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UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR ECONOMIC AFFAIRS
BEFORE THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AID EXPENDITURES
OF THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS
MONDAY, APRIL 11, 1966

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Subcommittee:

It is a pleasure for me to appear here to discuss with you the position of the Department of State on the population growth aspects of economic and social development programs abroad.

The Department of State, together with the Agency for International Development, has been giving increasing attention to these problems over the past five years. It has participated in numerous meetings, both in the international field and here at home with private organizations concerned with population growth. Its senior officers have spoken publicly on this subject and have met with many private groups to exchange views on the problem.

In some areas the population threatens to double itself in a generation. The long-term implications of such increases in population are sobering. They are a serious challenge to us if we are to succeed in the long efforts we have been making to assist a large part of the world in its orderly economic and social development.

The problem is summarized very well in the Bill introduced by the Chairman of this Subcommittee and other members of the Senate:

"...(1) the application of public health measures and the introduction of modern medical life-saving and life-prolonging techniques have contributed to a doubling of the annual rate of world population growth within the past eighteen years, and may be expected to continue to increase rates of such growth in the future.

"(2) population growth is a vital factor in determining the extent to which economic development and political stability will prevail in any country, especially in countries which are in the early stages of economic and political development;

"(3) at present, because of the rapid and continued growth in population, hundreds of millions of parents are unable to provide adequately for themselves and their children;

"(4) those nations in which population growth is most extreme and where the problems arising from such growth are most acute are, because of economic, technical, and other considerations, also the nations least able independently to cope with such growth and the problems connected therewith;....."

So much for the problem. What are we doing about it?

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First, we have been active in the formulation and expression of international policies and programs on population matters. In 1962, for example, we supported a resolution in the General Assembly which endorsed United Nations' encouragement and assistance to governments "in obtaining and carrying out essential studies of the demographic aspects as well as other aspects of their economic and social development programs." We have consistently encouraged and supported United Nations' activities devoted to the study of the nature and scope of population problems and their possible solutions. We have, in the United Nations and on the international scene, underlined our concern about the social consequences of our own population trends, and our interest in learning more -- and helping others to learn more -- about population trends in the developing countries.

We have, however, also been keenly aware of the many complexities involved in the population problem and its possible solution. To the extent we can help other countries in this field, we are ready to do so, but it is essential to our foreign policy goals that there be no misunderstanding about the dimensions of our activities and intentions. Therefore, as far back as 1962, the Department of State made it clear that the United States did not -- and will not -- advocate any specific policy that another country might follow in approaching its population growth problems. We stated that the United States was prepared to help other countries -- but only upon their request -- to find possible sources of information and assistance on ways to deal with the problem.

Ambassador Stevenson set forth additional aspects of our policy in the field of international cooperation when, in a public speech in 1963, he called upon the United Nations to be prepared to extend to member countries technical assistance for surveys on attitudes toward marriage, child rearing, and family size. Ambassador Stevenson also stated that the United Nations, together with UNESCO and the World Health Organization, could advise other countries, at their request, on how best to inform their nationals about family planning, consistent with the cultural and religious values of the country concerned. We have supported the World Health Organization in a research program on fertility and human reproduction.

Second, we have continued to expand our own activities abroad. The guideline for the greater concentration of resources, both by the Department of State and the Agency for International Development, in our international programs is to be found in the President's statement in January 1965, when he said, "I will seek new ways to use our knowledge to help deal with the explosion in world population and the growing scarcity in world resources."

Shortly after the President's statement -- early in March 1965 -- the Department sent an instruction to our Embassies around the world to ensure the closest cooperation between our Embassy staffs and those of the Agency for International Development in each country in working on population matters. We stressed to our Embassies the continuing

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responsible concern of our Government in this field. This is consistent with the proposal in S.1676 concerning the transmission of data to United States diplomatic personnel and other mission officers so that they may be advised with respect to the problems and their duties.

