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China's 1 Billion: Implications of Growth



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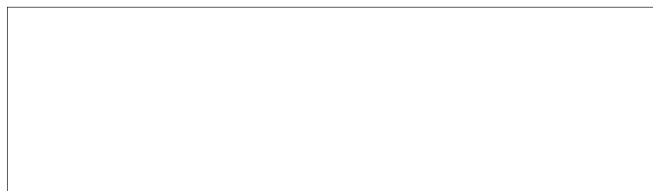
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Summary

*Information available
as of 6 December 1982
was used in this report.*

The population of China, which stood at slightly more than 1 billion as of mid-1982, is increasing at the rate of 1.2 million persons a month. We believe that by the year 2000 the population will probably range between 1.25 billion and slightly more than 1.3 billion, substantially above Beijing's goal of 1.2 billion.

Despite a comprehensive family planning program targeted to slow population growth, the birth rate has surged in the past two years. The increase results, in part, from new rural economic policies that have not only weakened local authority essential for effective family planning efforts but have also put a premium on larger families by linking income to production and giving greater economic decisionmaking authority to peasant households. Other reasons for the increased birth rate include the large number of young people who are now entering marriage and childbearing age and the 1980 Marriage Law that lowered the legal age of marriage and provided a legal basis for children to support their elderly parents.

The massive population and its increased rate of growth have major domestic and international implications. At home these include:

- Increased demands for food and basic necessities.
- Growing unemployment and underemployment.
- Intensification of a number of social problems, including youth disaffection, crime, overcrowded housing, inadequate medical and child care, and substandard educational training.
- Rising political tensions as a result of unfulfilled economic goals and festering social problems, leaving the leadership more open to criticism.

Internationally, China will have to favor food over imports of capital goods and will probably continue its recent policy of expanding Third World market opportunities for its large pool of labor and skilled personnel.

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China's 1 Billion: Implications of Growth

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Over a Billion—25 More Each Minute

Excessive population growth is an ancient problem in China. The problem is even more pressing today, threatening to jeopardize the painfully achieved economic gains of recent years and to thwart the full realization of an array of social and economic goals that form the objectives of Beijing's modernization efforts. The magnitude of the problem was highlighted by the recently released preliminary census for China which tallied the population as of mid-1982 at 1.008 billion—a figure that represents roughly 22 percent of the world's population (table 1). In addition, the data indicate a recent upsurge in births. In 1979 the Chinese stated that the population growth rate was 1.17 percent; preliminary census data indicate the 1981 growth rate at 1.45 percent.¹ Because of the size of the population base, even slight changes in growth rates translate into huge absolute numbers of people. The difference between a 1.45-percent growth rate and a 1.17-percent rate over the 1980-90 decade would amount to 30 million people.

The leadership has been increasingly concerned over the implications of these trends:

- A recent *People's Daily* editorial complained that some individuals still lack "sufficient understanding" of the urgency of controlling population growth, a few are "even apathetic," and in some places population growth is "out of control."
- In January 1982 State Councilor Chen Muhua, former head of the State Family Planning Commission, warned against a repeat of the baby boom of

¹ Preliminary results of the 1982 census were released in late October. Population data used in the tables are based on the census and on statistics compiled by the Foreign Demographic Analysis Division (FDAD), Bureau of the Census. Population estimates from FDAD, Aird's Model 3, June 1982, fit closely with official Chinese census data for 1953, 1964, and 1982. Slight adjustments have been made. Chinese data are used for vital rates. Figures 1 and 6 have been constructed from data in Chen, Charles H. C., and Tyler, Carle W., "Demographic Implications of Family Size Alternatives in the People's Republic of China," *The China Quarterly* 89, March 1982, pp. 65-73. Chen and Tyler used an earlier (1980) FDAD population model for China as their data source.

Table 1
China: Population and Estimated
Vital Rates

Year	Population (millions)	Crude Birth ^a	Crude Death ^a
1953	583	37.0	14.0
1954	596	38.6	13.2
1955	610	32.6	12.3
1956	624	31.9	11.4
1957	639	34.0	10.8
1958	654	NA	NA
1959	668	32.6	NA
1960	673	NA	NA
1961	670	NA	NA
1962	669	NA	NA
1963	678	43.9	10.1
1964	695	39.3	11.5
1965	715	38.1	9.6
1966	734	35.2	8.9
1967	752	34.1	8.4
1968	772	35.8	8.3
1969	793	34.3	8.1
1970	815	33.6	7.6
1971	838	30.7	7.3
1972	860	29.9	7.7
1973	880	28.1	7.1
1974	898	25.0	7.4
1975	915	23.1	7.3
1976	930	20.0	7.3
1977	942	19.0	6.9
1978	955	18.3	6.3
1979	968	17.9	6.2
1980	981	NA	NA
1981	993	20.9	6.3
1982	1,008		

Note: Demographic analyses prepared by the Foreign Demographic Analysis Division, as well as those by many foreign demographers, argue that the birth and death rates were considerably higher during the 1950s than reported by the Chinese; differences between various estimates of vital rates from the late 1960 onward and Chinese figures are much smaller.

