



U.S. AGENCY FOR
INTERNATIONAL
DEVELOPMENT

28 MAY 1993

*Assistant
Administrator
for Food and
Humanitarian
Assistance*

INFORMATION MEMORANDUM FOR THE ADMINISTRATOR

FROM: A-AA/FHA, Lois Richards *LL*
SUBJECT: A New Climate for Foreign Aid?

Attached is a report of a survey of the American public's attitudes toward foreign assistance conducted for FHA as part of its impact evaluation of the Development Education (DevEd) Program. This program has been operated by FHA for the past eleven years under the authority of the Biden-Pell Amendment to the International Security and Development Cooperation Act of 1980 to facilitate public discussion, analysis and review of development and its causes among the American people.

The survey was done to establish a basis for comparing the views toward foreign assistance among the general public with the views of groups targeted by the program. The overall evaluation will not be ready for release until late summer. However, the results of the survey stand alone as an important source of information for those of us concerned about the political bases for foreign assistance programs.

The report provides some surprising, and perhaps comforting, evidence that despite high priorities on domestic economic issues, the American people are more supportive of foreign assistance than formerly thought. Contrary to expectations, the survey found that support for economic assistance to the developing world is still favored by a majority of people, and the level of support has been unaffected by the end of the Cold War. Furthermore, support for "Third World" assistance is as great as the support for Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union combined.

Our intention in circulating this report is to inform decision-makers and policy-makers in the Agency of information that could be of use to them. We believe the survey has been excellently done. However, we strongly advise that the report be restricted for use and distribution within the Agency. GC does not believe that

release of this report would be prohibited publicity or propaganda in the U.S. Nevertheless and despite our convictions of its objectivity, general release of such a favorable report is likely to be interpreted as self serving. Since the survey is a fragment of a wider evaluation study, we feel it should only be generally released as part of the final evaluation of the DevEd program, which will be ready this August or September.

Attachment: a/s

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AA/FA:Rames
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A-AA/AFR:JHicks
A-AA/NE:DChandler
A-AA/ASIA:GLaudato
A-AA/EUR:DMerrill
A-AA/LAC:AWilliams
A-AA/R&D:AVanDusen ✓
A-AA/LEG:MO'Sullivan
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Clearance:

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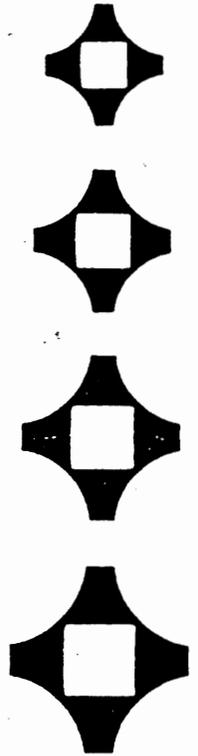
GC/CP, Steve Tisa ST Draft Date 5/27/93

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A NEW CLIMATE FOR FOREIGN AID?

**National Survey Finds That,
Despite Americans' Domestic Concerns,
They Strongly Favor Assistance To Other Nations**



**Submitted to:
Thomas Marchione**

**U.S. Agency for International Development
Bureau of Food and Humanitarian Assistance
Office of Program Planning and Evaluation**

**By:
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Washington, D.C.**

May 1993

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A recent national telephone survey has produced a variety of findings that seem to contradict many popular views about public opposition to U.S. foreign aid, especially to developing countries.

A national telephone survey of 1201 Americans, 18 and older, was recently undertaken (March 9-21) for the U.S. Agency for International Development's Bureau for Food and Humanitarian Assistance. The study is part of the overall assessment of the Bureau's Development Education (DevEd) Program. It was designed, analyzed, and reported by Intercultural Communication, Inc. (ICI), the Washington, D.C. research firm conducting the evaluation. Interviewing was done by National Research, Inc. of Washington; and the sample was provided by Survey Sampling, Inc., Fairfield, Connecticut; it compares very well to U.S. Census data. Findings may vary by plus/minus 3 percent due to sampling.

The study reveals that Americans have a much stronger sense of the global interdependencies of nations than expected; and that, despite Americans' domestic concerns, they strongly favor assistance to other nations, especially to developing countries.

GLOBAL LINKS

The conventional thinking that Americans have a parochial and insulated view of world affairs is undercut by the findings. Large majorities (65%-85% range) see global linkages among nations; for instance: ♦ The economies of the "Third World" and of "Eastern Europe" (including the former Soviet Union) affect the U.S. economy; ♦ strengthening Third World economies will have positive impacts on U.S. business opportunities, trade, jobs, national security, and local communities; and ♦ helping stabilize the Third World will improve global peace, prosperity, and democracy.

SELF-INTERESTS FIRST

Unquestionably, Americans' self-interests come first. And the major concern is for our jobs. Before turning to the needs of others, the public would first want to protect U.S. jobs and business interests abroad and solve our own problems of unemployment, poverty, and education. But the domestic agenda does not preclude concern for others.

In light of the positive pay-offs to the U.S. and to the world from Third World stability, the public's thinking is that: ♦ Developing countries are different from us, and have made many of their own problems through ineptitude and corruption. ♦ But their problems are not overwhelming and the U.S. can and should help them, and should not cut off aid and abandon them. ♦ It's important to help democracy grow in the Third World and to protect human rights as well as victims of ethnic conflicts and civil wars.

Yet, it is also important that aid be selective because some doesn't work and too much can make countries overly dependent on us.

SUPPORT U.S. LEADERSHIP

Another popular notion is that Americans' support for foreign aid has diminished. Instead, the national study finds that: ♦ Support for economic assistance has not declined since the time of the Cold War (54% in 1986, 52% today); very large majorities (70%-90% range) support U.S. involvement abroad; and ♦ other majorities (50%-70% range) favor humanitarian aid and economic assistance to the Third World and to countries of the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe.

Giving humanitarian assistance is more important to Americans than is economic assistance (72% vs. 52%), but most people support both and would provide both equally to Third World countries and to Eastern Europe (including the former Soviet Union). However, if forced to choose, more people would assist the Third World than Eastern Europe.

Underlying support for foreign aid is the public's sense of humanity as well as keen desire for U.S. moral and economic leadership, which is "vital to international peace and prosperity." Our leadership and assistance: ♦ Makes other countries more stable; ♦ keeps them as allies; and ♦ is essential to make them self-sufficient.

