

Human Rights Stood on Its Head

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On January 23, President Barack Obama rescinded the Mexico City Policy that barred federal funds from being used to promote or perform abortions overseas. He was immediately congratulated by every pro-abortion organization in the nation.

The next day he won their plaudits again when he said that “It is time that we end the politicization of this issue. In the coming weeks, my Administration will initiate a fresh conversation on family planning, working to find areas of common ground to best meet the needs of women and families at home and around the world.” He ended by saying that “I look forward to working with Congress to restore U.S. financial support for the U.N. Population Fund.”

In other words, Obama intends to accomplish his goal of ending the politicization of abortion by spending federal dollars to support a pro-abortion agency of the U.N., namely the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). This begs the question: If President George W. Bush was guilty of politicizing abortion by cutting off federal aid to UNFPA—this is exactly what the pro-abortion industry accused Bush of doing—then why is Obama not similarly guilty for reinstating the funds? Apparently, only those opposed to abortion are guilty of politicizing the issue; those in favor of it bring people together.

UNFPA claims that it is not pro-abortion. It says that it merely supports “reproductive rights,” by which it means “the right to decide the number, timing and spacing of children,” etc. It does not rule out any means to accomplish this end.

Which means it has absolutely no problem with abortion. More than that, it works tirelessly to work with pro-abortion groups to limit births, and nowhere is it more active than in poor, non-white nations around the world.

No one knows what a fraud UNFPA is better than Steve Mosher, president of the Population Research Institute. A good Catholic, Mosher says that despite this U.N. agency's alleged concern for "safe" abortions, it is "just a euphemism for legal abortion." Indeed, he argues that "The United Nations Population Fund would like to see abortion legalized worldwide, including in the 114 countries where there are significant restrictions on abortion, and it works to that end." He emphasizes that "this is an organization that is devoted to aborting and sterilizing and contracepting as many women as possible."

One way UNFPA accomplishes its goals is to manipulate public opinion by selling the idea that it works well with some segments of the Catholic community. More accurately, it works well with a few stray dissidents, and it works very well with anti-Catholic front groups.

Thoraya Obaid, the executive director of UNFPA, has admitted that "The Catholic Church can only discuss abstinence, but we have some relationships with a few priests who will refer women for other family planning options. This is what I have done in Latin America." In Brazil, for example, the pro-abortion group works with "certain progressive branches" of the Catholic Church.

The so-called progressive Catholics that UNFPA teams up with are none other than the Catholic bashers at Catholics for Choice (previously Catholics for a Free Choice). Frances Kissling, who was president of the letterhead group for decades, was the darling of UNFPA during Dr. Nafis Sadik's reign as its executive director. Sadik said it all when she explained that "I was very happy to find in Frances Kissling

an ally who not only shared my passion for sexual and reproductive health and rights but had a passion of her own, for her church and its mission.” Kissling once admitted that it was her mission to “overthrow the Catholic Church.”

No wonder the pro-abortion enthusiasts at UNFPA loved Kissling—she bailed them out when they were in hot water with the U.S. State Department for cooperating with the Communist Chinese government’s “one child” policy.

Following a 2002 State Department investigation of UNFPA’s ties to China’s pro-abortion policies, Secretary of State Colin Powell wrote, “I determined that UNFPA’s support of, and involvement in, China’s population-planning activities allowed the Chinese government to implement more effectively its program of coercive abortion.” It was for reasons like these that the Bush administration denied U.S. funding of UNFPA, monies that Obama wants to reinstate.

Kissling’s role in whitewashing China’s monstrous anti-human rights policies was to give it a clean bill of health when she and other “religious leaders” visited China in 2003. “We believe that UNFPA has been unequivocally committed to providing informed and voluntary family planning,” she offered.

Predictably, Kissling was dutifully congratulated by Sadik’s successor, Ms. Obaid: “I am extremely grateful that the religious leaders who visited China have affirmed that UNFPA is promoting voluntary choice in the Chinese family planning program and is not involved in any way with coercive practices.” Perhaps she doesn’t think that having the government track the menstrual cycle of women isn’t coercive, or the practice of ordering them to have an abortion.

