains to this day the essence of U.N. population operations. Indeed, over the past quarter-century (and particularly since the early 1980s) the political

warfare offensive in the developing world has reached levels that were probably not even imagined by early activists such as Notestein. And in no case has the "dirty tricks" campaign been more belligerent or more redundant than in the Muslim world.

Covert operations

A military manual on ideological interventions produced in 1958 by the Operations Research Office at Johns Hopkins University defines "psychological warfare" as "the *planned* use of *propaganda* and *other actions* designed to influence the opinions, emotions, attitudes, and behavior of enemy, neutral, and friendly foreign groups in such a way as to support the accomplishment of national aims and objectives."¹⁹

Overt propaganda is information, opinion, and other communications whose true origin is known to (or at least not hidden from) the intended audience. Propaganda is considered *covert* if it does not disclose its source or is deliberately disseminated in such a way as to be falsely attributed to a third party. It is considered *subversive* ("black" propaganda)