Accordingly, people are not threatened by the potential political and economic competition of stronger Third World economies. Rather: ♦ Free and open trade is good for global prosperity; and ♦ we should help the Third World grow its own food even if they buy less from the U.S.

NEW MOOD FOR AID

Compared with an earlier study by Interaction and the Overseas Development Council, several U.S. assistance programs have less priority today than in 1986. Health programs have highest priority and food programs rank second. Various other programs, such as infrastructure, business, and education, have lower priority. Using aid for military purposes has lowest priority – dropping sharply from its ranking a few years ago. Altogether, except for helping victims of ethnic conflict, the various aid programs are slightly less favored today than previously; but, with the exception of educating others in the U.S. and military uses of aid, all programs have positive ratings.

On the other hand, preventing the spread of the AIDS/HIV disease has the highest priority of all programs today; and suppressing the production of illegal drugs has high priority as well. These programs were not part of earlier studies of attitudes toward Third World assistance.

Apparently, public priorities are shifting, in part due to the end of the Cold War, a weakened U.S. economy, and new humanitarian and economic concerns.

For example, a slight majority of people would now reduce economic aid in the aftermath of the Cold War. Further, concerns for U.S. economic interests have risen dramatically over previous years: ♦ Concern for protecting U.S. jobs has doubled over measures in 1991 and 1986. ♦ Also, concern for protecting our business interests has risen in the past few years. ♦ And somewhat fewer people now think it's important to raise other nations' standards of living. ♦ At the same time, somewhat more people today than in 1986 think it's important to promote democracy in developing countries.

**MOST AID
EFFECTIVE**

If there were a loss of support for foreign aid, one reason might be that people don't think U.S. assistance has any effect. Instead, at least three of every five persons think that foreign aid is effective in: ♦ Feeding the hungry; ♦ increasing food production; ♦ encouraging democracy; ♦ strengthening Third World economies; ♦ raising education; and ♦ reducing children's death rates.

However, people are not optimistic about all aid: ♦ They are not sure about effects of U.S. assistance on protecting war victims or conserving Third World natural resources. ♦ They tend to be skeptical of the impacts of aid on reducing poverty. ♦ And they do not believe that aid can reduce population growth rates in developing countries, although most support "birth control" programs.

Overall, though, Americans are more likely to believe that the United Nations can do a better job in effectively assisting developing countries than can the U.S. government or private businesses or charities.

**HIGHER
ATTENTION**

While Americans have more empathy for the Third World, more understanding of global linkages, and more support for foreign aid than expected, they also are more interested and better informed than they were some years ago. Their use of the mass media has not changed since 1986, but there is good evidence that: ♦ They read more; ♦ talk more; and ♦ know more about the Third World than they did five years ago.

However, they also are more passive than expected: ♦ They are less active in Third World groups and causes than before; ♦ their learning is more passive than active – and mainly through television; and ♦ they give less money to charitable organizations than they used to.

Only a few (11%) have been members of groups involved with Third World issues. But, other than members of churches, PTAs, and professional associations, as many people belong to groups involved with Third World issues as belong to many other types of civic, business, service, labor, religious, human rights, or fraternal organizations (all in the 5%-15% range).

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A NEW CLIMATE FOR FOREIGN AID?

I. BACKGROUND

A national telephone survey of 1201 Americans, 18 and older, was recently undertaken (March 9-21) for the Bureau for Food and Humanitarian Assistance (FHA) of the U.S. Agency for International Development (A.I.D.). The study was undertaken as a part of the overall assessment of the Bureau's Development Education (DevEd) Program.

The DevEd program was authorized through the Biden-Pell Amendment to the International Security and Development Cooperation Act of 1980. The purpose of the amendment was to facilitate public discussion, analysis, and review of development and its causes among the American people.

This survey was done to establish a basis for comparing the views toward foreign assistance of groups targeted by the program with the general public. Also, in order to see trends in public opinion, many questions in this 1993 study are identical to questions asked in a 1986 study, What Americans Think undertaken by Interaction and the Overseas Development Council. And some questions are identical to questions in studies done in 1991 and 1987 by the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations: American Public Opinion and U.S. Foreign Policy.¹

The question of foreign aid was approached in several ways: (1) comparison of views today with those of two previous studies on support or non-support for U.S. foreign policy goals – to discern trends; (2) the reasons underlying support or non-support for the U.S. role in world affairs; (3) support or non-support for humanitarian aid and economic aid to the Third World and to Eastern Europe; and (4) perceived effectiveness of U.S. assistance programs.

In the study, the "Third World" and/or "Developing Countries" were defined as countries of Africa, Asia, and Latin America. "Eastern European" countries were defined as countries that emerged after the break up of the Soviet Union and the communist countries of Eastern Europe. In both cases, these are countries "whose economies and standard of living are lower than in the United States, Western Europe, and other more industrialized countries."

The study was designed, monitored, and analyzed by Intercultural Communication, Inc. (ICI), the Washington, D.C. research firm conducting the DevEd evaluation. Interviewing and tabulations were done by National Research, Inc. of Washington. And the sample was provided by Survey Sampling, Inc., Fairfield, Connecticut; it compares very well to U.S. Census data. Any finding may vary by plus/minus 3 percent due to sampling.

Although ICI consulted with FHA about the survey, the study was carried out independently of A.I.D. offices. At no time during the interviews was A.I.D. either mentioned or identified as the sponsor of the survey. Instead, respondents were told only that they were being interviewed for "a national public opinion survey (on) America's relations with other countries."

¹ Christine E. Contee, What Americans Think: Views on Development and U.S.-Third World Relations, Washington, D.C.: Interaction and the Overseas Development Council, 1987. John E. Riely (ed.), American Public Opinion and U.S. Foreign Policy, Chicago: The Chicago Council on Foreign Relations, 1987 and 1991.

II. AMERICANS' WORLD VIEW IS NOT PROVINCIAL

It is popularly held that Americans have a provincial view of the world: most look inward not outward, and don't see international interconnections. In contrast, the national study finds that large majorities (about 65% to 85%) see global linkages among nations, believing that:

- ◆ **ECONOMIC INTERDEPENDENCY:** The economies of the developing countries and of the Eastern European nations do affect the U.S. economy.
- ◆ **IMPACTS ON THE U.S.:** Stronger Third World economies will have positive impacts on U.S. business opportunities, trade, jobs, national security, and local communities.
- ◆ **GLOBAL LINKAGES:** Helping the Third World develop will have positive effects on world peace, prosperity, and democracy.

