

[1971]

DRAFT

STATEMENT BY FATHER HESBURGH

For many years I have been concerned and involved with the pressing problems of social change here in the United States. These efforts have rightly absorbed the time and attention of thousands of Americans devoted to making our country a better place in which to live.

But in recent years, I have become increasingly aware that we cannot see the problems of America in isolation -- shutting ourselves off from the outside world behind a wall built upon a legal definition of national sovereignty. In particular, we cannot ignore problems of poverty that beset fully 2/3 of the world's people. If man is to be a moral being, his concern cannot stop "at the water's edge" -- /as Chicago; in ~~the~~ ^{Africa} Argentine as well as Appalachia. For we can now see that domestic and foreign policies have become a seamless web of interlocking concerns and that problems such as pollution, prosperity and social justice cannot be neatly categorized as "domestic" or "foreign". This interdependence was underlined in President Nixon's new economic policy which linked his reversal of economic policy to the balance of payments crisis.

For this reason, I am happy to join the Overseas Development Council in Washington, as Chairman of its Board of Directors. I see the work of the Council, in promoting U.S. support for and understanding of development in the world's poor countries, as a logical extension of my ^{present} own work on America's social problems.

I accept this new job as a challenge. It is clear to anyone who looks that our country is not fulfilling its obligations to help the developing countries build a better world -- that we are reducing our contribution to development, just when the need is greatest, and just when other rich countries are recognizing and meeting their responsibilities.

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This reduced commitment was reflected most recently in the President's August 15 decision to cut spending on foreign assistance by ten percent, a decrease that will fall most heavily on development assistance. But this latest policy merely accentuates the trend that has been all too apparent in America's programs for development cooperation over the past several years. At the same time the President's proposals to reorganize the foreign assistance agency are stalled in Congress and *one must wonder at the problem of sustaining morale within the Agency for International Development itself under such circumstances.* ~~is at a low-ebb.~~ And this year the situation becomes, if anything, even more urgent because of U.S. contribution to virtually all major international financial institutions must soon be decided by the Congress.

We have rightly been concerned with reducing our political involvement in far-off areas of the world, as a product of our disillusionment with American actions in Vietnam; but that is no excuse for us to deny our moral obligations, our moral concerns. If anything, the past mistakes in our political policies argue for a greater effort to provide economic help to people in other countries whose goal is to be able to help themselves.

This meeting today of the Board of Directors of the Overseas Development Council, is especially timely. We are still in the midst of a major economic crisis that faces all nations that rely upon growing international trade and a stable monetary system for their economic well-being. Unfortunately, the burden of this crisis -- in the policies of the U.S. Government as in that of some other rich countries -- falls most heavily upon the poor. Once again, a crisis made by the rich leading the world's poor to be neglected, short-changed, and unduly taxed to our benefit. *In our own country our most important social program for the poor has been deferred for a year.*

In joining this young organization, therefore, I hope that I can help bring to the attention of our people what is happening in the developing world, and what we need to do to help meet our moral -- and political -- responsibilities

as a nation. .If we succeed, then we will be far more likely to see develop a world which we will all find more to our liking -- a world in which we Americans help in this generation as in the past, by extending generosity of wealth and spirit to others whose only crime was to be born less fortunate than we.