

Eye on Washington by Nicholas Benton

A refreshing exercise in moral outrage

If as much moral outrage as the House of Representatives exhibited against Red China's population control policy July 10 were aimed against the equally murderous International Monetary Fund, starvation in Africa would end soon.

The House narrowly voted up an amendment by Rep. Chris Smith (R-N.J.) to remove \$51 million in U.S. foreign aid money to the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA) because of its collaboration with the People's Republic of China's heinous "one child per family" policy.

Smith's amendment, attached to the comprehensive \$12.6 billion foreign aid bill that passed July 11, put the House on the line respecting one of the most blatant cases of genocide in modern history. Even so, an attempt to water down the amendment was only narrowly voted down by a 221-198 margin.

Long-time Washington observers called it the first victory of its kind, and a hopeful sign that the Congress may be starting to respond to public sentiment against the morally reprehensible implications of "population control" strategies.

Rep. Smith invoked "crimes against humanity" as defined at Nuremberg: "The U.S. must not fail to strongly condemn the barbaric practices that continue unabated in the PRC. We have a unique opportunity here to send a clear message around the world that such practices are intolerable to a civilized society, that such practices are obscene and our country will in no way, directly or indirectly, be involved in them, condone them, diminish their reality, or quietly acquiesce to them."

The amendment, which Smith said was supported by President Reagan, establishes a mechanism for the President to monitor PRC population policies, and to withhold monies from any agency—in particular, the UNFPA—that supports the PRC program.

Testimony showed that the PRC's "one child only" policy has resulted in 53 million forced abortions in five years (1979-84)—equal to the entire population of France. That includes up to 800,000 forced abortions a year in one province. Mass forced sterilizations and systematic infanticide practices were also documented.

The UNFPA receives more than half of its \$140 million yearly budget from the U.S. Agency for International Development (AID). It recently announced its second five-year grant of \$50 million to the PRC.

Rep. Michael DeWine (R-Ohio) documented what he called the UNFPA's "hand-in-glove relationship with the PRC's Population Control Program" by noting that in 1983, a U.N. committee gave the PRC family planning minister its first \$12,500 award for "the most outstanding contribution to the awareness of population questions." He quoted UNFPA executive director Raphael Salas: "China provides an example of integrating population programs with the national goals of development."

Given the extent of documentation provided, the bipartisan hew and cry against the amendment was astonishing. Reps. Dante Fascell (D-Fla.) and Peter Kostmeyer (D-Pa.) offered a counter-amendment, retaining the earmarked funds to the UNFPA, forbidding their use for China. As Rep. Smith pointed out, this "would simply require a little bookkeeping at the UNFPA. UNFPA will gladly keep our money in a so-called segregated account, but UNFPA's support for the

PRC would in no way be inhibited by this bookkeeping exercise."

Reps. Olympia Snowe (R-Maine), Marge Roukema (R-N.J.), Sander Levin (D-Mich.), Pat Schroeder (D-Colo.), Jim Moody (D-Wisc.), and John Porter (R-Ill.) took the floor to express their explicit support for genocide. Snowe and Roukema—both Republicans—took special pains to retail the racist "Malthusian" argument that population growth is the cause of poverty in the Third World. They said that the UNFPA's population control programs in no less than 115 nations would be jeopardized.

But while most of these muttonheads were failing to grasp the implications of the fact that voting against the amendment was voting for mass genocide—plain and simple—the saddest excuse of all was given by Rep. Fascell, who attacked Smith's reference to "crimes against humanity" for being what he called "impolitic language in reference to another government."

This drew a refreshing exercise of outrage from Rep. Henry Hyde (R-Ill.), who replied to Fascell: "This House is not at all reticent in pointing out human rights shortcomings when it comes to the Philippines, when it comes to South Africa or Central America; why should we be so genteel and concerned about ruffled feathers and feelings when it comes to coerced abortion, coerced sterilization, and infanticide now going on in China? If something is evil, let us call it evil. That is the only way to address it. And let us not try to euphemize something that is a thoroughly evil practice."

In that spirit, the Smith amendment narrowly passed in a vote that might go down in history as one of the most clearly delineated, unclouded tests of minimum human morality ever administered in our Congress. And 198 failed.