

Submission to the Joint Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defense and Trade
Parliament of Australia
Inquiry on "The Link Between Aid and Human Rights"

Submittee:

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Human Rights and Foreign Aid for Population Control in China

Does the assistance provided by foreign governments and non-government agencies to China's family planning program serve the cause of humanrights and the purposes of human welfare or does it encourage the Chinese government in the belief, up to now evidently well-founded, that it can violate the human right of reproductive freedom flagrantly and on a grand scale without being called seriously to account? Organizations involved in delivering assistance to the Chinese program would probably maintain that it does more good than harm, but of course they have an interest in continuing and, if possible, expanding the scope of their operations. As parties at interest, their assessments of the consequences of their activities in China may be somewhat less than wholly objective. In fact, such organizations have in the past often followed what is probably a nearly universal bureaucratic practice of exaggerating success and suppressing bad news.

For many years the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) denied that the Chinese family planning program was coercive and that implementation at the local level was anything but voluntary. Both agencies exhibited a conspicuous blindness as evidence of coercion in the program was mounting. Both rushed to embrace the program during peak periods of coercive activity--the UNFPA in 1979 as China was introducing and rigorously enforcing the one-child policy and the IPPF in 1983 as compulsory birth control surgeries in China soared to their all-time peak.

In public statements, the representatives of these agencies denied that the Chinese program was coercive, repeated the deceptive official cover stories issued by Beijing, and praised the program lavishly. In the early 1990s, when the evidence of coercion in the program became so massive that denial was no longer possible, both the UNFPA and the IPPF adopted a new ploy: they admitted that the Chinese program was coercive but argued that they must continue their involvement in order to exert a moderating influence on it! However little moderating occurred, and what there was due mostly to the progressive disintegration of political control in China due to the spread of corruption within the administrative system and its permeation of Chinese society in general. What the UNFPA and the IPPF (and other agencies that had embraced the Chinese family planning effort) had demonstrated was that they were not much concerned about human rights violations in the Chinese program except for the potential threat to their sources of funding and that they would deny or conceal the inhumanity of the program as long as possible. In their public statements they praised the program lavishly and said nothing about the brutal measures used to implement it.

In 1981, the then executive director of the UNFPA, Raphael Salas, commended the program as "a superb example of integrating population programs with the goals of national development." In March 1983, a United Nations committee selected by the UNFPA and advised by Salas chose Qian Xinzong, the Minister-in-Charge of China's State Family Planning Commission (SFPC), who was directing the 1983 crash surgery drive, to receive one of the first two United Nations annual population awards. (The other went to Indira Gandhi whose government had fallen in 1977 in part because of its unpopular compulsory sterilization program.) One of the five members of an advisory group of scholars chosen to assist the awards committee, the Nobel laureate economist Prof. Theodore W. Schultz of the University of Chicago, denounced the decision as a "travesty" and demanded that his name be removed from any materials relating to the awards. They were nevertheless formally conferred on the two recipients in New York in September 1983.

In April 1983, IPPF officials visiting China said that China's program had succeeded because "the masses have an understanding of family planning" and that it was "the people's own choice." They also said that China's population policies were consistent with the goals of the IPPF and invited the Chinese Family Planning Association (CFPA), already an associate member of the IPPF, to become a full member. In May 1983 the UNFPA deputy in Beijing reportedly said that China's one-child policy was "the only choice for a country with such a large population." In June he said that China's program had been approved by the people who saw it as in their interests and practiced family planning willingly. In April 1984, Salas reportedly denied that the UNFPA had any evidence of "abuses" in the Chinese program.

In February 1985, in a "briefing note" submitted to the U. S. Agency for International Development, the UNFPA claimed that the Chinese government advocates but does not require compliance with the one-child limit, that acceptance of the limit "can only be on a voluntary basis," and that the government had repeatedly indicated to the people of China that "coercion is under no circumstances permitted." In April 1985, in an article in the UNFPA house journal "Populi," Salas insisted that the work of the UNFPA was guided by three principles: first, respect for national sovereignty; second, that individuals [be permitted] to determine freely and responsibly the number and spacing of their children; and third, that population goals and policies be integral with plans for socioeconomic development. But Salas made it clear that "national sovereignty" took precedence over all other considerations:

"Sovereignty meant that countries are and must remain free to decide on their own attitudes and responses to questions of population. The United Nations system is not equipped, either by law or by practice, to go behind this principle and judge the moral acceptability of programmes. ...The United Nations system is bound to accept the good faith of Governments."