TABLE 1: LINKAGES AMONG NATIONS

"From what you have heard or read, would you say the economies in (the Third World)(Eastern Europe) affect the U.S. economy a great deal, somewhat, not very much or not at all?"	Great/Some Effect	None/Not Much Effect
◆ Effect of "Third World" economies on the U.S.	83%	15
◆ Effect of "Eastern European" economies on the U.S.	78%	21
"In the long run, if Third World countries do become stronger economically, do you think there be a very positive impact, somewhat positive, somewhat negative, or very negative impact on...?"	Positive	Negative
◆ U.S. business opportunities in the Third World	80%	15
◆ U.S. sales and exports to the Third World	73%	23
◆ The U.S. economy	72%	22
◆ Jobs in the United States	66%	25
◆ U.S. national security	64%	21
◆ You, your family, and your community	64%	17
◆ The environment in the U.S.	54%	22
"In the long run, do you think that helping Third World countries to develop will have great positive effect, some effect, not much effect, or no effect at all on...?"	Great/Some Effect	None/Not Much Effect
◆ Improving world prosperity	84%	14
◆ Improving world peace	80%	18
◆ Improving democracy in the world	76%	20

NOTE: Percentages total from left to right. The "Don't Know"/"Not Sure" responses are omitted in all tables. In this table, the responses are also omitted for those saying "No Impact" to the questions about positive or negative impacts. The "No Impact" responses are few except in two cases: 15 percent say the Third World has no positive or negative impacts on themselves and their communities and/or no impacts on the U.S. environment.

ECONOMIC INTERDEPENDENCY: As shown in Table 1 above, at least three of every four Americans 18 years or older see great or some effect of Third World economies and Eastern European economies on the U.S. economy. As compared with a similar question asked in the 1986 "What Americans Think" study, somewhat more people today (83%) see Third World effects on the U.S. economic system than saw the same seven years ago (74%).

IMPACTS ON THE U.S.: Table 1 also shows that at least two-thirds of the public believes that, if Third World countries do become stronger economically, there will be very positive or somewhat positive impacts on U.S. social and economic conditions.

Of every 10 people: ♦ Eight see positive impacts on U.S. business opportunities in the Third World. ♦ Seven see positive impacts on U.S. trade, our economy, and jobs. ♦ The smallest number, but still a majority of over five of every 10 people, see positive impacts on America's environment. ♦ And as many as six of every 10 Americans expect a positive, personal impact of stronger Third World economies on themselves, their families, their communities.

GLOBAL LINKAGES: Finally, the table shows that about eight in 10 people believe that, in the long run, "helping Third World countries to develop" will have positive effects on world prosperity, peace, and democracy.

Comment

The idea that a parochial American public is insulated from the global interdependencies of nations is undercut by the findings here. The public sees wide-ranging interrelationships between the U.S. and other countries and between the vitality of the Third World and that of all nations. So high are the levels of agreement and so pervasive is the theme of interdependency, that it can't be a newly acquired thought. With the exception of the environment, the large majorities of people who see international connections versus those who don't usually dominate by margins of about 3-to-1 or more. The consistency of the pattern suggest values more bedrock than artificial or momentary.

III. SUPPORT FOR FOREIGN AID IS STRONGER THAN EXPECTED

It is also conventionally believed, and widely reported in the media, that many Americans are increasingly opposed to foreign aid, especially to economic assistance. Instead, very large majorities (70%-90% range) support U.S. foreign involvement and majorities (50%-70% range) support humanitarian and economic foreign assistance to the Third World and to Eastern European countries. The general climate of opinion is very favorable:

- ♦ **HUMANITARIAN AND ECONOMIC AID:** "Humanitarian assistance" is more important than "economic assistance," but both types of aid should be given equally to developing countries and to countries of Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union (Table 2).
- ♦ **FOREIGN POLICY GOALS:** It's important to protect human rights, protect victims of ethnic conflict, improve standards of living, and help bring about democracy. But it's essential to protect Americans' jobs and business interests (Table 3 and 4).

- ◆ **U.S. LEADERSHIP ROLE:** U.S. "moral and economic leadership is vital to a peaceful and prosperous world," and helping others to develop "will pay great and lasting dividends to us all" (Tables 5).
- ◆ **FREE MARKET FORCES:** Free and open trade is good for world prosperity. We have nothing to fear from helping countries to feed themselves and to develop, even if they compete with us (Table 6).

TABLE 2: MORE SUPPORT FOR HUMANITARIAN AID

"The United States provides foreign aid to (developing countries in the Third World)(Eastern European countries). Such foreign aid includes humanitarian aid and economic assistance."

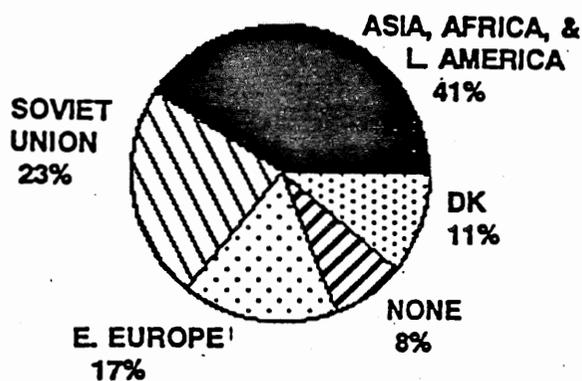
"Are you generally in favor of or opposed to the U.S. giving humanitarian aid to...?"	Favor	Oppose
◆ Developing countries	72%	23
◆ Eastern European countries	71%	24
"Are you generally in favor of or opposed to the U.S. giving economic assistance to...?"	Favor	Oppose
◆ Developing countries	53%	39
◆ Eastern European countries	51%	44

HUMANITARIAN AND ECONOMIC AID: As shown in Table 2 above, more people support giving humanitarian assistance than economic assistance. ◆ But there has been no loss of support over the past several years for economic aid to other countries (52% today, 54% in 1986). ◆ Nor has there been any decrease in the number who say that we should support Third World countries even if they "compete with us economically and politically" (about 65% today and in 1986).

