

For immediate release:
Saturday, July 20, 2002

For further information:
202-626-8820, Legfederal@aol.com

National Right to Life Response to Reports that the Bush Administration Will Enforce Kemp-Kasten Anti-Coercion Law and De-Fund UNFPA, Due to the UNFPA's Support for China's Pervasively Coercive Program

It has been reported in today's *Washington Post* and elsewhere that the Bush Administration within the next few days will announce that it will deny U.S. funding (\$34 million) to the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and redirect those funds to other programs. A spokesman for the National Right to Life Committee (NRLC) today expressed strong approval of this reportedly imminent action.

“The UNFPA is a cheerleader and facilitator for China's birth-quota program, which relies heavily on coerced abortion,” said NRLC Legislative Director Douglas Johnson. **“Top UNFPA officials have been completely cozy with China's birth-quota bosses. For 20 years, top UNFPA leaders have consistently praised China's program and attacked its critics.”**

The Bush Administration reportedly has determined that the UNFPA remains in violation of the Kemp-Kasten anti-coercion law. The amendment prohibits giving U.S. “population assistance” funds to “any organization or program which, as determined by the President of the United States, supports or participates in the management of a program of coercive abortion or involuntary sterilization.”

The Kemp-Kasten Amendment was originally enacted in 1985 in response to the UNFPA's extensive involvement in China's coercive program. In 1985, the Reagan Administration determined that UNFPA was in violation of the law. That determination was challenged in a federal lawsuit by the Population Institute, a U.S. advocacy group receiving substantial funding from the UNFPA. In 1986, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia upheld the cutoff. In a ruling written for a unanimous three-judge panel, Judge Abner Mikva upheld the Reagan Administration determination that “the UNFPA's activities in China aid the aspects of China's program that Congress condemned.”

The Clinton Administration essentially refused to enforce the Kemp-Kasten anti-coercion law. Nevertheless, the law has been renewed each year by Congress, and it flatly prohibits funding of any organization that either (1) “supports” or (2) “participates in the management of” a program of coercive abortion or involuntary sterilization. This week, in response to reports that the Bush Administration will enforce the law, Senator Patrick Leahy (D-Vt.) added language to the draft foreign aid appropriations bill that if enacted would gut the Kemp-Kasten law.

NATIONAL RIGHT TO LIFE ON U.N.-CHINA PROGRAM, 2

“In China, government officials continue to subject women and their families to crushing fines and employment sanctions, and even destroy their homes, for becoming pregnant without government permission,” said NRLC’s Johnson. “U.S. law prohibits funding an agency that in any way participates in such a coercive program.”

For two decades, top UNFPA officials have vigorously defended China’s program against its critics, and have held China’s program up as a model for other developing nations. For example, UNFPA Executive Director Nafis Sadik told a congressional briefing on May 24, 1989, “The UNFPA firmly believes, and so does the government of the People’s Republic of China, that their program is a totally voluntary program.” (For factsheets containing numerous similar examples, contact NRLC at Legfederal@aol.com or 202-626-8820.) Currently, the official website of China’s State Family Planning Commission features a report on an award presented earlier this year to Sadik, who headed the UNFPA from 1987 to 2000. (See www.sfpc.gov.cn/EN/enews20020114-2.htm)

Currently UNFPA prefers to focus attention on 32 Chinese counties (out of about 2,800) in which the UNFPA says that China’s government “has agreed to lift” birth quotas. But last year a private team of investigators associated with the Population Research Institute (PRI) traveled in one of these counties -- without government officials witnessing their interviews -- and documented that local officials were employing destruction of homes, incarceration of family members, and other forms of coercive pressure on women who were pregnant outside of the quota system.

This evidence and other testimony regarding systematic coercion in China was presented at a hearing of the House International Relations Committee on October 17, 2001, posted at www.house.gov/international_relations/fullhear.htm (See especially www.house.gov/international_relations/guy1017.htm)

Moreover, a report by three British members of Parliament who traveled to China in April found that even in the 34 counties “where UNFPA insists that only voluntarism exists,” Chinese citizens “still have to pay a ‘social compensation’ payment if they have more than one or two children. . . . Chinese officials confirmed that the compensation payment is set at a level, which most families would find extremely difficult to pay. It therefore acts as a pretty powerful incentive to conform. This is a form of coercion.” (The British team recommended continued funding of the UNFPA by the United Kingdom, but their observations provide additional evidence that the Kemp-Kasten Amendment would be violated by U.S. funding of the UNFPA.)

NRLC takes no position on federal funding of contraceptive services. Nor does NRLC take any position on what the funding level for the population assistance program should be -- so long as President Bush’s “Mexico City Policy” and the Kemp-Kasten Amendment remain in effect. NRLC is strongly opposed to any weakening of these two policies, which would result in resumption of U.S. taxpayer support for organizations which promote abortion and even programs of coercive abortion.

UNFPA

PRAISES CHINA'S ONE-CHILD POLICY

"For all the bad press, China has achieved the impossible," says Sven Burmester, the United Nations Population Fund representative in Beijing. "The country has solved its population problem."

—Time-Asia, August 29, 2001

<http://www.time.com/time/asia/news/magazine/0,9754,168514,00.html>

"China has had the most successful family planning policy in the history of mankind in terms of quantity and with that, China has done mankind a favour," United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) representative Sven Burmester said last week.

10/11/99 Agence France-Press

"In strictly quantitative terms, it was the most successful family- planning policy ever developed," said Sven Burmester, the UN Population Fund representative in Beijing. "My own view is that there is a generation of Chinese who sacrificed themselves for the benefit of society and they should be recognized for that."

— Chicago Tribune Monday, May 1, 2000

"I have had the honor of being associated with China's reproductive health and family planning programme for more than two decades. I was instrumental in initiating UNFPA's cooperation with China in 1979."

"...I also feel proud that UNFPA made the wise decision to resist external pressures and continued its fruitful cooperation with China."

(Nafis Sadik, UNFPA Executive Director 1987- 2000, accepting the "International Cooperation Honorary Prize" from the Chinese Government on January 12, 2002.)

—Official State Family Planning Commission
of China web site, January 12, 2002
<http://www.sfpc.gov.cn/EN/enews20020114-2.htm>