Thus Salas disclaimed any responsibility for ascertaining whether or not, despite its public claims, a client government was violating the United Nations' second principle, the principle of reproductive freedom, by implementing a coercive family planning program, let alone whether in fact its population program was integrated with its national development plans. The first principle, as defined by Salas, swallowed the other two! So far as reproductive freedom was concerned, Salas went on to make clear that this was no concern of the United Nations: "...The relationship of individual freedom of choice to the needs of society as a whole is a matter for each country to decide." The Chinese government had by then written family planning into its revised constitution as a citizen's "duty" and in December 1982 had adopted as national policy the three requirements that women with one child have an IUD inserted, one spouse of couples with two or more children be sterilized, and all pregnancies not approved by local family planning authorities be aborted. So much for reproductive freedom!

Moreover, Salas' assurances that the United Nations would believe what member governments told it had also assured the Chinese that the false claims it had been issuing for some time that its family planning program was "voluntary with state guidance" would be accepted at face value regardless of contrary evidence. Thereafter, UNFPA representatives continued their already established practice of repeating and pretending to believe the official cover story.

In fact, they even carried the story back to Beijing! In April 1985, the "People's Daily," the mouthpiece of the Party Central Committee and China's most authoritative newspaper, reported that at a reception in the Zhongnanhai Salas told Chinese Premier Zhao Ziyang that "China's family planning policy is established on the basis of voluntary acceptance by the people and is therefore accepted by the people" and added that "my colleagues and I come to visit at this time to reaffirm our support of China in the field of population activities. China should feel proud of the achievements made in her family planning program."

Shortly before his death in 1986, Salas told a gathering in Washington that the Chinese family planning program was "within their cultural norms... not at all coercive." How he had made that determination after declaring that the United Nations was "not equipped to judge the moral acceptability of programs" he did not make clear. Certainly he had not correctly assessed the "cultural norms" of the masses of the Chinese people, the majority of whom have resented and resisted the one child policy since its inception, as many domestically published Chinese sources have openly admitted. Salas must have been referring to the "cultural norms" of the Party Central Committee!

As UNFPA support for the Chinese program continued, so did its statements in defense of the program. In 1987 the UNFPA representative in Beijing was quoted as saying that "the [Chinese] government has shown its full commitment to a family planning program that has been internationally acknowledged as one of the most successful efforts in the world today." In April 1989 the UNFPA deputy in Beijing said that China's family planning program was "the most successful in the world" and that U. S. charges of coercion in the Chinese program were "groundless." Similar praise for the program was issued that same month by two UNFPA deputy executive directors. In May, Nafis Sadik, who had replaced Salas as UNFPA executive director in 1986, said in a speech in the Cannon House Office Building in Washington that "the UNFPA firmly believes, and so does the government of the People's Republic of China, that their program is a totally voluntary program." In October 1989 the next UNFPA deputy in Beijing said that "In the past ten years China has succeeded more than any other country in the world in limiting fertility and rapid population growth" and added that "if it were not for China's family planning success the world population would have reached five billion in 1985 instead of 1987." In November on a national television program Sadik repeated her claim that the Chinese program was "totally voluntary" and added that in China there was "no such thing as, you know, a license to have a birth, and so on." By that time there had been many media reports in foreign media of the universal requirement that couples in China obtain an official birth permission slip before getting pregnant. That Sadik could have been unaware of this policy is difficult to believe.

In September 1990 still another UNFPA deputy in Beijing was quoted by XINHUA as saying that "China's family planning program is the most successful such effort in the world." In April 1991, Sadik gave an interview to XINHUA, the Chinese official news agency, which the reporter summarized as follows:

"China has every reason to feel proud of and pleased with its remarkable achievements made in its family planning policy and control of its population growth over the past 10 years. ... "Around 10

years ago China knew next to nothing about the UNFPA and birth control. Now the country could offer its experiences and special experts to help other countries. 'China made some outstanding achievements in a very short time and fulfilled its commitment to the world,' Sadik stressed. ... "She said that what impressed her most is China's frank and sincere attitude toward its population problems, its eagerness to solve those problems by learning from other countries' experiences, and its desire to cooperate with the UNFPA. ... 'The UNFPA is going to employ some of [China's demographers] to work in other countries and popularize China's experiences in population growth control and family planning,' Sadik said. ... "Sadik told XINHUA that in the next cooperation program the UNFPA is going to increase its free aid to China in order to help China solve its population problems and spread its experiences in working toward world development and progress."