Moreover, Americans don't make any regional distinction in their preferences for which countries should get either form of aid: ◆ People favor giving "humanitarian assistance" equally to developing countries (72%) and to countries of Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union (71%). ◆ Fewer, but still one-half or more, support "economic assistance" equally to developing nations (53%) and Eastern European countries (51%).

They do make a distinction, however, when forced to choose among the developing nations, the former-USSR nations, and Eastern European countries. And their concerns lie more in favor of the Third World.

If they had to choose among U.S. aid recipients, more people favor assistance to the Third World (41%) than to former USSR nations (23%) or to Eastern Europe (17%). However, if the Eastern European and ex-Soviet responses are combined,



about equal numbers of people support Third and "Second" World assistance (40% range).

In all cases, people are much more likely to say that our motives in giving foreign is "more the desire to protect our national security" (40%-50% range) than our "generosity" or our desire "to sell our products." ♦ At least two-fifths of the people believe that "national security" is the principal motive for aid to the Third World and to Eastern Europe. ♦ Only in the case of the Third World do many people think our aid is motivated by generosity (32%), which is somewhat more than those saying the same about aid to Eastern Europe.

FOREIGN POLICY GOALS: As shown below in Table 3, there is widespread support for several U.S. foreign policy goals; and support is maximum where Americans can clearly see their self-interest at stake.

People were asked about the importance to them of six U.S. "foreign policy goals," five of which were asked in two earlier studies (1991, 1987) by The Chicago Council on Foreign Relations. Combining "very important" with "somewhat important" responses: ♦ Nearly everyone wants U.S. foreign policy to protect "the jobs of American workers." ♦ Similarly, nine of 10 want protection for "the interests of American business abroad." ♦ At nearly the same levels of assertiveness (80%-90% range) most people also favor protecting human rights, protecting civil war victims, raising living standards, and promoting democracy in other countries.

TABLE 3: SUPPORT FOR FOREIGN POLICY GOALS

"I'm going to read you...possible foreign policy goals that the U.S. might have. For each one (say whether) it should be a very important foreign policy goal...somewhat important...not important goal at all?"	Important	Not Important
♦ Protecting the jobs of American workers	98%	2
♦ Protecting the interests of American business abroad	90%	8
♦ Protecting and defending human rights in other countries	88%	10
♦ Helping to improve the standard of living of less developed countries	86%	14
♦ Helping to bring a democratic form of government to other countries	83%	16
♦ Protecting victims of ethnic conflicts and civil wars in other countries	79%	18

Taking out the "somewhat important" responses, Table 4 below compares trends for the "very important" policy goals today with the same questions asked in two previous studies.

As Table 4 shows: ♦ There has been a enormous jump in the number of people saying that it is "very important" to protect American jobs (doubling to 87% in 1993 vs. 39% in 1991 and 43% in 1987). ♦ There is also a marked increase in the number today (49%) saying that it is "very important" to protect American business interests abroad (27% and 32% in 1991 and 1987, respectively). ♦ Another indication that economic concerns are at the core of public opinion is the decline in those saying it's very important to raise others' living standards.

On the other hand, helping "democracy" to grow in other countries has taken on greater

importance for the public, increasing from about three of every 10 people in earlier studies to about four of every 10 today.

TABLE 4: TRENDS IN "VERY IMPORTANT" FOREIGN POLICY GOALS

TREND COMPARISON OF "VERY IMPORTANT" FOREIGN POLICY GOALS IN 1993 AND 1986	1993 Very Important	1991 & 1987 Very Import
◆ Protecting the jobs of American workers	87%	39% & 43%
◆ Protecting the interests of American business abroad	49%	27% & 32%
◆ Protecting and defending human rights in other countries	46%	45% & 44%
◆ Helping to improve the standard of living of less developed countries	31%	42% & 46%
◆ Helping to bring a democratic form of government to other countries	38%	26% & 29%

AMERICA'S LEADERSHIP ROLE: The public is both keen on a prominent U.S. role in world affairs and unthreatened by the prospects of economic or political competition: About nine out of every 10 persons believe that "American economic and moral leadership is vital to a peaceful and prosperous world" (Table 5).

As Table 5 shows, some of the reasons Americans support active world leadership and assistance to others (all in the 80% range) are that: ◆ We help make other countries "more stable." ◆ We keep them as "allies." ◆ And our "aid is essential if other countries are to become self-sufficient."

Indeed, "In the long run, helping other countries to develop will pay great and lasting dividends to all of us."

TABLE 5: REASONS FOR U.S. LEADERSHIP

"As I read some statements about U.S. assistance for developing countries, tell me if you tend to strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree..?" (paraphrased)	Agree	Disagree
◆ American moral and economic leadership is vital to a peaceful and prosperous world	91%	8
◆ Helping other countries to develop will make them more stable	83%	17
◆ U.S. aid helps us make or keep other countries as allies	77%	21
◆ Helping Third World to develop will pay great and lasting dividends to us all	77%	19
◆ U.S. aid is essential if other countries are to become self-sufficient	68%	31

FREE MARKET FORCES: As shown in Table 6 below, about nine of every 10 American adults say that "free and open trade among all nations is good for international prosperity"; and that we should help farmers in other countries "even if it means that they buy less food from the U.S."

And about seven in 10 do not think it's against our interest to help developing nations because "they will compete with us economically and politically" (67%).

TABLE 6: ENCOURAGE ECONOMIC COMPETITION

As I read some statements about U.S. assistance for developing countries, tell me if you tend to strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree...? (paraphrased)	Agree	Disagree
◆ Free and open trade among all nations is good for international prosperity	87%	10
◆ Help farmers in other countries to learn to grow their own food even if they buy less from U.S.	87%	11
◆ Against our interests to help developing countries because they will compete with us economically and politically	29%	67

Comment

At least for the general climate of American public opinion, the "atmosphere" for continuing humanitarian and economic assistance to other countries is very favorable. Many of the questions are somewhat abstract concepts and may be easier to answer favorably than to answer more specific questions that pose trade-offs and require people to choose among alternatives.

On the other hand, there is no gainsaying the consistency of findings that Americans are very strongly in favor of foreign aid and active U.S. leadership in the world across many measures of support or non-support.

And, amidst the rush of technical assistance to the CIS, NIS, and Central and Eastern Europeans countries – about which many people are skeptical, they are saying to our policymakers: "Don't forget the Third World." And for a fairly sizeable group, charity is a good enough reason to aid developing countries.

