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Mexico City Policy - Helms Letter

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**U.S. Agency for International Development
Bureau for Legislative and Public Affairs
1300 Pennsylvania Ave., NW, Room 6.10
Washington, D.C. 20523**

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NUMBER OF PAGES SENT INCLUDING COVER SHEET: 3	
SUBJECT:	

Draft. Seligman, October 4, 2000. Frontoffice/docs/helmsrequest_resp.doc

Response to September 27, 2000 letter from Senator Jesse Helms to the President

1. **"I have been reliably informed that (pursuant to Section 599d of the Foreign Operations, Export Financing, and Related Programs Appropriations Act 2000) at least ten foreign, privately run so-called population control advocacy groups and international organizations have, so far, refused to certify to the Agency for International Development that they did not perform or promote abortions with their own funds."**

To date only nine organizations have elected not to certify under the terms of Section 599d. The total amount of funding received by these organizations is \$8,360,000. Senator Helms identifies the two largest non-certifying organizations, the International Planned Parenthood Federation in London (IPPF) and the World Health Organization, in his letter. The remaining seven organizations together have received a very small amount of funding: \$860,000.

2. **"We received the findings of the General Accounting Office report called "USAID Compliance with Family Planning Restrictions" which we find disturbing, to say the least."**

we understand the people's right
The findings of the GAO report indicate that USAID has faithfully implemented and complied with restrictions placed on its population program and that it has satisfactory mechanisms for ensuring continued compliance. The report notes that IPPF made an administrative error where funds were sent to two affiliates (India and Uganda) that provide abortion-related services in addition to family planning. IPPF identified this error during a Price Waterhouse audit in March 2000 and corrected it prior to the GAO review. The GAO report was issued on October 2, but Senator Helms has placed a 30 day embargo on its distribution.

3. **"The Committee then sought the names of the eight other organizations that are refusing to comply with U.S. law."**

The nine
Non-certifying organizations are not in violation of U.S. law. The option not to certify and still receive funding within the \$15 million cap was made possible when the President exercised the waiver provision in the law.

4. **"We were arrogantly informed that the information would not be provided unless unprecedented and illegitimate restrictions were implemented."**

In September, USAID received a verbal request for the list of non-certifying organizations from a member of Senator Helms staff. USAID provided a briefing for the staff, offering to provide this information under the same arrangements that had been agreed to by the White House and House leadership in May 2000. The staff refused to agree to these conditions. USAID proposed that the White House meet with the staff and

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was awaited their response when this letter was sent. Throughout these exchanges, no disrespect was shown to the Senator Helms' staff.

[House Agreement: The Administration is unwilling to provide in written form the identities of the 7 small non-certifying organizations because it could expose the organizations, their staff, and clients to excessive media attention, harassment and even physical harm. In light of these concerns and recognizing the need for Congress to fulfill its oversight responsibilities, an agreement was struck between the White House and House leadership that USAID would provide to the Subcommittee on Foreign Operations (HACFO) a listing of the amounts of funding provided to each non-certifying organization without revealing the names of these 7 organizations. In addition, the names of these organizations would be provided verbally to the Chairman of the Subcommittee with the understanding that it would be held in confidence. This information was provided by USAID in May 2000. To the best of our knowledge, that confidence has been respected and the privacy of non-certifying organizations remains protected.]

5. "I am sure that you agree that U.S. taxpayers have every right to know which groups (domestic or foreign) use taxpayer funds to carry out foreign aid projects."

Through the notification process, USAID routinely provides Congress with the names of contractors and grantees receiving foreign assistance funds.

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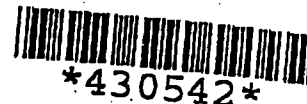
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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6225

September 27, 2000



The President
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

I have been reliably informed that (pursuant to section 599D of the Foreign Operations, Export Financing, and Related Programs Appropriations Act 2000) at least ten foreign, privately run so-called population control advocacy groups and international organizations have, so far, refused to certify to the Agency for International Development that they did not perform or promote abortions with their own funds.

Two of these groups (the International Planned Parenthood Federation in London and the World Health Organization) have made their position public.

We received the findings of the General Accounting Office report called "USAID Compliance With Family Planning Restrictions" which we find disturbing, to say the least. The Committee then sought the names of the eight other organizations that are refusing to comply with U.S. law. We were arrogantly informed that the information would not be provided unless unprecedented and illegitimate restrictions were implemented.

Mr. President, it may be subject to legitimate question whether your administration is using taxpayers' dollars in violation of U.S. law to finance covert abortion clinics in foreign countries, although the behavior of your staff -- not to mention their highly creative excuses to deny Congressional request for information -- does make one wonder.

The number of frivolous excuses employed by your staff in efforts to keep Congress and the American people in the dark on this matter is breathtaking and would ordinarily defy imagination. I certainly shall not dignify a response to any of them.

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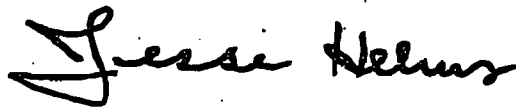
9th JUL 2001

I am sure you agree that U.S. taxpayers have every right to know which groups (domestic or foreign) use taxpayer funds to carry out foreign aid projects. There has never been any question about this.

A.I.D. does not now, nor has it ever, operated covert foreign aid programs. For your people to suggest otherwise could permanently damage A.I.D.'s credibility in the field as well as to cause friend and foe alike to question the U.S. Government's stated intentions to help poor people.

Mr. President, providing this information without further delay will put an end to this charade.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jesse Helms". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned below the word "Sincerely,".

JESSE HELMS:ggg