^a Per 1,000 persons, per year.

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Counting the Population

The size of China's population has always been a mystery. Entering Beijing in 1644, the Manchus discovered that officials of the deposed Ming Dynasty already had the population returns completed for the year 1651! No modern census was undertaken until 1953 when a population of 583 million was announced—a figure that exceeded earlier estimates by about 100 million. After 1957 almost no population data were released, although another census was taken in 1964; in 1971 then Vice Premier Li Xiannian admitted in an interview that different government ministries used population estimates varying by as much as 80 million people. [redacted]

The nationwide census conducted 1-10 July 1982 had the benefit of assistance in the planning stages from foreign demographers and the United Nations Mission in China. Computers were imported from the West to assist the 5 million census workers with the collection and processing of data. Questionnaires were designed to ascertain 19 demographic factors; data on the number of children born last year and women of childbearing age in each household will be significant for gauging current and future population growth rates. [redacted]

The announced census, however, does not end speculation about its accuracy. One reason is that the census total is virtually identical (a less-than-1-million-person difference) with previously published Chinese statistics based on household registration tabulation. Unresolved problems include reliance in the census enumeration on household registration tabulations that are updated yearly, the lack of independent household lists compiled by a door-to-door survey, and the admission by officials that during the Cultural Revolution the registration system "turned into a mess." Births in some rural areas may have been underreported to avoid penalties exacted for failure to meet one- or two-child family planning quotas. There is concern that the contradiction between the census results and population data previously submitted will expose earlier data manipulations by local officials attempting to show "success" in family planning campaigns. More questions also remain concerning previously published Chinese population data, particularly those on vital rates, that do not jibe, or seem plausible, with analyses made by Western demographers. [redacted]

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the 1960s, when China's growth averaged slightly more than 20 million people a year from 1964 to 1973. Chen emphasized that "the hundreds of millions who were born during the decade of uncontrolled growth in the 1960s are now entering marriageable age. If they are not guided into the orbit of family planning, it will be almost impossible to keep our population within the limit of 1.2 billion at the end of the century."

- General Secretary Hu Yaobang in his report to the 12th Party Congress in September 1982 warned that excessive population growth not only threatens modernization objectives but may even "disrupt social stability."

- Premier Zhao Ziyang in his 30 November report to the National People's Congress said that success of the current economic plan hinges on "strictly controlling" population growth. [redacted]

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Family Planning Targets and Techniques

The ticking of the Malthusian clock has caused the Chinese leadership to embrace increasingly stringent family planning policies over the past several years (appendix A). In 1979 Chen Muhua unveiled Beijing's population targets. The goals were ambitious: to lower the population growth rate from 12.05 per thousand in 1978 to less than 10 per thousand by 1980, to five per thousand in 1985, and to achieve zero population

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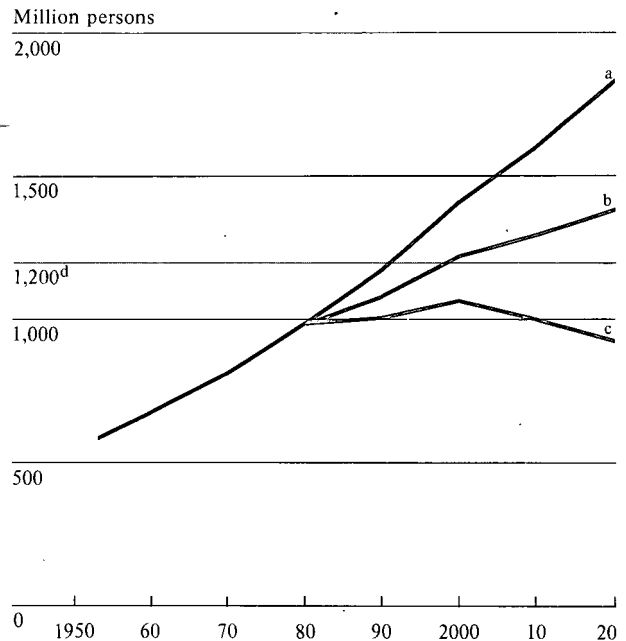
growth by the year 2000. The one-child family norm was introduced at this time as the means by which population growth could eventually be halted and reversed.