IV. SELF-INTERESTS ARE FIRST, BUT NOT EXCLUSIONARY

Another popularly held view is that Americans' preoccupations with their own problems decreases their interest in helping others. Certainly, the public puts its self-interest before others, but not exclusively:

- ◆ **CHARITY BEGINS AT HOME:** Among our first foreign policy obligations is protection of American jobs and business interests. And we need to solve some our own problems before turning to the problems of others.
- ◆ **BUT WE SHOULD HELP OTHERS:** People in developing countries are different from us, and their problems are largely of their own making. But we should and we can help them.

TABLE 7: SELF-INTERESTS AND DIFFERENCES

"As I read some statements about U.S. assistance for developing countries, tell me if you tend to strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree..?" (paraphrased)	Agree	Disagree
♦ Solve our unemployment problems before creating jobs in other countries	91%	8
♦ Solve our own poverty problems before turning to other countries	91%	9
♦ Educate our own children before investing in education in other countries	89%	8
♦ Many aid programs are bad because they make countries dependent on us	83%	16
♦ Third World countries to blame for own problems because of poor planning	75%	21
♦ To blame for their hunger and poverty because of their corrupt governments	74%	23
♦ Causes of hunger and poverty in Third World are the same as those in U.S.	37%	61
♦ Give them less aid and leave them alone to develop in their own ways	40%	57
♦ Their problems are so overwhelming that anything U.S. does has no effect on improving conditions in developing countries	42%	56

CHARITY BEGINS AT HOME: As shown earlier in Table 3 (page 5), at least nine of every 10 adults say that important U.S. foreign policy goals are to protect "the jobs of American workers" and to protect "American business abroad."

Moreover, as shown above in Table 7, nine of every 10 also say that before we turn to the problems of other countries, we need first to: ♦ Solve our own poverty problems; ♦ solve our own unemployment problems; and ♦ educate our own children.

And one reason for taking care ourselves first is that, in the long run, "many aid programs are bad because they make other countries too dependent on us" (83%).

BUT WE SHOULD HELP OTHERS: Table 7 also shows that three of every five persons believe that "the conditions that cause hunger and poverty in the Third World" are different from the causes of hunger and poverty in the U.S. These "different" causes are further exacerbated by ineptitude and corruption. That is, three of every four adults believe that Third World governments are largely to blame for creating their own problems because of poor planning. An equal number says that the countries are largely to blame for their hunger and poverty because of their corrupt governments.

This is a rather bleak picture of the Third World. However, most people – about another three of every five – also feel that the "problems in developing countries" are not "so overwhelming" that U.S. assistance cannot improve conditions there. And a comparable number says that we should not cut our aid and "leave them alone" to develop on their own.

Comment

Be it U.S. jobs, business interests, or education, the survey confirms the importance of self-interest. Like all people, Americans think of their own interests first, but not to the exclusion of the welfare of others. Indeed, fully two out of three, see improvements in the Third World having some positive impacts on themselves, their families, and their communities.

Yet, widely prevailing public opinion requires that we take care of ourselves first and don't deplete our own resources in assisting overly dependent Third World countries. After all, they are different from us, and they have made many of their own problems.

Most people feel that Americans and Third Worlders have little in common. Although there is a strong sense of humanity in the public's concern for developing nations, Americans resist the notion that the conditions that cause destitution and want in those countries are the same kinds of conditions here. Having said that, Americans are not daunted by the problems of developing countries, and don't think we should cut them off to work things out alone. Rather, most people say that we should help other countries, and that there are many good reasons for doing so.

V. SEVERAL TYPES OF ASSISTANCE HAVE LESS PRIORITY TODAY

Although the public sees interdependent social, economic, and political systems among nations and although they widely support U.S. foreign aid, their support for certain programs does not have the same order or strength of priority as it did some years ago. This could be related to the end of cold war, weakened U.S. economic conditions, and new priorities:

- ◆ **NEW PRIORITIES EMERGE:** Helping countries to prevent the spread of the AIDS disease is the top priority among assistance programs for developing countries. Suppressing illegal drugs has high priority too.
- ◆ **TRADITIONAL PRIORITIES DECLINE:** Otherwise, people give lower priorities to specific assistance programs than they did in 1986; although disaster relief and health programs continue to have highest priority.
- ◆ **SPENDING PRIORITIES CHANGE:** With the "end of the cold war with Russia," people are more likely than not to say that foreign aid should be reduced, and that the first order of business is to protect U.S. economic self-interests.

TABLE 8: SUPPORT FOR SPECIFIC AID PROGRAMS
 Now, let's talk about what kinds of aid programs are important for developing countries.

On a scale where 1 means lowest priority and 10 means highest priority, using any number between 1 and 10, where would you place these types of aid?	1993 Avg. Rating	1986 Avg. Rating
◆ Helping countries to prevent the spread of AIDS disease (HIV)	7.9	NA
◆ Helping countries to control the production of illegal drugs and narcotics	7.1	NA
TREND COMPARISON OF AVERAGE SCORE RATINGS FOR AID PROGRAMS IN 1993 AND 1986.	1993 Avg. Rating	1986 Avg. Rating
◆ Relief for victims of disasters like floods, droughts, and earthquakes	7.4	8.3
◆ Education on family planning and providing birth control	7.1	7.5
◆ Programs that help countries lower infant death rates	7.0	7.3
◆ Helping farmers in those countries buy seeds and basic equipment	6.7	7.6
◆ Giving other countries food to feed their hungry populations	6.5	7.1
◆ Building large projects like roads, dams, and hospitals	5.9	6.5
◆ Helping victims of ethnic conflict and civil war	5.8	5.8
◆ Supporting small businesses started by people in those countries	5.6	5.9
◆ Giving people university or other training in the U.S.	5.2	5.6
◆ Using aid to rent land for U.S. military bases in those countries	4.8	6.0

NEW PRIORITIES EMERGE: Table 8 was generated using a 10-step scale on which people were asked to rate the priorities of different programs – where "1" on the scale is the "lowest priority" and "10" is the highest priority." A score of 5.5 would be the expected mid-point on the scale. So, any rating above 5.5 could be taken as positive and any rating below could be interpreted as negative.

There is evidence that new priorities are in the public's mind. As shown above in Table 8 for all 12 types of programs rated: ◆ "Helping countries to prevent the spread of AIDS (HIV) disease" has the highest average priority rating (7.9). ◆ And "helping countries to control the production of illegal drugs and narcotics" also rates highly (7.1 average rating).