One scholar who wasn’t fooled by this was the late Julian Simon, a professor of population economics at the University of Maryland. Here is how he described what was going on in

China: "Its 'family planning' one-child policy is pure coercion. It includes forcing IUDs into the wombs of 100 million women against their will; mandatory X-rays every three months to insure that the IUDs have not been removed, causing who knows what genetic damage; coercion to abort if women get pregnant anyway, and economic punishment if couples evade the abortionist."

Beijing's one-child policy began in 1979, with support from UNFPA: it gave China \$50 million over the first five years of the program. According to Mosher, the policy led to widespread female infanticide, something which was once practiced in poor areas of China. "But when the one-child policy came into effect we began to see in the wealthy areas of China," he says, "what had never been done before in history—the killing of little girls."

This imbalance, in turn, led to a massive wave of human trafficking: in 2005, an estimated 800,000 people—80 percent of whom were women—were being trafficked from across China's borders. Somewhere in the neighborhood of 350 million girls are now said to be missing from the Chinese population. And yet UNFPA—which is heavily staffed by former Planned Parenthood workers—has never objected to any of this.

UNFPA concentrates heavily in places like Vietnam, Nigeria and Peru, promoting policies similar to those in China. When the genocidal maniac from Serbia, Slobodan Milosevic, wanted to tame his people, he invited UNFPA to help reduce the population of Kosovo; Milosevic said Kosovar women were "baby machines" that needed to be stopped. UNFPA did not disappoint him—it responded with a huge contraception and abortion campaign.

It is one thing for UNFPA to act irresponsibly, quite another to tap American taxpayers for money to support its agenda. Moreover, UNFPA gets a boat-load of cash from the establishment. For instance, John D. Rockefeller III, the

nation's foremost population control guru, was responsible for getting UNFPA off the ground in 1969. And today it is lavishly funded by the likes of Microsoft billionaire Bill Gates and Wall Street tycoon Warren Buffett (he is also a generous contributor to Catholics for Choice). Yet Obama says this isn't enough, even in a recession.

The Obama supporters are trying to cast this issue as a matter of human rights. They're right about that, but only in a perverse way. Women's rights are at stake, but it is not their right to family planning that is being jeopardized, it's their right to be free from government agents seeking to police their private behavior. It's also their right to be free from punitive policies that victimize them for wanting to expand their family. And it's the right of children to be born—a right UNFPA never addresses.

No one can improve on what Pope Benedict XVI said on December 8, 2008: "Poverty is often considered a consequence of demographic change. For this reason, there are international campaigns afoot to reduce birthrates, sometimes using methods that respect neither the dignity of the woman, nor the right of parents to choose responsibly how many children to have; graver still, these methods often fail to respect even the right to life. The extermination of millions of unborn children, in the name of the fight against poverty, actually constitutes the destruction of the poorest of human beings."

The pope's indictment applies perfectly to UNFPA. In the name of women's rights, it undercuts women. In the name of eradicating poverty, it eradicates the poor. If this wasn't bad enough, those who support UNFPA often seek to malign Catholicism.

In the mid-1990s, speaking of the Catholic Church, Professor Julian Simon wrote that it is "up against a deep-rooted anti-Catholicism that is triggered by the population issue and distorts the thinking of even the clearest-minded people."

This was quite a statement, especially coming from a Jew. By the way, not long before he passed away, Simon called me to say how much he appreciated the work of the Catholic League. He said that while he did not want to become a member, he wanted to make a \$100 donation. We could certainly use his insights, and his courage, today.

Since Simon wrote those words, nothing has changed. What fires the population crowd is hatred of Catholicism. They hate the Church's teachings on sexual ethics, preferring a full-blown liberationist agenda where everything goes. They also want to limit the number and type of persons who make their way to the U.S., having grave reservations about the influx of Catholic Latinos.

The pro-abortion forces have been galvanized the likes of which we haven't seen since the Clinton administration. This does not bode well: If the Freedom of Choice Act that threatens Catholic doctors and hospitals ever makes its way through the Congress, Obama has pledged to sign it. Meanwhile, we can expect to see more executive orders that restrict abortion overturned, and more abortion-happy judges appointed to the federal bench.

It is all so sick. At the same time that the world's most dangerous terrorists are being bestowed with new rights, innocent children are losing the few they once had. Thus has human rights been stood on its head.