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'Third World' Must Aid Themselves

Americans do not want anybody to starve. That is why this country has provided 84 per cent of all food aid given by developed countries over the last eight years.

What has this done for the world? It has enabled more infants to survive, prolonged lives of adults, and contributed to increased population. The hungry world needs more food than before.

Some claim that as many as one-fifth of the human race are facing starvation or severe malnutrition. Sympathetic individuals and organizations are advocating that the United States go on a diet so that more food might be shipped to friendly and unfriendly nations around the world.

The crux of the problem is that too many irresponsible people are producing more children instead of producing food for those they already have. It is not so much that the world is running short on food as it is that thoughtlessness and prejudices are producing too many people.

Many peoples regard large families as evidence of virility and, in a sense, prosperity. Some nations want larger populations to face down weaker ones or for national defense.

India has a population three times as large as the United States and a growth rate triple that of this country. India's 1974 growth rate of 2.6 per cent is higher than the 2.3 per cent it reported for 1958-63.

Millions of people in India are undernourished and unofficial reports say that thousands are starving. India cannot feed her people and

planned parenthood is very limited, but India has developed the atomic bomb and accepts food from the United States under any foreign aid program we may offer.

Smaller countries follow much the same pattern, and then criticize America because we don't send more food.

The urgency of the situation is generating extreme proposals. One is that the United States ought to set an example for the world by restricting the number of children per family.

The Environmental Fund, Inc., Washington, D.C., suggests that "all elements in the government concerned with population matters should be transferred to a new Office of Population whose primary

function would be to motivate couples not to produce, on the average, more than two children."

This would be something like prescribing medicine for the nurse in order to make a distant patient well. Limiting population of the country with highest food production would not keep nations with millions of idle, hungry people from continuing to reproduce more non-producers for an already overcrowded world.

The solution is not in sight, but it is plain that America alone cannot feed the world. Unless the so-called "Third World" starts producing more food and fewer children, the earth's population may reach 6 billion by 1999, as predicted, and if it does, starvation will not necessarily be its worst difficulty.