TRADITIONAL PRIORITIES DECLINE: On the same scale of priorities, people rated 10 other aid programs, using the same questions asked in the 1986 "What American Thinks" survey. Although ratings are somewhat lower across the board, health and relief programs in general have maintained highest public priority. Food programs have second priority. And other types of aid have lower priority. Using aid for military purposes is the lowest priority today.

More specifically: ◆ Highest priority is given to disaster relief and health programs. With average scores of 7.0 to 7.4, people favor aid for disaster relief, birth control, and lowering infant

deaths. Average scores in 1986 were somewhat higher, ranging from 7.3 to 8.3. ♦ Food programs are the second highest priority. Aiding farmers to buy seeds and equipment and giving food to hungry populations score, on the average, from 6.5 to 6.7. Scores in 1986 were higher: from 7.1 to 7.6.

♦ Of less priority is a mixture of programs aimed at building infrastructure, protecting minorities, supporting small businesses, and providing education in the U.S. They also receive lower ratings today than previously. ♦ And of least priority today is using aid to buy land for military bases. It drops sharply to a 4.6 rating, down from 6.0 in 1986.

As such, most aid programs have lower priority today than in 1986. But, with the exception of educating others in the U.S. and using aid for military purposes, all aid programs receive positive ratings.

Of course, as suggested by the priority for AIDS and drugs, other aid programs that were not asked about may have higher priority than those some seven years ago.

SPENDING PRIORITIES CHANGE: With the "end of the cold war with Russia," Americans are more likely than not to say that "economic assistance to the Third World should be reduced" (53% vs. 43%). Unfortunately, this was the only question asked on the subject.

53% Agree
43% Disagree

Q. "With the end of the cold war with Russia, the United States' economic assistance to the Third World should be reduced."

At the same time that people would cut "economic assistance," their concern for U.S. economic self-interests has risen dramatically over previous years. That is, as noted above, Americans' concern for protecting U.S. jobs has doubled over previous measures in 1986 and 1991. And the importance of protecting U.S. business interests has increased greatly. There's no doubt that the domestic agenda is the first concern. But, also at the same time – and also noted above, helping to bring about democracy in other countries has become for more people a very important foreign policy goal than in previous years.

Comment

The findings indicate that there is a new context, a changing public mood, for foreign assistance programs. New health and public safety priorities are emerging in place of some traditional assistance programs. But it seems that economics are largely defining the changing climate. Although the level of support for "economic assistance" is unchanged from 1986 measures, the public's perception may be that such assistance – foreign spending – is less important now in the aftermath of the Cold War.

There seems to be, however, a qualification to that perception: A sense that there is more to gain than lose from "appropriate" assistance programs; and these gains translate as benefits to the United States as well as to a more stable, free, and prosperous world.

Apparently, appropriate programs would not abandon needy countries and would retain vital

U.S. leadership in world affairs. Such assistance would encourage free-market competition among nations, even where U.S. assistance would make countries more competitive – but toward the goal of self-reliance. Further, appropriate assistance would include "humanitarian assistance," for which support is very high. And appropriate assistance would also include democracy-building, for which support has increased since 1986.

VI. AMERICANS BELIEVE MOST FOREIGN AID IS EFFECTIVE

One argument in the debate about foreign aid is that U.S. assistance programs just don't work. So, if there were a loss of support for foreign aid (which there isn't) or if public priorities are changing (which they may be), one probable reason might be that Americans don't think that our assistance has any effect on conditions in developing countries. Instead:

- ◆ **MUCH AID IS EFFECTIVE:** American foreign aid works in feeding the hungry, encouraging democracy, raising education, reducing children's death rates, and in other ways. What is more, the United Nations might be able to do better.
- ◆ **SOME AID IS PROBLEMATIC:** People are divided over the effects of our aid on protecting victims of ethnic conflicts and on conserving natural resources.
- ◆ **SOME AID IS NOT EFFECTIVE:** American aid doesn't work in reducing poverty or reducing population growth.

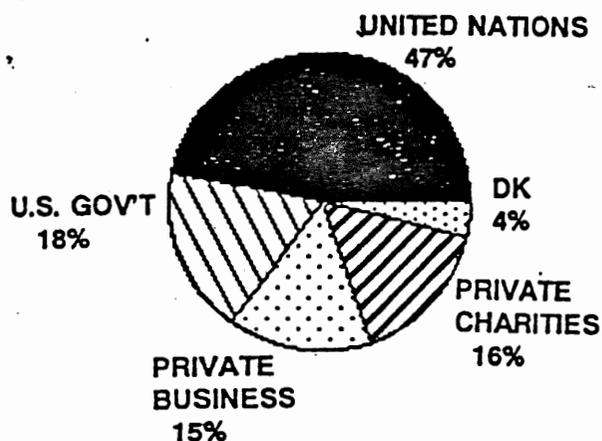
TABLE 9: EFFECTS OF U.S. ASSISTANCE

"Do you think that U.S. assistance to Third World countries has had great effect, some effect, not much effect, or not effect at all on...?"	Great/Some Effect	None/Not Much Effect
◆ Feeding the hungry and poor	77%	23
◆ Improving their ability to produce their own food supply	68%	28
◆ Encouraging the growth of democracy	68%	29
◆ Strengthening the Third World economies	63%	34
◆ Increasing people's level of education	62%	34
◆ Reducing death rates among children	59%	38
◆ Protecting victims of ethnic conflicts and civil wars	51%	45
◆ Conserving the Third World countries' natural resources	47%	44
◆ Reducing poverty	45%	53
◆ Reducing population growth rates in those countries	29%	65

SOME AID IS EFFECTIVE: As shown in Table 9 above, large majorities of American adults say that "U.S. assistance to developing countries has had great effect (or) some effect on a variety of social and economic problems.

Two-thirds or more say that aid is effective for: ♦ "Feeding the hungry and the poor"; ♦ improving nations' capacities to "produce their own food supply"; and ♦ "encouraging the growth of democracy." A little less than two-thirds say U.S. aid is effective for: ♦ "strengthening ... national economies"; ♦ increasing people's "level of education"; and ♦ "reducing death rates among children."

