

Speeches and messages: 1974 (1 of 2): Western Regional Convention of American Society of Women Accountants

Senator Daniel K. Inouye Papers

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news from

Senator DANIEL K. INOUE

topic:

SPEECH BY SENATOR DANIEL K. INOUE TO WESTERN REGIONAL CONVENTION OF AMERICAN SOCIETY OF WOMEN ACCOUNTANTS, AT SHERATON WAIKIKI HOTEL, HONOLULU.

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Since 1970, something almost unnoticed -- yet basic and universal -- has occurred in the world. Mankind has slipped out of the Era of Plenty into the Era of Scarcity. This change represents the most profound alteration in the society of man since the Renaissance. It affects each and every one of us to some degree today. In the not too distant future, it will dominate the lives of two-thirds of mankind; later, it will overpower the hopes and dreams of four-fifths of the world.

Strangely, very few of us are aware of what has happened. However, these world issues are of such enormous scale that sensible people can no longer ignore them.

United Nations Secretary General Kurt Waldheim stressed this when he recently said, "The pursuit of short-term national interests by any nation or group of nations can no longer provide even a brief reprieve from the inevitable results of the present trends." In an April 15th address before the U. N., Secretary of State Henry Kissinger called it, "the challenge of interdependence." Secretary Kissinger stated, "We are part of a single international economic system," and he somberly challenged the assembly and the world "to come to terms with the fact of our interdependence."

Like a runaway engine with numerous attached cars, there are six major interconnected problems that we must face and somehow master if the collision and tragedy that confront us all are to be avoided. These problems are: poverty, population, food shortages, inflation, energy shortages, and weapons control.

Each inescapable element has its own properties and problems. When they are combined, as they now are rapidly combining, they, like the various elements of a nuclear bomb, may trigger an explosive chain reaction of massive forces -- social, economic, and political. Some are now already quite evident.

Poverty grips more than two-thirds of the world's people. Some of the world's poverty-stricken are here in America, where 19 million adults over the age of 16 years are functionally illiterate and 24 million of our citizens are officially malnourished. However, this represents only a small fraction of the abject and inhumane poverty that exists abroad. While one-third of mankind lives in relative abundance -- and some in superabundance -- the rest of the world's population remains entrapped in a web of hunger, malnutrition, illiteracy, unemployment, and corrosive poverty. The gap between the rich and the poor widens daily in an almost insurmountable chasm.

Last year, average income in developed countries was approximately \$2,400 per capita. The comparable income in the nondeveloped countries was \$180. Within 10 years, the industrialized and developed nations will raise their per capita income by \$1,200 to \$3,600 per person. Three-quarters of the rest of the world will be fortunate to add \$100 each raising their per capita income to \$280. Imagine that: by 1980, the numbers will be \$3,600 to \$280 -- a 13.1 ratio!

Each year, 80 per cent of the increase will go to those countries where per capita income already averages more than \$1,000. These countries contain only one-quarter of the world's population. A mere 6 per cent of the gain will go to countries with per capita incomes averaging \$200 or less -- countries which nevertheless contain more than 60 per cent of the world's people.

There are many types of poverty. Poverty is a relative term. Poverty as experienced in America's Appalachia would represent a reasonably comfortable middle-class existence to the poor of the Sahel or Bangladesh.

The poorest of the poor -- or roughly 40 per cent of the developing countries -- have shared almost no growth and live in conditions of deprivation that fall below any rational definition of human decency. In more than twenty countries, the very poor earn less than \$80 a year or less than 30¢ a day. In India alone, more than 210 million people -- the approximate population of the United States -- live on less than \$40 a year.

Unless governments can reverse the present trend, the income share of the poorest 60 per cent will further decrease while that of the richest 5 per cent will continue to increase. There has been virtually no "trickle down" of resources and income. Here development efforts have almost completely failed.

The population problem is undoubtedly the greatest single obstacle to world economic and social improvement. While it took our planet approximately two million years for the human population to reach three billion, it will require only 35 years at present rates to add an additional three billion people. By the year 2000, the earth's population will increase by more than one billion persons every eight years.

