

Malthusians Target El Salvador For Depopulation War

May 28—In a February 20, 1981 interview widely reported by EIR at the time, Thomas Ferguson, then-Latin American case officer at the State Department’s Office of Population Affairs (OPA), matter-of-factly discussed the case of El Salvador to insist upon policies of vast depopulation by any means necessary. The country was already being torn apart at that time by a domestic war; but, he argued, more child-bearing females have to be killed “to do the job on population”; food shortages are needed, people have to be dislocated. [Extracts](#) from that interview, published in the March 10, 1981 issue of EIR follow:

“Every hot spot in the Third World is in fact a result of failed population policy.... El Salvador is an example of where our failure to lower population through effective programs has created the basis for a national security crisis. The government of El Salvador failed to use our programs effectively to lower their population. Now they get a civil war because of it. Alone, that might not do anything to the population, but there will be dislocation, maybe even food shortages. They still have too many people there.

“There is a single theme behind all our work—we must reduce population levels. Either governments do it our way, through nice, clean methods, or they will get the kinds of mess that we have in El Salvador, or in Iran, or in Beirut. Population is a political problem. Once population is out of control, it requires authoritarian government, even fascism, to reduce it.

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population for humanitarian reasons. That sounds nice. We look at resource and environmental constraints, we look at our strategic needs, and we say that this country must lower its population, or else we will have trouble. So steps are taken.

“Our program in El Salvador didn’t work. The infrastructure was not there to support it. There were just too god-damned many people. If you want to control a country politically, you have to keep the population down. Too many people will breed communism and social unrest.... In El Salvador, there is no place for those people—period. No place.

“Look at Vietnam. We studied the thing. That area was also overpopulated and a problem. We thought that the war would lower rates, and we were wrong. To really reduce population quickly, you have to pull all the males into the fighting, and you have to kill significant numbers of fertile age females. You know, as long as you have a large number of fertile females, you will have a problem. One male can sire a number of females, especially in these countries, with weak family units.

“In El Salvador, you are killing a small number of males and not enough females to do the job on the population. If the war were to go on for 30 or 40 years, then you would really accomplish something. Unfortunately, we don’t have too many instances like that to study. It would be different because it

would be continuous political violence.

“The quickest way to reduce population is through famine, like in Africa, or through disease, like the Black Death. What might happen in El Salvador is that the war

might disrupt the distribution of food: The population could weaken itself, you could have disease and starvation, like what happened in Bangladesh or in Biafra. Then you create a tendency for population rates to decline rapidly. This could happen in El Salvador. When that starts happening, you have total political chaos for a while. So, you have to have a political program to deal with it. I can't really estimate how many might die this way, indirectly, but it could be a great deal, depending on what happens. People breed like animals.

"For a long time, people here were very timid. They listened to arguments from Third World leaders that said the best contraceptive was economic development. So we pushed development aid. Look what we accomplished. We improved water and sewage systems, cut down disease, and helped create a population time bomb. We lowered death rates, and did nothing about lowering birth rates. In most countries this renders economic development impossible. Now we are reversing the policy. We are saying, with "Global 2000" [*The Global 2000 Report to the President* commissioned by President Jimmy Carter and released in 1980 as a mass-circulation book, which called for reducing the world's population by two billion people—ed.] and in real policy, that we must lower population rates. The idea is to get your population numbers under control as the primary issue—reduce population so that you can have development.

"Most of the Reagan people, including [Secretary of State Alexander] Haig, share this view. They will go to a country and say, 'Where is your development plan? Throw it out the window! Start by looking at the size of your population and figure out what must be done to reduce it. If you don't like that, if you don't want to do it through planning, then you'll have an El Salvador or an Iran or worse, a Cambodia.' That's what we tell them.

"Haig is an enlightened fellow on these matters. We have many supporters here in the State Department and in the rest of the administration. Cap Weinberger is a long-standing advocate of population doctrine."

The monstrous brutality of Ferguson's Malthusian outlook is shocking, but he was no lone voice. A week later, William Paddock—a leading spokesman for Zero Population Growth, who Lyndon LaRouche denounced on U.S. national television in 1976 for advocating Nazi-like genocide against Mexico (see accompanying article)—argued in a public forum at Washington, D.C.'s Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), that to ensure sufficient population reduction in El Salvador, U.S. policy must be prepared to foment perpetual

war in that nation.

EIR had been tipped off that Paddock would be speaking to CSIS by a journalist who had interviewed him as he was preparing his presentation. In that [interview](#), made available to EIR, Paddock declared that El Salvador's future was one of "total chaos, anarchy of one kind or another. Continuing military government, maybe rightist or leftist, but a military government." Why? Because the country had too many people, especially young ones. Paddock cited Thomas Malthus' "dismal theorem ... that the only check on population growth is starvation and misery," to justify his argument against providing technological improvements and food aid to developing countries, because that fosters population growth, which only leads to "starvation and misery."

Paddock's CSIS presentation was [reported](#) in EIR's March 17, 1981 "Eye on Washington" column as follows:

On the morning of February 27, the center [CSIS] gave its stage to Prof. William Paddock. Widely portrayed as a population expert, he was speaking on, of all things, El Salvador. Paddock looks like a Midwestern farmer, but his message would be congenial to Pol Pot. Paddock told the audience:

"El Salvador's problem is not land reform, industrialization, or even the Russians. It's overpopulated. What we will see in El Salvador is one military dictatorship after another until its population is halved.

"Technology is not the solution, it's the problem: more technology means more misery."

Challenged for a solution by attendees from the AFL-CIO's land reform operation in Salvador, he said:

"Nothing can be done. The land determines how it will be used, and there has never been a successful land reform in human history."

When members of the audience brought up examples of developing countries such as Taiwan and South Korea, whose populations have grown with industrialization and have remained relatively stable, Paddock shot back,

"Oh, that's not my area. I'm an expert on tropical agronomy."

He added:

"For those who happen to be concerned about the political situation [in El Salvador], I would suggest that the best thing would be to back the current military and start working with the opposition immediately, and then start working with the opposition to the opposition."