

## **The RAPID Program**

# **How less-developed countries are to be brainwashed into population cuts**

by Joseph Le Grande

*Last month, EIR exposed the workings of the State Department-funded Resources for the Awareness of Population Impacts on Development or RAPID program. Developed by the Futures Group, RAPID attempts to capture the minds of key development planners through the use of a computer-based "soft brainwashing" program. In that way, the Haig State Department hopes to steer developing-sector leaderships away from policies of capital-intensive industrial development and focus them instead on nationally suicidal population-control programs.*

*EIR has obtained a copy of an eyewitness report by an investigative reporter who was given an extensive tour of the RAPID headquarters at the Washington offices of the Futures Group. What follows is his account, accompanied by display charts from a printed booklet that is presented along with the computer display. The charts are similar to what appears on the RAPID screens.*

When I heard that the coordinators of the RAPID project considered themselves "the psychological warfare unit of Global 2000," and were confident that through their computer-based program they could convince the leaders of Third World countries that depopulation of their countries, and not development, was the only way out of their present crisis, I was intrigued.

I wanted to find out how the doctrine of Parson Malthus, which has been disproven and discredited so many times since he elaborated it two centuries ago for his East India Company patrons, could be sold in the 20th century. So I called Malcolm Donald, manager of development studies for the Futures Group, principal contractor for the RAPID project, to arrange a visit.

I went to the office where the RAPID project is coordinated in Washington expecting to find a large, sophisticated operation complete with a bank of giant computers spitting out complex economic projections that would be enough to intimidate all but the most sophisticated computer-trained economic development experts.

Instead I found that the Washington, D.C. office of the Futures Group, at 1029 Vermont Avenue NW, occupied only the second floor in a relatively small build-

ing. I also found that the RAPID program is *not* based on a complex computer analysis.

Instead, it is a mere statistical sleight-of-hand operation. Not at all scientific, the approach is to arrange statistics in such a way as to prove the predetermined conclusion—that development is impossible.

The unstated assumption is that these economies are fixed and nondeveloping, that nuclear technology, infrastructure, and industry cannot and will not be introduced. Indeed, if such a development program were initiated in sparsely populated Africa, it would rapidly be shown that Africa does not *have the population* to sustain such economic growth. Africa is underpopulated!

The computer is only an Apple with a small 48K memory, no bigger than a briefcase; but it is only used as a device to flash the graphs and data on a TV screen, with the idea that it will distract the unsuspecting Third World leader from questioning the assumptions behind the jazzed-up cartoon show of bars, lines, and stock figures.

### **How it works**

"The RAPID projections," Malcolm Donald told me, "are based on three different fertility-level assumptions. A is the present fertility rate, B is a rate of three children per woman, and C is the RAPID goal of two children per woman. We then see what effects these three fertility levels have on from 6 to 12 sectors of the economy in question."

Donald, a rather sloppy, bearded man in his early forties, gave me the RAPID study of Rwanda. The following sectors of the economy were examined from the standpoint of three different fertility rates: land availability, food production, rural employment, rural income, forest resources and energy, labor force and child dependency, new job requirements, gross domestic product and GDP per capita, education, health, and urbanization.

"Our game," Donald pointed out, "is to show the enormity of the difference of the cost between the three projections. We can show how much more it costs to train the doctors or provide the education for a more rapidly growing population.

"The shocking differences between these three levels," Donald added, "is the kind of thing needed to get these leaders to drop their resistance to population-control policies."

Donald was acutely aware that this brainwashing program could be easily discredited, especially given the strong commitment to industrialization on the part of Third World leaders.

"We have to be careful what we say," was the first thing he told me in the interview. "We wouldn't want anything printed," he said as he pulled his legs up under him yoga style, and looked out the window while talking to me, slowly wringing his hands. "That would reflect poorly on Third World leaders. AID [Agency for International Development] is our client, and any bad reactions to what we are doing by Third World leaders would have a bad effect on U.S. population policy."

"Global 2000 is already in a lot of trouble," he added, referring to the Carter administration's report calling for global depopulation.