In June 1991 the UNFPA country director in China, Stirling Scruggs, insisted that his agency closely monitors all countries that accept UNFPA assistance, adding that "The issue of coercion is exaggerated." This statement happened to coincide with a new crackdown on family planning ordered by the central authorities as of May 12, 1991 under the title "Decision of the Party Central Committee, State Council on Stepping Up Family Planning Work, Strictly Controlling Population Growth." Among other things the new policy document said that "At present it is necessary to resolutely implement existing policies without any wavering, loosening, or changes in order to preserve the stability and continuity of the policies... It is necessary resolutely to correct laxity in family planning work in certain regions and to strictly prohibit the indiscriminate granting of permissions for more childbirths and [changing] of family planning targets" Presently reports of extremely coercive measures began to appear in foreign newspapers.

An article in the "New York Times" in May 1993 indicated that the UNFPA had suffered a change of heart. The agency was said to have been alarmed by the reports of a harsh crackdown in the Chinese countryside and was considering withdrawing from China. It had been negotiating a new project for China ostensibly to show the Chinese authorities that fertility reduction could be accomplished by a voluntary family planning program (an implicit admission that the existing Chinese program was not, as Sadik had repeatedly claimed, "totally voluntary"), but the Chinese authorities refused to exempt the experimental units from compulsory limits and targets. For a time, apparently, the UNFPA dropped the project, but it was finally approved early in 1998, by which time the Chinese authorities had allegedly agreed to impose no targets on the 32 counties participating in the experiment. It was at this point that the UNFPA began to claim that it was making great progress in persuading the Chinese authorities to substitute voluntary for coercive approaches.

In Chinese domestic media, however, the UNFPA experiment with "voluntary" family planning was never mentioned. The UNFPA also had little to say in public about its new program. Neither side seemed to want to draw attention to the project, no doubt for rather different reasons, but what they were can only be surmised.

In any case, after a silence of several years during the apparently tense negotiations over the project, UN spokespersons resumed their complimentary statements about the Chinese program. In October 1999 UNFPA representative Sven Burmeister declared that "China has had the most successful family planning policy in the history of mankind in terms of quality and with that, China has done mankind a favor." In the same month the Beijing English language newspaper "China Daily" quoted UNFPA Deputy Executive Director Kerstin Trone as saying that "China has made remarkable progress during the past decades in improving the health and quality of life of its people" and added that the UNFPA was proud to be associated with China's population program.

For the Chinese leadership, the warm endorsements from the UNFPA and other foreign sources, which were duly quoted in the Chinese media, served two important purposes. First, they helped to provide cover for the coercion in the Chinese family planning program by seeming to confirm the disingenuous official propaganda claims that the program was voluntary. Second, they were useful in convincing the Chinese people that most of the rest of the world tacitly approved the coercive measures used in the Chinese program and had no sympathy for the sufferings of the people victimized by them.

In 1983, Qian Xinzong said that his UN population award was "a symbol of UN support and encouragement for China's family planning program, and a Chinese health journal said that "The fact that Qian Xinzong has won the population award indicates that the international community supports and approves of China's family planning program." In July 1985 the "People's Daily" said that "Everyone who has looked into China's actual conditions seriously and with an unbiased attitude gives an affirmative assessment of the tremendous achievements in China's family planning work." In 1987 a leading Chinese advocate of population control, Ma Bin, acknowledged the encouragement and funds provided by the UNFPA and the IPPF and the praise for the program by other foreign agencies, but he worried that it was all much too complimentary and might cause birth control activists in China to become "giddy with flattery" and relax their efforts. In April 1989 a Chinese spokesman noted with satisfaction that "China's family planning program has received the understanding and support of many countries, international organizations, and individuals." In October 1989, Peng Peiyun, then Minister-in-Charge of the SFPC, said that "Although some foreign governments and individuals have held opposing views on China's family planning, many other countries and people have shown support for it. ... During the past few years over 20 foreign delegations... have agreed that the Chinese government has 'foresight and sagacity' and that 'history will prove [the policy's] validity'."