What does this really mean? Let us try to visualize it. If you became a parent today and your child lived into his seventies, he would know a world of approximately 15 billion people. Today's population is just over four billion. Assuming this rate of increase continues, his grandchild would share a world of more than 60 billion. Obviously, some links in the chain of life would break before then.

The United States and other industrialized nations have allocated considerable resources and talent to their own population control problems. At present, the developed world has achieved a stable population with very little numerical growth.

When India announced a year and one half ago that she had achieved a decrease in her growth rate, it was hoped that the populations of less developed countries might be eventually controlled. Now we know that, not only did India not achieve the announced reduction, but her population, like much of the rest of the Third World, is actually hopelessly out of control. By the year 2000, the number of inhabitants of the developed and industrialized countries will scarcely change, but the populations of the developing and less developed nations will at least double. Approximately 20 per cent of the world's population will then live in the developed countries. By the year 2040, this will drop to just 10 per cent and continue to decrease unless we can effect rather massive change in the world.

Of the six international and intranational trends being discussed today, food and food shortages are perhaps the most well known and pathetic.

Last year saw food shortages in India, Sahel, Bangladesh and other areas of the world. That was before the oil crisis. Now there will be far less energy available to run tractors, irrigate marginal land, and produce vital fertilizer. Due to lack of fertilizer alone, it is estimated that India's wheat crop will be reduced by at least one-third this year. Throughout most of Asia, crop production will be down sharply and with a 2 to 3 per cent yearly population increase certain, a huge food deficit threatens.

For weeks, alarming reports have been circulated predicting poor harvests in India, Afghanistan, New Guinea, Kenya, Ethiopia, and other Third World nations. At present, across the Sahel region of North Africa, a full-scale starvation grips entire nations. In spite of massive international humanitarian relief efforts, an ever-increasing number are dying, and unless other methods are utilized, millions more will starve and additional millions will be debilitated and retarded.

In the developing countries, close to one billion persons presently suffer from severe malnutrition or starvation. Twenty to 25 per cent of all children die before their fifth birthday. The life expectancy is 20 to 30 years less than it is here in America. With the developed population now stable and the developing nations rapidly gaining additional inhabitants, this chaotic situation will worsen.

A profound moral and political test awaits the United States and other developed nations on the issue of food.

Recently a well-known nutritionist at Harvard got to the heart of this problem. He stated, "The same amount of food that is feeding 210 million Americans would feed 1.5 billion Chinese on an average Chinese diet."

The older developed nations and numerous newly-developed nations are constantly improving their diets. As the food supply in the world during any given year is relatively finite and fixed, this dietary improvement is often achieved at the expense of marginal diets elsewhere. Americans ate 50 pounds of beef per capita in 1950. In 1973, it was 119 pounds per person. Presently an American consumes 2,200 pounds of grain -- most of it to fatten his animals. A Chinese needs only 400 pounds to live on an average Chinese diet.

Simply averting our attention will not deny the linkage between the level of food production and consumption in the U. S. and other developed nations, and the ever-widening ripple of starvation throughout the world. In order to merely maintain the present inadequate diets, food production must double by the year 2000 to keep up with population increases. At present, world food reserves are down from the 69-day supply in 1970 to less than a 30-day supply in 1974 -- the lowest level since the holocaust of World War II.

While time does not permit me to dwell on it at length in this discussion, the interrelated problems of worldwide inflation and the energy crisis are pertinent. If oil prices, which are now approximately four times 1972 prices, stay at present levels, it will cost the developing countries some \$15 billion more for essential

imports in 1975 than it did in 1974. This increase is equivalent to nearly five times the total net U.S. development assistance in 1972 and almost double the total amount of development assistance for all developing countries from all sources that year.

This year, all nations must face increased oil prices as well as higher prices for essential food, fertilizer, raw materials and/or finished products. The rate of inflation ranged from some 7 per cent to 25 per cent for developed countries this past year. However, the rate was much higher in the nonindustrialized countries where it ranged from 20 per cent to 200 per cent.