When I asked why, Donald answered: "A combination of the new administration and big business. Business doesn't want to be told that markets don't exist. Even though we liked to use Global 2000 to add weight to our presentations, it has been suggested to us by AID that we don't talk about Global 2000. If people got suspicious, we could lose our contract."

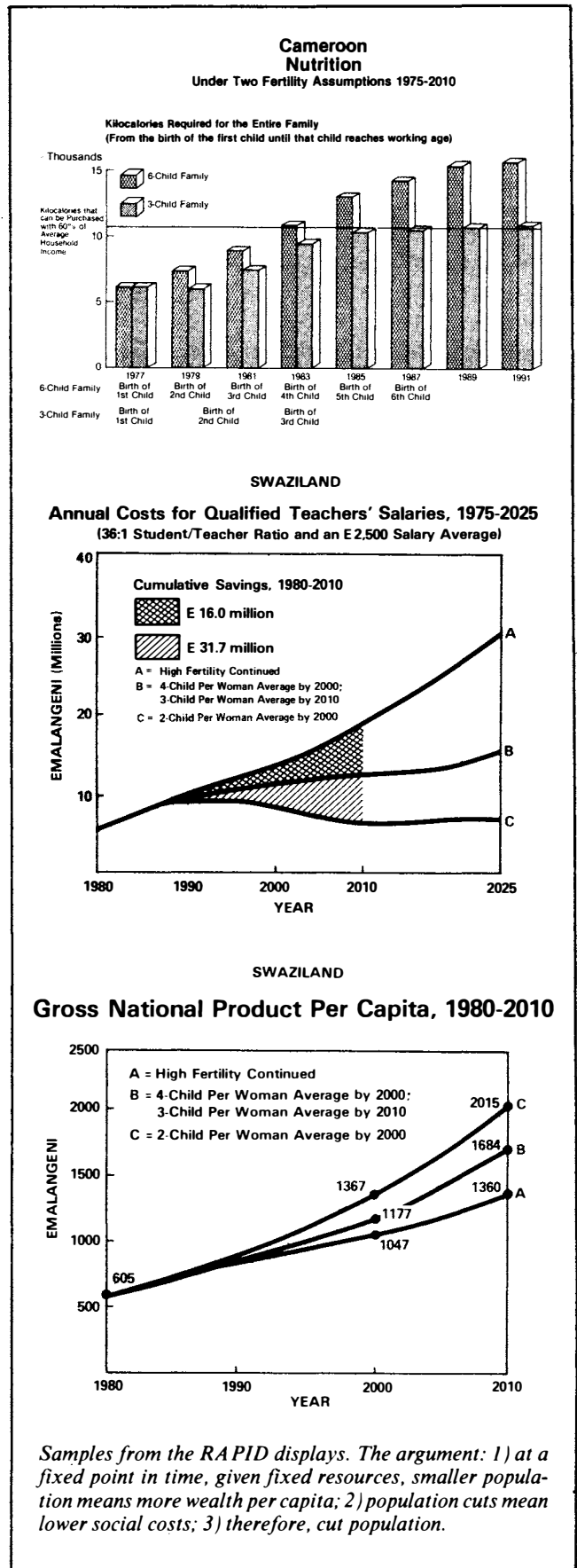
While we were talking Donald received a phone call from Dr. Judith Seltzer of AID, whom he referred to as "my controller."

Donald has had a lot of experience in masking the true nature of his activities. After two years in the Peace Corps from 1962 to 1964, his career has encompassed sociological profiling in Vietnam, as well as directing a State Department population-control program in Tunisia, reportedly the best population program in Africa.

### Brainwashing Third World leaders

Donald then explained the vulnerabilities of Third World leaders that RAPID is ready to play upon. Many of them, says Donald, are not really committed to the idea that economic development will solve all their problems. "They have picked up a few notions here and there from Europe and America, some bad ideas, but they don't really understand them. They see themselves as patriots. They have a gut response to the idea of saving their countries, their people. That's okay. That is what we have to work with. We use RAPID to tell them if they are real patriots, they need a population-oriented program to save their nation." But, "every now and then we run into somebody who wants to argue out the development questions. The idea is to surround these people with others emotionally charged up by the program. That gets the best results.

