'U.S. policy is population triage'

The RAPID planners commissioned by the State Department, writes Lonnie Wolfe, are confident about their Global 2000 program.

Former State Department officials told reporters last week that State Department policy toward the developing sector is based upon a policy of triage which calls for "writing off" hundreds of millions of people in the Third World.

Philander Claxton, Jr., the member of the Population Crisis Committee who was the State Department's Co-ordinator for Population Affairs in 1966-74 and who is currently working for the State Department as director of the Resources for the Awareness of Population Impacts on Development or RAPID program, commented to a reporter that for some time now State Department policy has been predicated on the claim that it is impossible, no matter what is done, to prevent a population holocaust of proportions hundreds of times worse than Hitler's in the developing sector. U.S. policy has therefore been to write off non-viable sections of developing nations' populations in a policy that Claxton termed "horizontal triage."

Other State Department sources say that the original first draft of the *Global 2000 Report*, prepared under the direction of Gerald O. Barney, overtly reflected this thinking. It was rejected as being "too doomsday," according to former Carter administration Population Coordinator Marshall Green. The rejected draft reportedly stated that no matter what measures were taken, a billion people "would not make it."

Though Global 2000 was rewritten, the orginal assumptions remain actual policy. These assumptions are not based on scientific evidence or any other real parameter. They are based on a political decision that development of the postcolonial sector is undesirable.

This defines the purpose of the RAPID program. It is aimed, as Claxton and others have stated, to shift the developing-sector leadership away from the perception that economic development is necessary and feasible, and to convince them that their primary concern must be to reduce population.

The message of RAPID—the real content of Global 2000—is presented to developing sector leaders through a video display computer program. The program was designed by Claxton, working with the Washington,

D.C.-based Futures Group under State Department contract. The program is designed to be simple and persuasive. As Claxton states, it is a program that Parson Malthus, the 18th-century ideologue of population reduction, "would love."

Spokesmen for the RAPID program say that they have been instructed by people like Claxton to not make any direct connection between their program and the *Global 2000 Report*. Global 2000, they have been told, has already developed a bad name among most developing sector leaders.

The sponsors of RAPID, which is funded through a $4 million line in the State Department's International Population Programs budget, boast that they will influence virtually every developing-sector nation. They will not waste their time with the ministries of health, because such individuals are interested in keeping people alive. They will focus primarily on capturing the development and finance ministries, because as Claxton relates, this is where overall policy is made.

It this way, through the use of simple psychological manipulations around the population question, they hope to tilt the policy balance toward Global 2000, despite the fact that the Reagan White House is known to reject this doctrine.

Interviews

Philander Claxton, Jr. and Marshall Green

From an April 30 interview with Philander Claxton, provided to EIR:

Q: Why did you choose the RAPID approach to reach people in the developing sector?
A: We needed a new way to get to people and make

them understand the kind of issues raised in the *Global 2000 Report.* . . . These are hard things for many of the Third World leaders to grapple with. We are telling them some very unpleasant things and they don't like to hear it. Population perspectives have always run up against this. . . . The computer as a tool in shifting people's perceptions is something that I have been working on for a long time. It is really an effective and cost efficient device. We will, or should I say, can, do more with something like RAPID than with hundreds of millions of dollars of educational money to convince peasants to use contraceptives.

The reason RAPID is more effective is because it is designed to go after the elites, the people who actually run these countries, the people who make policy. . . . I am not saying that we don't need the other money, but quite frankly, if you don't capture the leaders, you won't be very effective. . . .

Q: The RAPID program is then aimed really at leadership people. It seems also to be fairly straightforward and uncomplicated.

A: That is right. Our presentation is designed to be comprehensible to some very unintelligent and unsophisticated people who happen to run countries. You have corporals and sergeants, postal clerks, who become heads of state. These people know so little and have so many misconceptions. We have to educate them. . . . Before we make any presentations, we try to work with top people in the development ministries and finance ministries. We try to avoid working with the ministries of health. They are interested in doing things on lowering infant mortality and the like. If you work with the health ministries, you get tracked into family planning. That is not what we want.

We want the development and finance ministries, because that is where policy is made and that is what must be controlled and changed. We don't want this [RAPID] to be a family planning venture. It is much bigger than that. . . .