When the International Union for the Scientific Study of Population (IUSSP), the international professional association of demographers, decided to hold its 1997 meetings in Beijing, family planning minister Peng Peiyun, who was chosen to chair the organizing committee, said that the IUSSP's decision to hold its meetings in China showed that the Chinese efforts at population control had won the "recognition" of the international community. In October 1997 XINHUA stated that the Chinese Family Planning Association (CFPA) has received 12 million US dollars from a dozen international governments and non-government organizations in the previous 13 years, including support from the IPPF and the Ford Foundation. In November 1998, XINHUA noted that former Norwegian prime minister Gro Harlem Brundtland, who had just been named director general of the World Health Organization (WHO), which has also been a supporter of the Chinese family planning program, made China the first country she visited after assuming her new office. Referring to China's one-child policy, Brundtland reportedly said that China had set an example for other developing countries by controlling population growth. In August 1999 XINHUA pointed out that China's population policies had received much support and encouragement from "international society." Since the 1980s, it said, the UNFPA had allocated nearly 200 million US dollars for projects in China. In November 2000 a member of China's State Council told an international family planning conference that "the Chinese government highly appreciates the support of all its partners" in the population control effort.

Indeed it should. The Chinese program has encountered strong opposition from the people of China since its inception, opposition that is still continuing, and it has been very helpful to the central authorities to be able to point to the approval of prestigious foreign agencies and foreign governments to silence domestic opposition. Because of the opposition, Chinese government

leaders were obliged to keep up the pressure on leaders and the provincial and lower levels to sustain their efforts. Central injunctions often contained thinly veiled invitations to use coercive measures in order to meet population control targets. In 1981 Chen Muhua, then the head of the family planning "leading group" under the State Council, predecessor to the SFPC, reportedly quoted Deng Xiaoping as saying, "In order to reduce the population use whatever means you must, but do it!" In an apparent allusion to past accusations of coercion against the local cadres, Chen added, "With the support of the Party Central Committee, you should have nothing to fear." In 1983 then Premier Zhao Ziyang told family planning workers to "prevent additional births by all means." In a speech in Wuhan in April 1991 then SFPC Minister Peng said:

"The 1990s is a crucial decade in our country for controlling population growth. We need powerful measures. It is necessary for the whole Party to take immediate action to mobilize the entire people."

In July 1991 the People's Daily urged local authorities to "adopt all relevant means which have proven to be effective in our practice over past years." That these demands were to be taken seriously was soon apparent in provincial family planning dispatches. An example is a June 7, 1991 radio broadcast from Qinghai Province, which contains the following injunction in characteristically tough but abstract language:

"In accordance with the instructions issued by the Communist Party of China Central Committee and the State Council, we should be greatly determined to take forceful measures to fulfill the targets of population control in the coming 10 years and the Eighth Five-Year Plan period."

The dispatch explicitly states that the determination to take "forceful measures" is in accordance with central instructions calling for tighter supervision of family planning work at all levels and strict observance of procedures, rules, and regulations. When the central authorities issue injunctions such as these and do not include warnings to avoid coercion, the lower levels know what is expected of them!

In March 1994, Peng Peiyun indicated that the use of coercion was getting results. In a speech she reportedly said that

"...Since there was a big gap between the state family planning policy and the desire for having children by farmers, the policy on family planning in the country was being carried out mainly through powerful executive measures and if there were any relaxation in this sector, the birth rate would soon [rise again]."

Implicit in this quotation is an admission that the practice of birth control in China is not voluntary and that without the "powerful executive measures" compliance with the policies would be significantly lower than it is.

Sometimes published sources in China admit quite openly that the Chinese family planning program is coercive. In April 1993 a national law journal article deplored the fact that because of the lack of an explicit national law legalizing forcible means, "some forcible measures which could have become legal have become illegal. ...Meanwhile, it is impossible to totally avoid using forcible measures in practice." The article adds:

"In addition to ordinary economic and administrative sanctions, it is also necessary to have legal rules providing for relevant forcible, restrictive measures to deal with the situation of being

pregnant and preparing to give birth after having had two births, such as rules which explicitly provide for forcible termination of pregnancy, forcible induced abortion, or induced abortion. It is necessary to forcibly sterilize those couples who have failed to be sterilized or use contraceptive measures after having each had two births. Forcible and restrictive measures constitute an issue which critically affects whether family planning work can be effectively carried out. If there are no relevant legal rules, then it would be difficult to eliminate the stubborn problems in family planning work. Therefore there should be no hesitancy on this issue."

In June 1993 an article in the principal national family planning journal admitted that:

"So far the reduction in China's rural fertility rate has been the result of external constraints; that is, the mechanism involved has been a coercion-based reduction mechanism. Consequently, there is the possibility that the rural fertility rate can rise again when there are externally provided opportunities."

In September 1994, the two authors of an article in China's leading demographic journal, "Demographic Research," said:

"It cannot be denied that population control in China is a control model guided by administrative coercion. This type of control in the beginning is based on countering the forces against control. It can be said that the stronger the coercion, the stronger the counter resilience. Thus, the current decline in fertility in China is still not stable. ...

