

*The Address—Mr. Roche*

ratio of 30 to 70 between the population of the rich and poor nations will swing inexorably to 10 to 90.

The continuation of such growth constitutes what many now consider to be the overwhelming threat to the future wellbeing of man. What are the consequences of adding 75 million to the earth's numbers this year—of populating the equivalent of the United States in three years, or of populating another China in less than a decade? And, of course, the impact of population growth is intensified by the rising expectations of all men, rich and poor, and the desire of every nation to expand its industrial base. Urbanization compounds the population problem. The one billion urban dwellers of 1960 will become three billion by the year 2000, requiring the equivalent of building 70 new cities yearly, each housing one million people.

Any commodity in over abundance tends to lose its value, and the brutal fact is that people have become a commodity. Because we have disregarded the elementary, universal quality of human dignity, hundreds of millions today live in abject poverty, are illiterate, are ravaged by disease and are chronically malnourished. Their lives have a bleakness and hopelessness difficult for us to comprehend. What worth is the individual in such circumstances? How valuable is the human person? The current famine in the southern Sahara has produced a tragic comment on technological man: the undernourished children of a tribe in Chad were too weak to resist an outbreak of diphtheria. None the less the tribe elders pleaded with UN officials not to send drugs. Starvation, they said, would be too slow a death; let diphtheria rage.

● (2020)

The impoverishment of the human spirit and the cheapening of human life have profound consequences now that technology gives man the technical power to shape his own future. It is a myth to believe that the problems of under development will be solved simply through the implementation of birth control programs, although I believe that acceptable ways of stabilizing world population must be found. Birth control measures are too often mistaken for true family planning. I believe that the mentality which we have in the western world, which favours reducing the number of people in the world so that we will not have to reduce our share of the world's goods, is the wrong mentality.

Sharing what the world community possesses is a prerequisite to stability. Before introducing massive birth control programs into the various countries of the world, considerable investment is needed in the key sectors which determine economic growth. Giving priority to the population problem, over and above the economic and social one, means we are bound to fail.

It strains credibility to suggest that the interlocking problems of population growth, urbanization and energy demands will not lead to extreme social disorder. Greater shortages of basic goods, including food, deeper poverty and more environmental damage are ahead. Is it possible that we, in our affluence, can blithely consign millions more people to a human state comparable to the worst regions of India or Pakistan without sowing the seeds of massive revolutions? At the very least we can expect the

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rise of authoritarian governments whose demands for social changes will not stop with family limitation.

Today the political winds blowing across Latin America are nationalist and authoritarian. Right-wing military dictatorships hold power in Brazil, Chile, Bolivia and Uruguay. Argentina is experiencing a neo-Peronist threat to freedom. The political and military strife we now see within and between nations will escalate as the universal social-economic situation deteriorates.

Third, warfare. The good work of the United Nations notwithstanding, there is not the slightest reason to hope that we can escape mounting terrorism, revolutions and international warfare if we continue on our present path. Sheer desperation will drive individuals, bands of terrorists and nations to fight for survival. Nothing is more basic in human nature. The picture of two men fighting over the last gallon of gas in a Florida service station is but an amusing reflection of the spectre of inevitable wars of redistribution. When to this age old manner of deciding who gets the spoils is added the modern factor of nuclear weapons, the prospect is grim.

Even small nations, or groups within nations, possessing no fully developed industrial base can gain possession of nuclear weapons. They will be a by-product of atomic power plants that will soon be common around the world. These warheads will not require complicated delivery systems but can be easily smuggled into enemy harbours or cities.

If a band of desperadoes in California can kidnap the Hearst heiress and demand massive food distribution to the poor as ransom, it does not require much conjecture to envision the developed world being blackmailed by nuclear terrorism, even by small groups, demanding the transfer of large amounts of wealth to the poverty stricken world. Our world pattern is undeniably producing terrorism. Airplanes and airports, even in this country, are not safe today without the tightest security. Why should we regard whole cities as any safer? What have terrorists got to lose?

I am not purposely trying to paint a grim picture of humanity in the days ahead just for its shock value. Rather I am trying to show that the energy crisis of the past few months is but the tip of an iceberg whose dimensions and power can now be charted. Put as plainly as possible, industrial man has constructed this mammoth iceberg which threatens to capsize us. We may think our accomplishments are magnificent, but the truth is that never in the history of the world have the times been so dangerous.

Of course, it would be folly to think that we are helpless. For population growth, war, environmental damage and the use of technology are all social problems originating in human attitudes and capable of solution by alteration of our behavior. Thus, says Robert Heilbroner, in an analysis he calls "The Human Prospect":

—whether we are unable to sustain growth or unable to tolerate it, there can be no doubt that a radically different future beckons. In either eventuality, it seems beyond dispute that the present orientation of society must change.

Well, now, what is to be done? Without backing away from the bleak picture I have sketched, I reject any implication that all these complications amount to a death