The computer terminal, the little Apple terminal, sells the whole thing. It is really quite simple and damn impressive because of it. . . . We had these psychologists tell us that we should use color because it would be more dramatic, so we have done this. . . . I've done several presentations. You have this declining green line that represents food supply appear on the screen. Then you have this rapidly rising red line that represents population growth. The red line crosses the green line and gobbles it up. . . . Malthus would really love this. It is quite shocking. It opens up these people's eyes and minds. . . .

Q: Isn't it true, though, that no matter what is done with programs like RAPID, that people like yourself feel that hundreds of millions of people will die because of the population crisis? This is what Global 2000 implies.

A: Yes, I believe that is true. I was just talking to people about this today on one of the groups I am involved with, the Global Tomorrow Coalition, which backs the *Global 2000 Report.* I work with the Population Crisis Committee, and we were the people who helped steer this effort along. We worked to set up a leadership conference of environmentalists and population people with the help of the Audubon Society and Russell Peterson. I helped make sure that this conference focused on Global 2000. . . . This group comes from this effort in part.

A number of countries are already headed in short order for the kind of things that happened in Iran and El Salvador. Most of the countries of Africa and Latin America are headed there. They are really beyond hope. There are built-in population momentum factors that are just going to overwhelm them.

This doesn't appall me. Before the U.S. began to get into the population activities—and I was assigned the job by Secretary [of State Dean] Rusk to create the population office in State—it was already apparent that many countries were on a course where they were going to experience chaos and death. And I don't see all that we have really done has changed things too much. . . .

Now a country like Mexico happens to have oil resources, and they can buy food for a large number of people from the U.S. if they want to do it. But they can't charge for it. They have to give it away. But what happens when the oil runs out or our food supplies get lower? . . .

Q: But in most countries that is not going to be the case. . . .

A: No. Most countries don't have the resources to buy food or other things they need. So the only choice they have, their only hope, is that somebody will buy food for them. But there is really not that much food to go around. Look, a lot of countries that were once exporters of food are now importers. And their deficits keep increasing. Theoretically, at this point in population growth, there is not going to be enough to go around. We can say that. . . .

Q: So, no amount of economic development, according to you, can solve these problems?

A: That is right.

Q: Is it foolish to tell people that technology will solve their problems?

A: Absolutely. It makes things worse. . . . There is a very important point here. People in the developing sector say, "Look at the European countries. They had eco-

nomic and social development and they reduced their populations eventually." Well, there are several vast differences between what happened to Europe and what is happening now. One of them is that the death rates in Europe came down slowly, beginning with the smallpox vaccination. The industrial revolution had already started by that time. This is the beginning of modern scientific medicine and modern sanitation. These developments took place very slowly over a period of a hundred years or so. And the birth rates came down very slowly. But population growth rate through all this never really went above 1 percent. A lot of this growth was absorbed in industry and agriculture. And where it could not be absorbed, they went to America or went to war.

But now in the developing countries, they have had a massive reduction of their death rates . . . through all the advantages of modern medicine, especially since the war. Birth rates have hardly come down at all. Industry and agriculture in these places cannot absorb all the people. And there is nowhere for them to go. . . .

Q: So are we going to see what Maxwell Taylor sees happening—more than a billion people being written off, dying from one cause or another because of the population crisis?
A: I am not inclined to put numbers on things. But yes, there will be such a disaster. Certainly in the many scores of millions, maybe in the hundreds of millions or even billions. . . .

Q: Some people say that we should not waste resources saving people who can't be saved. . . .
Q: You mean triage. We probably can't do it as official policy. But we are doing it in another sense. There are two kinds of triage. Vertical triage is where you separate out whole countries and let them sink under. What we are doing is a form of horizontal triage. This is where we let certain economic strata go under. We are providing certain levels of assistance to countries so that parts of their population will survive and other parts, in some cases, most, won't. That we are doing with all countries, where certain numbers of their population will survive while others die. This is U.S. policy in the State Department. Eventually we may have both vertical and horizontal triage. . . .

Q: Isn't this a national security question for the West?
A: Yes, most definitely. Global 2000 and related studies have very real national security implications.