"As everyone knows, the mechanism for decline in China's fertility rate is based mainly on coercion. ...The decline in the fertility rates of most of rural China was accomplished through widespread restrictive conditions dominated by coercion... Just as mentioned above, the low fertility rates currently achieved are still quite unstable."

In February 1995 the SFPC observed in its "Outline" of family planning work from 1995 to 2000 that "the level of births [in China] is still unstable." Jiang Zemin repeated that admission in March 1995, and in December 1998 the current SFPC Minister, Zhang Weiqing, repeated his predecessor's warning that "there is still a gap between state policy and the wishes of some rural residents regarding childbearing..." In September 2000, an article in the "People's Daily" repeated that

"...There are still many unstable factors behind this low birth rate. We must clearly understand that any unfavorable influences, such as flaws in policy, errors in our work, or changes in the external environment, could cause the birth rate to rise again and result in serious problems."

To overcome the popular opposition, the central authorities have repeatedly called for the use of "administrative, legal, educational, and economic means" to enforce compliance with birth control demands and have called on local leaders to "mobilize the masses" to practice birth control. "Economic means" refers to the use of heavy fines for violators; "legal means" refers to the enforcement of the provincial and local family planning regulations; "educational means" is a reference to promotional propaganda; "administrative means" is a purposefully vague allusion to locally devised expedients that include coercive measures. "Mobilization" covers tactics that involve the use of public security police and "activists" to force people to take actions they would not undertake of their own volition. In December 1998, Jiang Chunyun, the newly chosen chairman of the CFPA, called upon his organization to help "mobilize the masses" for family planning and said that the local family planning departments should "use administrative, legal, and economic means to restrict the people's childbearing behavior according to the plan..." At a

national meeting convened by the Party Central Committee in March 1999, Chinese president and Party chairman Jiang Zemin said

"Family Planning and population control constitute arduous work involving many aspects. Instead of putting a brake on the work, we must strengthen it. We should further improve our population macro-control, family planning management... Education, legal, economic, and administrative measures should be adopted."

Jiang's instructions were repeated by the current SFPC minister, Zhang Weiqing, in December 1999.

In September 1999 the SFPC announced that it was drafting a national family planning law to "tighten the rule of law in carrying out family planning and strengthen mass supervision over law enforcement in the next decade." Although the article carrying the announcement talks of "protecting the legal rights of citizens," the main emphasis is on reinforcing central control over local implementation of family planning requirements. The article predicts that by 2015 the people of reproductive age in China "would follow the State family planning policy voluntarily," another implicit admission that their compliance now is not voluntary, hence the need for more legal muscle!

Since then, the Chinese Communist Party Central Committee and the State Council issued a new major policy document approved on March 2, 2000 setting the goals for the promotion of family planning work in the next ten years. The national birth rate is to be "stabilized" at its present low level. By the year 2010 the national total population must be kept under 1.4 billion and the national birth rate may not exceed 15 per thousand population. Zero population growth is to be attained by mid-century, and the population is to decline thereafter. This is the first time these objectives have been explicitly embraced in a published policy document. The whole of Chinese society is to be "mobilized" to accomplish these goals. The document reaffirms that "It is necessary to take legal, educational, economic, and administrative measures to deal with the population issue in a comprehensive manner." Coercion in China's family planning program is to continue.

Meanwhile, the Chinese central authorities are searching for new ways to enforce the penalties they impose on local leaders at all levels who fail to meet the state-mandated population control targets. Local dispatches tell of the punishment of local officials who fail to enforce family planning rules, and even more stringent penalties on those officials who themselves have unauthorized children or who take bribes in exchange for allowing others to have unauthorized children. The system for punishing officials who neglect enforcement of birth control requirements, known as the "target management responsibility system," is not new, but new efforts are being made to tighten up on the system. Surprise inspections are being carried out, surveillance and reporting of derelictions by the local CFPA branches is being promoted, and harsh penalties are being imposed on local officials found deficient in order to intimidate the rest into pursuing family planning work more aggressively. It is this system that drives to local cadres to resort to coercion, and it works, as recently reported spectacular instances of coercion attest.

Why, then, do foreign governments and other organizations continue to support and applaud the Chinese program? Not all of them have a direct conflict of interest in fielding family planning missions in China. Probably the main factor is the widespread public conviction that world population growth constitutes an imminent threat to human welfare, hence extreme measures, though regrettable, can be justified in dealing with the "population crisis." This view is seldom stated openly because it would invite condemnation from people more deeply committed to human

rights, but the "crisis" notion has become part of the received wisdom in intellectual circles throughout much of the Western world and is seldom challenged.