We also informed them in this circular that our AID Missions abroad were being supplied with general reference materials and technical publications dealing with a wide range of subjects, from demographic studies to family planning booklets. In each AID Mission abroad there is not only a small library of reference material and technical publications but in virtually all, an officer who has been designated to coordinate mission activities in this field. This is consistent with the suggestion concerning demographic attaches in S.1676.

Here at home, the Agency for International Development organized a Population Reference and Research Branch. This branch serves as the focal point for coordinating all AID operations around the world in this field. I am informed that AID already has good files on programs in other countries. This is consistent with the suggestion made in S.1676 for the collection of data on all foreign population programs whether or not instituted or assisted by the United States.

Working within this AID framework are a number of consultants. They advise us on the demographic, economic, medical, and public health aspects of the population problem. But, more than that, they maintain contact and coordinate with interested United States and foreign private institutions and groups concerned with the population problem. Dr. Berman, for example, traveled extensively in Latin America when I was in charge of the Inter-American Bureau, where he sought out and talked with all those in the public and private sectors interested in the problem. These consultants are performing a number of the functions suggested in S.1676.

The Bureau of Inter-American Affairs, which has merged into one organization the functions and staffs of the Department and AID with respect to Latin America, created a Population Unit in its Institutional Development Office. The AID geographic bureaus for the other regions also have population officers in their health units.

The Department's Office of Research and Analysis has undertaken several population research projects. We should be alert to the possibilities of using this office on additional research projects.

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An increasing amount of AID funds has been used in support of population programs in those developing countries which have asked for our assistance, and AID programs in this field are scheduled to be increased substantially over the next few years. Mr. Bell informed this Subcommittee on April 8 of some of the principal programs AID has undertaken abroad -- in the Republic of China, Turkey, Honduras, Pakistan, and in other countries. Many countries are becoming more aware of the need for action on their population problems, and a growing number are seeking advice and assistance.

We agree with this subcommittee on the need for a focal point in the Department of State to undertake policy coordination in all our programs abroad; to ensure full consideration of our foreign policy objectives; particularly those of a political nature, in the carrying out of these programs; to keep our Embassies fully informed of our thoughts and plans, and where necessary, to make sure our posts abroad are giving this serious problem all the attention it deserves; and, finally, to maintain close liaison with the Department of Health, Education and Welfare, all other United States Government agencies and private institutions and organizations concerned with this problem -- as well as with this Subcommittee.

To this end, my own office -- that of Under Secretary of State for Economic Affairs -- will serve as the needed focal point for policy matters and coordination. Working under me will be a Special Assistant for Population Matters, a position comparable with that of the Special Assistants who are now in charge of such important fields in our international relationships as Fisheries, Food for Peace, and Labor. Working with me, through a Special Assistant for Population Matters, will be officers representing the Bureaus in the Department, as well as the AID offices, which work on the various aspects of the problem -- for example, the Bureau of International Organization Affairs, which is in charge of handling matters with the United Nations and its specialized agencies. In addition, the geographic Bureaus, particularly those which cover those areas of the world in which the population problem is a serious one -- Latin America, the Near East and South Asia, and the Far East -- will, as I have said, designate one of their senior officers to work with my office on this subject.

To sum up, Mr. Chairman, I believe that the Department has and will continue to do everything it can properly do to encourage other governments to give this problem the attention it deserves and to respond to such requests for assistance as we receive, subject only to the limitations which Mr. Bell has already described to this Committee and which I will not repeat here. We have all the legislative authority we need at this time. Should the future demonstrate a need for additional legislation in this field, we shall not hesitate to ask for it.

Mr. Chairman, we have a vital national interest in this subject, and are grateful for the thought you and your associates are giving it. I assure you that the Department of State fully shares your concern, and that it hopes that its increasing efforts in this field, and those of all of our official and private institutions, may soon point the way to a solution of this world-wide problem.

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