With this positive picture of effective U.S. aid, it's notable that about one-half the public thinks that the United Nations would do the "best job" in assisting other countries by reaching "the largest number of people in the fastest time and the lowest cost." This is more than twice the number choosing either private business or private charities or the U.S. government (15%-20% range), although the U.S. may be seen as part of the U.N. assistance effort.



SOME AID IS PROBLEMATIC: As Table 9 also shows, the public is divided about evenly on the effects of foreign assistance on "protecting victims of ethnic conflicts and civil war" and on helping countries to conserve their "natural resources."

SOME AID IS NOT EFFECTIVE: But most people (53%) don't think American aid has any effect on "reducing poverty," and as many as two out of three (65%) think our aid has no effect on "reducing population growth" in developing countries.

Comment

From one-half to three-fourths of American adults believe that U.S. aid to developing countries has positive effects for seven of the 10 types of assistance programs queried. The programs cover a wide range of adverse conditions in developing countries – for example, feeding programs, agricultural production, and democracy-building.

Where the public is skeptical is on the effectiveness of aid in dealing with the environment and poverty. Where people are downright disbelieving is in the effectiveness of aid to combat rapid population growth, although they support "birth control" programs as a rather high priority. It is these three conditions in combination that are the generalized, but vivid, media images coming out of the Third World: Abject poverty, eroding lands, burning rain forest, and teeming populations outstripping their land and water resource base.

Images even under desperate circumstances can, of course, be positive. The many months of nightly television pictures of the blue-helmeted U.N. teams and their relief convoys in Bosnia have probably etched on the public's mind a new and significantly positive image of the effectiveness of the world body.

VII. PUBLIC ATTENTION TO THE THIRD WORLD IS HIGHER

At the same time that Americans have more sympathy for the Third World and show more support for foreign aid than expected, they also are more interested and better informed than they were some five years ago:

- ◆ **INFORMAL COMMUNICATION HAS INCREASED:** Although media-use has not changed, Americans read more, talk more, and are better informed about the Third World than "five years ago."
- ◆ **BUT THE PUBLIC IS MORE PASSIVE:** However, people are less active than before in Third World causes; learn more passively than actively; and, with their current economic constraints, give less money than before.

78% Know More
73% Talk More
66% Read More

Q. "Because of family, job, and other responsibilities, our lives change from year to year...In your own case, compared with five years ago, are you more likely or less likely to ..."

INFORMAL COMMUNICATION HAS INCREASED: At least two-thirds of the public (65%-75% range) say that today, "compared with five years ago," they read more, talk more, and are better informed about "issues in Third World countries."

People are exposed to the mass media today at the same levels they were in 1987. That is, of every 10 adults: ◆ Nine have high television exposure; ◆ eight have high daily newspaper exposure; and ◆ six have high exposure to news magazines. Another six of 10 say they listen frequently to "news programs on the National Public Station," but we are not sure if there was any confusion with commercial radio.

25% Every day
32% 2-3 per week
43% Less often

Q. "About how often, if ever, do you talk with other people about major international issues...almost every day, two or three times a week, once a week, once every two weeks, or less than that?"

More than one-half say that they talk about "major international issues" at least two or three times a week. And two out of five lay some claim to opinion leadership, saying that someone has asked their "opinion or advice on major international issues in the news" within the past few days.

BUT THE PUBLIC IS MORE PASSIVE: Despite their apparently higher involvement in communication about the Third World, if Americans do learn anything about developing countries, it's by far more likely to be through television -- the easiest, most passive kind of exposure -- than by any other means.

In a year's time: ♦ More than twice as many people see "television programs about Third World countries" (85%) than have exposure through any other single medium. ♦ At the next highest level of exposure (40%-range) are movies/videotapes and pamphlets/brochures. These, too, are behaviors requiring little exertion. ♦ As potential exposure becomes more difficult, fewer (20%-30% range) can recall getting anything in their mail or reading any books. ♦ And where exposure requires exertion, only a few (10% or less) take courses, attend speeches, or go to conferences or meetings.

The findings above for higher self-claimed communication behavior gain credence with the opposite finding that, compared with five years ago, some people are "more active" (19%) but twice as many (42%) are "less active in groups, issues, or causes" concerned with the Third World.

19% More Active
37% No Change
42% Less Active

Q. "(Compared with 5 years ago) Are you more active or less active in groups, issues, or social causes concerned with Third World countries?"

Only about one person in every 10 has "ever been a member" of any programs, groups, or causes concerned with developing countries (11%). Only a few more have "ever participated in any programs" concerned with Third World issues (13%).

As shown in Table 10, Americans are also "less likely to donate money" to such groups than previously. Fewer people today than in 1986 say that they have "made any donations of money in the past 12 months to any charitable organizations." In fact, it's a very sharp drop-off (only 55% today vs. 81% in 1986).

TABLE 10: DONATIONS TO CHARITABLE ORGANIZATIONS

TREND COMPARISON OF DONATIONS TO CHARITABLE ORGANIZATIONS IN 1993 AND 1986	1993	1986
♦ Made donation of money in the last 12 months to any charitable organizations or other groups promoting social or non-political causes	55%	81%
♦ YES: Gave less than \$100 total donation in the past 12 months	52%	48%
♦ YES: Gave more than \$100/less than \$500 total donation	28	31
♦ YES: Gave more than \$500 total donation in the past 12 months	13	18

Of those who do give money, slightly more people give smaller amounts and slightly fewer people give larger amounts than before. That is, compared with 1986, a few more people give under \$100 a year (52% now vs. 48% previously) and a few less people give over \$500 (13% now vs. 18% previously).

<p>Comment</p>

The findings don't mean that Americans have stopped giving. On the contrary, within the past two years or so, nine out of 10 have given "food, money, or clothing to help poor people" in their own communities (91%). And four out of 10 have done the same "to help poor people in other countries" (42%).

Neither do the findings suggest that the public is dropping out of organized activities related to Third World causes. Leaving aside high memberships in churches, PTAs, and professional associations, Americans are as likely to belong to groups concerned with the Third World (11%) as to belong to any other kinds of civic groups, business associations, service organizations, fraternal orders, environmental groups, human rights groups, religious clubs, veterans organizations, labor unions, or others (all in the 5%-15% range).

But the data are rather convincing that, even though people are more conversant and conversational than before about problems of developing countries, they take the easiest path to knowledge and get most of their conversation-starters through television and more often in the living room than in the classroom.