There is a certain superficial plausibility to the "crisis" argument that makes it easy to grasp and popularize, but the argument becomes more dubious on closer examination. The relevant empirical evidence, based on international statistics relating demographic factors to other measures of human welfare over the past several decades is equivocal at best, suggesting that there is no simple, direct, strong relationship between population growth and human welfare, either positive or negative. As long as that is the case, there can be no logically compelling basis for urgent and extreme family planning measures or for disregarding reproductive freedom in the haste to reduce population growth rates.

Before important human rights can be sacrificed to avoid what are presumed to be still greater dangers to human welfare, the need for such action must be established beyond reasonable doubt. Human rights should never be overridden on the basis of convictions, however strongly, widely, and sincerely held, that are not supported by incontrovertible evidence. Under no circumstances can the analysis and interpretation of the evidence be entrusted to professions, organizations, or individuals who have conflicts of interest in the matter. Moreover, proposals for action in such instances must be subjected to thorough democratic discussion and debate before implementation is considered. The "population crisis" view has not yet attained that level of credibility. In fact, it has been under serious challenge by some eminent demographers and economists since the 1960s and still lacks a firm empirical basis. In the world demographic community at large, the "crisis" idea has been losing adherents, but since it still generates funds for demographic research, demographers have been less than diligent in drawing public attention to their increasing doubts. They have also maintained a virtual "conspiracy of silence" about the coercion in the Chinese family planning program, perhaps because if they spoke out they would lose opportunities for research in China and contacts with Chinese colleagues. Putting professional advantage ahead of the professional obligation to inform public opinion is unethical, but demography is not the only profession to indulge in such compromises.

One thing is clear, however. Massive violations of universally acknowledged human rights principles relating to reproductive freedom have been occurring in China for more than twenty years with the blessing of the UNFPA, despite its nominal commitment to those principles. Would the UNFPA (and the other UN and non-government organizations supporting the Chinese family planning program) be as reticent about similar violations in countries less powerful than China? Does the UNFPA treat client governments even-handedly? Would it welcome coercive family planning programs in any other country as it has in China? Or is it encouraging imitation of the Chinese approach only in third world countries? Up to now, China seems to be treated by international agencies and foreign governments with a special indulgence, motivated by unstated purposes that are presumably self-serving in one way or another. Meanwhile, as long as foreign governments, agencies, and individuals continue to support China's family planning program, in whatever capacity, and applaud its accomplishments without regard to its human costs, they share responsibility for its abuses of human rights.

Coercive Family Planning and the Chinese Family Planning Association

The website of the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) has recently featured an article describing the Chinese Family Planning Association (CFPA), which has been an affiliate of the IPPF since it was welcomed to full membership in 1983, the year in which coercive birth

control surgery in China reached its all-time peak. The IPPF article contains a considerable amount of disinformation about the nature of its Chinese affiliate, representing it as independent of the Chinese government and an agency for moderation of family planning "abuses" in China. Both these claims are false.

The IPPF article begins by saying that "The CFPA is different from family planning associations in other countries," but it then fails to note the main difference. The CFPA is a government controlled organ. It has been since its foundation on May 29, 1980, when XINHUA reported that its first appointed leader was Wang Shoudao, the vice-chairman of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference and also the deputy head of the "birth planning leading group under the State Council," predecessor to the State Family Planning Commission. Thus, from the very beginning it was headed by a government official. Its function was also made clear by the XINHUA dispatch announcing its founding: "The association will implement government population control policies." The next head of the CFPA was Song Ping, a member of the State Council, hence also a government official. In 1998 Song was replaced by the present chairman, Jiang Chunyun, who is a member of the Party Central Committee's Political Bureau and Vice Chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress. The connection of the CFPA with the central leadership has always been close. None of its top leaders have been ordinary citizens unaffiliated with government or the Party.

The CFPA is, as the IPPF article says, a "mass organization," but what that means is that it is a government controlled organ set up to give the appearance of mass support for government programs and policies. This puts it in a class with the All-China Women's Federation and the All-China Federation of Labor Unions, which serve as tools to maintain government control over women and workers and head off any tendency that might arise among these groups to form truly representative organs.