"For example," explained Donald, "our program was well received in Tanzania. Although the health



minister, a Catholic, tried to tear us apart, he was laughed off by his colleagues.

"Leaders are receptive to our program because it doesn't have an ideology attached," said Donald. Hiding the Malthusian ideology RAPID is based on is thus of the utmost importance.

"The secret of the computer," Donald explained, "is that it is interactive. If a minister doesn't like a certain percentage we are using in one of our assumptions, it can be changed right there, and he thinks that *he* is changing assumptions.

"It is very easy to counter the genocide argument," volunteered Donald. "Take a country like Mali. It has no resources. If people want to make some money, they have to go to the Ivory Coast. Yet despite this situation, the country is pronatalist. We just show them that the additional number of doctors they will have to train, schools and hospitals they will have to build for this growing population at the same time there are no jobs for these people, all this will cost too much, and they will never attain their development goals unless they cut their population."

When RAPID goes into a country, Donald explained, it quickly trains one presenter and programmer from that country, "so they don't get the impression that this is something we are imposing from outside." RAPID tries to avoid the health ministries of countries and instead focuses on the ministries of planning and finance which would carry out the austerity measures that would *enforce* population reduction.

"If we are successful, the first thing that usually happens is that a demographic plank is introduced into the national plan. Of course the problem is that some countries pay attention to their development plans, and others don't, just like companies that abandon their marketing plan when the situation changes."

### Through the RAPID program

At this point, Donald turned me over to one of his assistants who demonstrated how the Apple program works. "We start out first with a slide show," he explained, "to introduce people to the ideas and concepts of demography. Since you already understand the significance of this," he added, "we can skip that part," indicating that this was not the case with Third World leaders.

The RAPID program on the Apple runs like this: when a sector of the economy is called up to the screen, first the coordinates of the graph appear, and then the lines or bars appear on the screen in color, one by one, slowly, accompanied by beeps. In the highest birth-rate categories, the correspondingly higher costs or more serious resource shortages are accompanied by higher-pitched beeps, adding to the effect.

I was first shown some screens from the project on

Egypt. One screen described the number of jobs that would have to be created if unemployment is to be avoided. The graphs that were swept out, accompanied by beeps, showed that the number of jobs that would have to be provided in the future would be fewer if the population grew at the lowest or C rate of two children per woman. The beeps and the graphs had one message: that scarcity predominates, and that the only way to deal with it, in this case provide enough jobs, is to cut population. The beeps and sweeping colored lines and bars drowned out the fact that this conclusion assumes that there is no industrialization possible in Egypt which could increase productivity as well as provide new jobs, better jobs.

A second screen confronts Third World leaders with another kind of scare tactic. Two green squares appear on the screen, each depicting one Egyptian land unit, the *feddan*. A large number of stick figures pop one by one into the square on the left, depicting what the population per feddan will be by some point in the next century. A small number of stick figures pop into the square on the right, depicting a much less crowded situation at the same point in time, if the lowest birth rate is achieved.

The message is that soon the finite amount of land will not support a growing population. The sensational character of the screen again hides the fact that economic development with advanced levels of technology can support larger and larger numbers of people. RAPID's graph again assumed a fixed level of technological production.

Donald's assistant told me that RAPID had had great success in Egypt. "We succeeded in showing the program to most of the Egyptian ministers, as well as Sadat's wife. Then last January we showed it to Sadat himself. Once we accomplished that, RAPID's job was finished. Hopefully there will be subsequent requests for planning assistance." The Futures Group directs such requests to other groups set up for this purpose, such as Battelle and the Research Triangle.

But later, Donald complained of some Africa leaders. "Kenya has the highest birth rate in Africa," he said, "and President Moi says he wants Kenya to start a population program. But there is tremendous resistance, and the effort they are making is only lukewarm. Moi may not mean what he says. We have made two trips to Kenya, a third is slated, and we are still not out of the batter's box.

"There are only four African countries we have not been able to get into at all," said Donald, "Ethiopia, Somalia, Angola, and Mozambique. Then there is the case of Gabon," he said at one point. "They have just the opposite problem. Their fertility rate is way too low. I would like to get in there to help them raise their population. It would show that we're good guys."