VIII. ARE THE FINDINGS CREDIBLE?

The purpose of this March 1993 survey was to assess public support or non-support for U.S. humanitarian and economic assistance to other nations in order to compare prevailing views with those of special audiences targeted by the A.I.D. Development Education (DevEd) program. The survey was not designed to "diagnose" the limits on support or non-support. For example, we did not ask people to choose between domestic and foreign aid programs. We know from many studies that, when faced with domestic trade-offs, public support for many types of foreign assistance declines.

Domestic budget alternatives to foreign aid were not the issue here, although certainly our findings show the force of national self-interests. Rather, as part of the overall DevEd evaluation, we sought to learn what people feel about assisting other nations and whether they do or do not see bilateral or global implications of trying to improve social, economic, and political conditions in other countries, especially the developing countries. The following addresses some questions about the study.

◆ **IS THE STUDY PARTISAN?** The study was undertaken independently of A.I.D. offices, and A.I.D. was never mentioned to respondents at any point in the interviewing.

The survey was designed, monitored, and analyzed by Intercultural Communication, Inc. (ICI) a specialty social research firm. The ICI project director, Dr. Gerald Hursh-César, co-developed the CBS New Poll, now shared with the New York Times. He is a recognized international authority in social research. Two of his several textbooks, Survey Research and Third World Survey, are standards in the field and are used around the world.

Interviewing and tabulations were done by National Research, Inc., a subsidiary of Hamilton & Staff, one of the premier social and marketing research firms in the country. The sample was

provided by Survey Sampling, Inc., the most prominent and reputable sampling firm in the U.S.

◆ **IS THE SAMPLE BIASED?** As compared with 1992 U.S. Census estimates and with the 1986 "What America Thinks" sample, the demographic characteristics of the FHA sample have no important deviations from the demographics of the other two distributions.

As expected, people in lower income and education groups tend to be generally less supportive of foreign assistance than are people in higher groups. And there is a tendency in the sample toward under-representation of lower-education and lower-income people. But the differences in their views, which are often minor, are not enough to change the consistency of findings. That is, if either the lowest or highest education or income groups are removed from total sample results, the pattern of findings (for example, interdependent economies, support for foreign assistance, support for U.S. leadership, effects of foreign aid) remains the same.

DEMOGRAPHIC COMPARISONS

	1993 <u>SAMPLE</u> (%)	1992 <u>CENSUS</u> (%)	1987 <u>SAMPLE</u> (%)
◆ MEN	50	49	48
◆ WOMEN	50	51	52
◆ WHITE	87	81	84
◆ BLACK	7	12	11
◆ ASIAN/OTHER	6	7	5
◆ 18-24 YRS	14	14	16
◆ 25-34	25	23	24
◆ 35-64	47	45	>
◆ 65 & OLDER	13	17	> 60
◆ UP TO HIGH SCHOOL	42	55	50
◆ SOME COLLEGE	27	19	24
◆ COLLEGE GRADUATE+	31	26	26
◆ EMPLOYED	63	60	-
◆ UNEMPLOYED	7	4	-
◆ NOT IN LABOR FORCE	30	36	-
◆ UNDER \$15,000	14	23	25
◆ \$15-\$25,000	19	17	>
◆ MORE THAN \$25,000	67	60	> 75
◆ PROTESTANT	48	-	57
◆ CATHOLIC	27	-	24
◆ JEWISH/OTHER	25	-	19

◆ **ARE RESPONSES INCONSISTENT?** Trend data show strong consistency in certain then-and-now behavior, such as media exposure and group memberships, where they should. Where there is a change in trends (e.g., support for democracy, protection of American jobs and business interests), the changes are supported by answers in the same direction to other, related questions.

Regardless of trends, Americans' responses to different types of questions on the same subject at different places in the interview show patterns of strong consistency and congruency (e.g., foreign aid is necessary for other nations' self-sufficiency, stability, and democracy; and changes in these Third World conditions will have positive impacts on global conditions).

To avoid "reponse set" (people getting into a rut, answering a string of similar questions in the same way): Questions were balanced so that about as many were phrased positively as were phrased negatively; similar types of question were put in different places in the questionnaire; and, where questions were asked in a series (e.g., "do you agree or disagree with the following statements"), the order of questions was reversed for every other respondent.

Where people could be inclined to inflate their answers to enhance their self-image (e.g., claiming to read more, talk more, and know more about Third World issues), they resist the inclination to inflate their answers to other, related questions that could be even more self-enhancing (e.g., they are less active in and give less money to Third World causes than previously). Moreover, if they claim one type of general behavior (e.g., give less money today), they support it with their answers to specific questions at other places in the interview (more give under \$100 and fewer give over \$500 than in 1986).

There are other examples. We are fully satisfied that the critical mass of people interviewed was listening to the interviewers and answering the questions carefully. Capricious responses would not have produced the same patterns of consistency across time, topics, or sentiments.

◆ **ARE DIFFERENCES OBSCURED?** Many questions offered responses with different levels of intensity (e.g., "strongly agree" and "somewhat agree"). We usually combine the "strongly" and the "somewhat" answers in the tables, and report them together as positive or negative. We do this for simplicity on the basis that there is less chance of error in discerning a positive feeling (agreement) vs. a negative feeling (disagreement) than there is in discerning whether a positive feeling is strong or moderate.

Yet, people's answers seem to be more discriminating than impulsive (e.g., they strongly favor birth control assistance but don't think the assistance to-date has had much effect). Nor do people take refuge in "middling" responses. Where they feel very strongly, they say so (e.g., 50% to 90% say it is "very important" to protect U.S. jobs, U.S. business, and other people's human rights.) Still, as opposed to a general population survey, levels of intensity may be more important in the analysis of population sub-groups who have specialized familiarity with or expertise in the survey topic; for example, those 11 percent who belong to groups concerned with Third World issues.

◆ **ARE RESPONSES AWASH IN "DON'T KNOWS"?** The "true" distribution of responses to any given questioning could be skewed if the thinking person's meaningful views were obscured by large numbers of other people's meaningless "don't know"/"not sure" evasions.

This simply isn't the case. The percentages of "don't knows" typically hover around the 1-2 percent or 3-4 percent levels. Only occasionally do "don't knows" rise to the 7-8 percent level. And rarely are they higher. This is not an unthinking or uninterested American public that either cannot or will not answer questions about international issues.