The IPPF's claim that the role of the CFPA is to provide "democratic supervision" over family planning work and inform individuals of "their rights and responsibilities" also shows how little the IPPF leadership knows about political and social realities in China. Where family planning is concerned, the emphasis in China has always been on "responsibilities" rather than "rights," since ordinary Chinese citizens have few rights aside from the "right" to comply with government programs. The Chinese constitution stipulates that practicing family planning is a citizen's duty. There are no rights that contravene that "responsibility."

In all the years since 1980, little has been said in the Chinese media about specific actions carried out by the CFPA in support of the government's family planning program. That they help to propagandize for the program is undoubtedly correct, but it hardly encompasses the organization's complete role, a major component of which is undoubtedly surveillance over the compliance of local officials, a matter over which the central authorities have encountered increasingly severe problems.

The importance of the surveillance function is implicit in the fact that although CFPA membership grew rather slowly throughout the 1980s, it expanded suddenly at the end of that decade when the central authorities were getting ready to order the family planning crackdown of the 1990s. In September 1989 there were reported to be only 384,000 FPAs "at various levels" with a total membership of 13.4 million. By May 1990 the CFPA had 500,000 branches and 20 million members, and by November 1991 it had grown to 600,000 branches and 32 million members. By December 1995 there were 1,020,000 branches with 83 million members. Since then the figures on

branches and membership have not changed. At the end of May 2000, Jiang Chunyun was still quoting the same numbers.

Far from being concerned with suppression of coercion in family planning administration, the CFPA has consistently supported such measures. In December 1998, Jiang Chunyun, addressing the National Council of the CFPA, said that "to effectively perform the work of family planning in rural areas, family planning functional departments should use administrative, legal, and economic means to restrict people's childbearing behavior according to plan..." "Administrative means" is a euphemism for locally devised enforcement tactics which usually involve varying degrees of coercion. They range from harassment, threats, and fines to outright physical coercion, such as forced birth control surgeries, imprisonment of family members, and smashing of houses. Jiang continued that "It is necessary to persistently combine administrative management with mass work," and he called on local family planning associations to "further mobilize and organize the masses to participate in family planning." Despite the euphemisms, the steely hard line glistens through. People are "managed" or "mobilized" in China when they refuse to do voluntarily what the Party and government want them to do.

In his speech to a Beijing family planning "seminar" in May 2000, Jiang Chunyun said, "As mass organizations that assist the government in mobilizing people to practice family planning, family planning associations at all levels have, over the past 20 years, effectively carried out work around the basic national policy of family planning under the leadership of the Party committees and governments at all levels." In November Jiang told a conference on population and development in western China that "We should pay close attention to formulating and improving laws and regulations concerning population and managing family planning according to law, and strengthen the inspection and supervision of law enforcement..." in the western region. For the leader of a non-government organization, this sounds more like the voice of government than the voice of the people!

The IPPF seems to have been favorably impressed by the recently announced policy of expanding "village democracy" by providing more public information about local government requirements in regard to taxation, public expenditures, land matters, and family planning. The villages practicing "democracy" are said to provide information to residents by posting it on "understanding walls" to increase the "transparency" of village government. Some villages reportedly brought "democracy" into family planning work by posting the required targets, allowing villagers to formulate their own rules for meeting family planning requirements, having villagers sign pledges to abide by family planning rules, and so on. In some places it was reported that when villagers were allowed to "run" family planning, their birth rates declined. Given the pervasive rural opposition to family planning restrictions, it is difficult to understand how an increase in "democracy" could result in an increase in compliance, since compliance is against the popular will. This should give rise to suspicion that the whole story is not being told, but the IPPF is immune to suspicion.

To buttress its claim that the Chinese family planning program is trying to curb coercion, the IPPF cites a "circular" issued by China's State Family Planning Commission (SFPC) on July 10, 1995 calling on local family planning officials to avoid seven practices that "damage the prestige of the Communist Party and the Government in the eyes of the people" and the "image of family planning work. Known as the "Seven Prohibitions," the circular was reportedly distributed to provincial and municipal family planning commissions, but there was no mention of giving it to local family planning officials. It has never been published or even mentioned publicly in national or provincial sources from China, presumably because the authorities do not want to draw foreign attention to the pervasiveness of the practices that the "Seven Prohibitions" were meant to discourage. Backlash

provoked by extreme instances of coercion in family planning work has been a continuing concern of the central authorities for many years. After the crash program of mandatory birth control surgeries in 1983, the central authorities declared a moratorium on coercive measures because, they said explicitly, the 1983 campaign had resulted in "the alienation of the masses from the Party." For the next two years the watchword was to "refrain from coercion" and make the family planning policies "more reasonable and fair and easier for the cadres to carry out." By 1986, however, birth rates were rising again, and the anti-coercion campaign was called off once more. Preparation went forward for another round of tightening up, which was launched officially in 1991 after it had already been under way for several years. Published instructions to family planning cadres once again included thinly veiled invitations to use coercive measures. In the early 1990s coercion escalated markedly, and once again backlash became a problem. This time, however, the authorities apparently decided to be very selective about the forms of coercion they wanted to discourage.