Some developing countries will be able to partially offset increased prices and inflation with exports of raw materials. For the poorest 40 countries, there is little relief available. In the near future, they will need at least an additional \$5 billion in aid merely to maintain this stability and survive.

Perhaps the greatest paradox in the entire aid picture centers on weapon development and procurement. For whatever it is worth to America, we are the world's largest supplier of weapons and military material to the developing nations: Planes and advisors to Bolivia, F-14 jets to Iran, tanks to India and Pakistan, carbines, helicopters and transports to the Philippines. The shopping list is endless and the customers read like a list of the Who's Who in the United Nations.

Over the past decade alone, the United States sold or gave away more than \$21 billion in weapons to more than 60 countries. This accounts for more than one-half of the total international trade in arms. Even more unsettling is the fact that our military exports have doubled in the past four years and jumped again this year -- to more than \$5.4 billion.

We supply not only arms and material, but also war technology and advisors. Many thousands of police and military have been trained with U.S. foreign assistance and weapons development encouraged. You may have noticed that a few weeks ago, India, one of the largest and poorest nations on the earth, exploded a nuclear device underground. At a time when her millions are literally starving, India has invested millions of dollars and valuable technology in the preliminary production of a nuclear capability.

Last year, I called for our government to curtail this senseless policy of weapons distribution and sales. I urged at that time that the Administration attempt to bring about a meaningful international agreement on conventional (non-nuclear) arms distribution, especially in the developing world.

Americans are the most generous and humanitarian people in the world. Since World War II, the United States has provided more than \$183 billion to the world in international assistance. In a recent public poll, 84 per cent believed to be in the best interest of the United States to help other countries. Almost 70 per cent favored the United States providing direct and multilateral assistance to the developing world. Yet, foreign aid is the most unpopular program within the Congress and in the nation.

As chairman of the Foreign Operations Subcommittee of the Appropriations Committee, I can assure you that there are many valid reasons that Americans react this way.

Whereas most Americans believe that foreign aid means "helping other countries and people by sending money and food," military items and police training represent a larger percentage of our total foreign aid than does economic and humanitarian assistance.

Our priorities in the way aid is distributed also need reordering. What is the Administration's sense of values -- what is the grasp of the real problems facing humanity -- when, this year, the Administration proposes to spend ten times as much on South Viet Nam with a population of 19 million persons, as on India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh with a total population of 711 million?

Clearly, drastic reforms are called for. Foreign aid, throughout the 1950's and 1960's, was closely associated with our overall foreign policy objectives of gaining political advantage in the Cold War. Today, the overall goals of the foreign assistance programs of the United States must not be primarily to halt the flow of communism and aggression. Detente and improved relations with the Soviet Union and China have removed much of that menace. Today, if our aid is to continue to be supported by Congress and the American people, it must speak to the real social and economic problems found in the less-developed world.

In addition, the entire U.S. assistance apparatus -- which is the most top-heavy and expensive of all governmental agencies -- must reduce its administrative cost and redirect its efforts.

The military component must be taken out of the foreign aid bill. In the past, it was argued that the military aspects helped to justify the economic and humanitarian aspects. I believe this is no longer the case. The world urgency of development -- energy, food, and social -- will easily absorb all the funds that we can make available for assistance. Continuing to pour American tax dollars and

technology into bolstering the police and military forces of more than sixty nations can no longer be justified. In most cases, it compounds -- rather than eases -- the problem. Assistance should and does begin at home. We find ourselves in a rising price spiral, which demands that the expenditures of our tax dollars must be fully justified. Poverty, illiteracy, and hunger still exist within our land and our first priority must be to assist our own citizens.

Whatever funds the United States can make available for foreign assistance must be directed to reach and to assist the poorest people elsewhere in the world -- not the richest, as has too often been the case in the past.

A complete foreign aid reassessment is essential. In the past, aid from rich to poor nations has had only a limited success in fostering development. Given the scope of the problems now forming throughout the world, our aid philosophy and methodology are antiquated and doomed to fail. The dangers of unbalanced economic and social world growth cannot be ignored. The adjustments must begin now.