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## National Security Study Memorandum 200(NSSM 200)

**National Security Study Memorandum 200: Implications of Worldwide Population Growth for U.S. Security and Overseas Interests (NSSM200)** was completed on December 10, 1974 by the United States National Security Council under the direction of Henry Kissinger.

It was adopted as official U.S. policy by President Gerald Ford in November 1975. It was originally classified, but was later declassified and obtained by researchers in the early 1990s.

The basic thesis of the memorandum was that population growth in the least developed countries (LDCs) is a concern to U.S. national security, because it would tend to risk civil unrest and political instability in countries that had a high potential for economic development. The policy gives "paramount importance" to population control measures and the promotion of contraception among 13 populous countries, to control rapid population growth which the US deems inimical to the socio-political and economic growth of these countries and to the national interests of the United States, since the "U.S. economy will require large and increasing amounts of minerals from abroad", and these countries can produce destabilizing opposition forces against the United States. It recommends the US leadership to "influence national leaders" and that "improved world-wide support for population-related efforts should be sought through increased emphasis on mass media and other population education and motivation programs by the U.N., USIA, and USAID."

Thirteen countries are named in the report as particularly problematic with respect to U.S. security interests: India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Indonesia, Thailand, the Philippines, Turkey, Nigeria, Egypt, Ethiopia, Mexico, Colombia, and Brazil. These countries are projected to create 47 percent of all world population growth.

The report advocates the promotion of education and contraception and other population control measures. It also raises the question of whether the U.S. should consider preferential allocation of surplus food supplies to states that are deemed constructive in use of population control measures.

Some of the key insights of report are controversial:

"The U.S. economy will require large and increasing amounts of minerals from abroad, especially from less developed countries [see National Commission on Materials Policy, Towards a National Materials Policy: Basic Data and Issues, April 1972]. That fact gives the U.S. enhanced interest in the political, economic, and social stability of the supplying countries. Wherever a lessening of population pressures through reduced birth rates can increase the prospects for such stability, population policy becomes relevant to resource supplies and to the economic interests of the United States. . . . The location of known reserves of higher grade ores of most minerals favors increasing dependence of all industrialized regions on imports from less developed 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" [Chapter III-Minerals and Fuel].

Whether through government action, labor conflicts, sabotage, or civil disturbance, the smooth flow of needed materials will be jeopardized. Although population pressure is obviously not the

only factor involved, these types of frustrations are much less likely under conditions of slow or zero population growth" [Chapter III-Minerals and Fuel].

"Populations with a high proportion of growth. The young people, who are in much higher proportions in many LDCs, are likely to be more volatile, unstable, prone to extremes, alienation and violence than an older population. These young people can more readily be persuaded to attack the legal institutions of the government or real property of the 'establishment,' 'imperialists,' multinational corporations, or other-often foreign-influences blamed for their troubles" [Chapter V, "Implications of Population Pressures for National Security].

"We must take care that our activities should not give the appearance to the LDCs of an industrialized country policy directed against the LDCs. Caution must be taken that in any approaches in this field we support in the LDCs are ones we can support within this country. "Third World" leaders should be in the forefront and obtain the credit for successful programs. In this context it is important to demonstrate to LDC leaders that such family planning programs have worked and can work within a reasonable period of time." [Chapter I, World Demographic Trends]

The report advises, "In these sensitive relations, however, it is important in style as well as substance to avoid the appearance of coercion."