The "Seven Prohibitions" document is not a call for abandoning all coercive family planning measures. All it asks is the avoidance of the most provocative measures-- exorbitant fines; damaging the homes, property, and crops of violators; punishing their relatives; refusing to permit a birth that is "legal" merely to meet a birth quota; and imposing pregnancy tests on unmarried young women. Seizing property of violators is prohibited only if the confiscations are not carried out under legal auspices. The proscribed activities are those that stir up and justify intense popular resentment--the kind of actions that can lead to riots or alienate people and weaken political control. What is most noteworthy about the document is what it DOES NOT prohibit! It does not prohibit the three compulsory birth control operations, which have been national policy since 1982--forced IUD insertions, forced sterilizations, and forced abortions. It does not prohibit the use of sterilization as a punishment for failure to take out a one-child certificate, or for failure to report promptly after the birth of a first child to have an IUD inserted, or for failure to report for the quarterly examinations to be sure the IUD is still in place--punishments authorized in one locality in Fujian Province in a published order disclosed by a former Fujian family planning official in 1998. And of course it does not prohibit family planning "mobilizations" or management," which have been called for within the past year by President Jiang Zemin, SFPC Minister Zhang Weiqing, as well as CFPA Chairman Jiang Chunyun. These forms of coercion are essential to the program and are to continue.

Meanwhile, instances of extreme coercion continue. On November 24, 2000, the Beijing office of the French news agency Agence France Presse (AFP) reported that three local Chinese officials in a county of Anhui Province were found guilty of having "set up their own private prison and kangaroo court to mete out rough justice to peasants who fell foul of family planning rules." A 60-year-old woman in the county reported that she was jailed for 170 days in the unsanitary, makeshift prison because her daughter-in-law had an unreported pregnancy. The woman reportedly lost most of her hearing and suffered ruined health as a result of her confinement. The account was obtained from the Chinese journal "China Youth Daily," which added that in that community "confessions were routinely beaten out of prisoners." The case of the three officials was apparently so flagrant that it actually did go to trial, but, characteristically, they were let off lightly, apparently by offering bribes to higher level officials. But the journal also noted that the local people were outraged at the lenient sentences given the offending officials. When AFP contacted the county, its officials refused to discuss the case.

In August an even more harrowing incident got into Chinese newspapers and was picked up by the foreign press. A woman in Hubei Province who was pregnant with her fourth child was forcibly given a saline injection by her local family planning officials in an attempt to bring on an abortion

and kill the child, but, surprisingly, the baby was born normally and was healthy. The officials ordered the father to take the baby out of the hospital and kill it, but though he was afraid of punishment he merely left the baby behind an office building where a doctor found it and returned it to its mother. The infant was given its inoculations and discharged. When the couple got home with their new baby, they found five family planning officials waiting for them in their living room. A struggle ensued in which the officials wrested the child from its parents, took it out into a paddy field, and drowned it in sight of its parents. The action so enraged people in the community that they brought the story to the attention of provincial newspapers. In September Beijing's English language newspaper, "China Daily," reported that three persons had been detained by the authorities in connection with the case, but the judicial departments had still not decided "whether or not to take legal action against them."

The lenient sentences and hesitancy about punishing officials who carry out even extremely coercive measures reflects the reluctance of the authorities to discourage such measures. Even murder is not necessarily deserving of punishment in China if it is committed in support of family planning!

Where were the local CFPA branches while these outrages were taking place? The Chinese sources that revealed them say nothing about CFPA involvement. In fact, so far the Chinese media have never described an incident in which the CFPA has intervened to quell coercion. The role of the CFPA is to strengthen control over childbearing in China--not weaken it, and curbs on coercion tend to discourage local officials from attaining their state-assigned family planning targets. For that reason, the central authorities continue to enforce the "target management responsibility system" which punishes local officials for failure to enforce family planning rules. This is the mechanism which drives the local authorities to resort to coercion, which would be greatly moderated if the pressures from above were abandoned. This the central authorities are unwilling to do.