From an interview made available to EIR *with Marshall Green, population coordinator for the State Department from 1977 through 1979, and former diplomatic representative to several Asian nations.*

Q: Who in the United States is getting out the message on the *Global 2000 Report*?
A: The State Department and the Council on Environmental Quality [CEQ] have a program for trying to follow up on Global 2000. I just don't know if the Reagan administration is going to give it very serious consideration.

Q: Who's been working on the followup?
A: We at PCC [Population Crisis Committee] did a long, long paper giving our views on what followup should be, and they had a State Department committee. Dr. Dick Benedick was deeply involved in it. I have not been, though I was involved in the original report, from the demographic side. And I will testify in hearings on the Hill in two weeks.

But I just have a feeling that the Reagan crowd is not focused on this. One of the things is that they've knocked all the pins out from under the CEQ. They're the ones who originally brought this document together. The State Department had a secondary role. We tried to draft the thing in a more balanced way. The original draft was pretty much doomsday. It didn't wash. Lindsey Grant and some others took over, and redrafted the job. I think it was unfortunately too long delayed. Had it come out when it should have come out, which was 1978, then the Carter administration could have done something. The President clearly thought about the report in his farewell speech, which was full of longer-range, global things. New administrations, they come in and don't think about these kinds of things. After a while, they will.

Q: Perhaps Global 2000 thinking can be spurred faster outside the United States than inside at this point.
A: Oh yes, I think it can. I've just gotten back from a trip to India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh. I met with Zia of Pakistan and with the president of Bangladesh, Ziaur Rahman, for over an hour, a very good man. And before that, I met with Sadat for an hour and a half.

On these trips, we've been using computer technology to demonstrate our points. Then we have followup. Try to get the leadership person the ammunition to convince their own people, show why it's in their interests.

Q: How does the computer element work?
A: That's a project called RAPID. They have a think tank up in Connecticut called Futures. They're the ones who put this thing on chips and into a portable computer. They use the host country's data, or if that's lacking, U.N. data, or the best demographic projection available. They take their plan—most of them have five-year plans or something like that—and then they show how realization of those plans is absolutely impossible, under current population growth. Conversely, lowering family

size to two to three child families would make a real improvement in the situation.

This program has a real impact. It's been used in Nigeria, Kenya, Tanzania, Sudan, and many other countries. When I was in Pakistan with Zia, I did not show him the program; it's not needed to convince *him*, but he needs it to convince his own people. In Egypt, we're working on popularizing these ideas in a nationwide TV program, to show dramatically why they have to bring the birth rate down faster—or else.

Q: Zia, then, is aboard?
A: Yes, he's aboard. He's got a very good assistant. She has put forward a very ambitious program, but hasn't coordinated with the other ministers in an effective way.

The question of organization is very important. You don't want to put a population program in the Health Ministry, there's too much concern with MCH—maternal/child health. They aren't really interested in other considerations. You want a broader interministerial group. Then the question is, if you find organization problems, how do you deal with them? We try to find out different ways to get the ideas across. The computer helps here, with their own data.

Q: So the computer serves to work on the doubters, those suspicious of the data?
A: That's right. When they challenge data, they say they have other data, they tend to say, 'Well, all that's invalid.' What you're able to do with the computer is put in whatever they say, change all your charts and graphs. It happens automatically. And there's no appreciable dent in the problem. You're able to show the inconsequence of these minor variables that people are fond of bringing up. That's one of the great advantages.

For example, when I was in Egypt, I made two major presentations to the Supreme Council, and the Minister of Education challenged our data on primary school attendance. We used his data; all the charts changed; it made no difference. But it was dramatic, I was glad he raised the question. It exposed what I call the "variable crowd."

Q: Is there any place in Latin America where the RAPID program may go into effect?
A: Yes, in Colombia. But the program is largely aimed toward Africa, and to some extent, Asia.

Q: It appears to be in a strong implementation phase.
A: Yes, but they don't have enough staff to expand. Where it has been used, it has had tremendous impact. But it's sometimes hard to tell how deep it goes. For instance, the Cameroons; it had a tremendous impact in the Cameroons. But you don't know if it's working.