

Kissinger's NSSM 200

The first person who linked “overpopulation” to U.S. national security interests was Henry Kissinger, who, as National Security Advisor, oversaw the drafting of National Security Study Memorandum 200, entitled “Implications of Worldwide Population Growth for U.S. Security and Overseas Interests,” which was a highly classified document when it was completed on Dec. 10, 1974.

On Nov. 26, 1975, with Kissinger now Secretary of State, his successor as National Security Advisor, Gen. Brent Scowcroft, issued National Security Decision Memorandum 314, which adopted NSSM 200 as official (covert) U.S. policy on population matters. The following are excerpts from NSSM 200:

The World Population Plan of Action is not self-enforcing and will require vigorous efforts by interested countries, UN agencies and other international bodies to make it effective. U.S. leadership is essential. . . .

Assistance for population moderation should give primary emphasis to the largest and fastest-growing developing countries where there is special U.S. political and strategic interest. Those countries are: India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Nigeria, Mexico, Indonesia, Brazil, the Philip-

pinas, Thailand, Egypt, Turkey, Ethiopia, and Colombia. Together, they account for 47% of the world's current population growth. . . .

Moreover, short of draconian measures there is no possibility that any LDC [Less Developed Country] can stabilize its population at less than double its present size. For many, stabilization will not be short of three times their present size. . . .

Population growth *per se* is not likely to impose serious constraints on the global physical availability of fuel and non-fuel minerals to the end of the century and beyond. . . .

The important potential linkage between rapid population growth and mineral availability is indirect rather than direct. It flows from the negative effects of excessive population growth on economic development and social progress, and therefore on internal stability, in overcrowded underdeveloped countries. . . .

The real problems of mineral supplies lie, not in basic physical sufficiency, but in the politico-economic issues of access, terms for exploration and exploitation, and division of the benefits among producers, consumers, and host country governments. In the extreme cases where population pressures lead to endemic famine, food riots, and breakdown of social order, those conditions are scarcely conducive to systematic exploration for mineral deposits or the long-term investments required for their exploitation.