The leadership has vacillated in its approaches to achieve these targets. As the birth rate began to rise in 1980, accounts of "remedial measures"—often meaning abortions—began to appear in the press.

In some areas monetary penalties for noncompliance with family planning goals have been increased. Recent press reporting indicates that the harsher methods employed in 1981-82 have also led to female infanticide by parents desiring a son. Premier Zhao Ziyang recently denounced this practice, demanding punishment for those responsible. Apparently, greater attention and emphasis are to be placed on education of the people (appendix B). A national family planning propaganda work conference, convened in Beijing on 1 November, developed materials for propagandizing more widely that "family planning is a national affair concerning the future of Communism."

Despite these efforts, optimism began to fade over reaching the original 1979 targets within a year after their unveiling. Although Chinese officials have privately admitted to American officials that the original population targets cannot be met, publically they continue to stress the 1.2-billion goal and its importance as a target. According to recent Chinese projections, if the present number of children (2.3) per woman is maintained, the population would reach 1.282 billion by the end of the century—far in excess of China's goal. But if the family planning program has some success and the average number of children per woman of childbearing age is reduced to two, then the population forecast is 1.217 billion—a difference of 65 million. Even greater differences are apparent using different—and somewhat more unrealistic—family-size projections (figure 1).

Figure 1
China: Projected Population Under Different Family Size Assumptions



^aThree children per family.

^bTwo children per family.

^cOne child per family.

^dGoal for year 2000.

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Factors Behind Increased Growth Rate

A number of factors have caused the resurgence of the birth rate and rate of natural increase in recent years:

- Rural economic policies that encourage individual initiative to spur production but weaken the authority of local officials.
- The effects of the new marriage law on the age of marriage and the large cohort of young people of marriageable age; in 1979, half the total population was below 21 years of age.

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Rural Responsibility System

Rural responsibility systems were introduced in 1978-79 as part of Deng Xiaoping's package of economic reforms. Although many variations of the responsibility system exist, all are designed to increase productivity by giving peasants a much larger role—and stake—in production and marketing decisions and by compensating individuals according to the amount they produce. Beijing claims that 90 percent of the peasants have adopted some form of the production responsibility system; probably half or more are using a system in which individual households make some or all key agricultural decisions. Regardless of the system adopted, the state retains ownership of the land and requires a certain proportion of the output for tax and various collective needs. Part of the rural reform package includes the reopening of free markets to sell above-quota output and an increase in procurement prices paid by the state for agricultural products.

Because of the improved economic conditions in rural areas, the responsibility systems have also created a number of problems, ranging from a growing reluctance of young males to volunteer for military service to a decline in influence of state and local cadre attempting to implement national directives. The most serious in the long run, however, is an increase in birth rate in many rural areas, since in some of the more popular responsibility systems farmland is assigned on the basis of family size.

- Several traditional factors, including old-age security fears.
- The general difficulty of implementing unpopular programs in the more remote and tradition-bound hinterland of China.
- A weakened system of rural control affecting family planning efforts.
- The political apathy of the population to government campaigns and distaste for its intrusion into family-size decisions.

Government policies designed to spur agricultural production have had the unintended side effect of

reinforcing traditional values toward children as an economic asset. Rural responsibility systems in which income is linked directly to production benefit families with the most laborers. As rural family income increases, the economic incentives and disincentives associated with the one-child certificate become less useful methods to enforce compliance. In areas where individual households are the productive units, cadres have even less control over peasants who work their own land, raise their own food, and make their own decisions as to childbearing.

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Although it was intended to modernize, regulate, and stabilize marriage and family life, the 1980 Marriage Law undermines family planning goals. It raises the age of marriage to 20 years for women and 22 years for men, two years more than the 1950 Marriage Law but two to four years below the regulations established (though never based in law) in the 1960s and 1970s and in regular use until 1980. As a *People's Daily* editorial recently stated, this has resulted in a "high tide of marrying younger and having children earlier."

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The new law also sends conflicting signals by establishing children as the legal source of old-age support for their parents, while pressing for family planning. The traditional dependency relationship continues to motivate couples to have more than one child to ensure the survival of the family name and to relieve the burden on the single child. There is no national social security system or comprehensive rural retirement program. The few old-age homes widely publicized at earlier times by the media and Western visitors were built by the wealthier communes for old people without families. While generous pensions provide for about 8 million retired industrial and professional workers, the bulk of the working population—the hundreds of millions of agricultural workers—have no choice but to depend upon their children for old-age support.

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The geographical remoteness of millions of peasants further impedes the progress of family planning. The static nature of peasant life, lack of mobility, poor transportation and communication, and distance from the cities contribute to the peasant's resistance to

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Figure 2. 55,000 babies are born each day in China.

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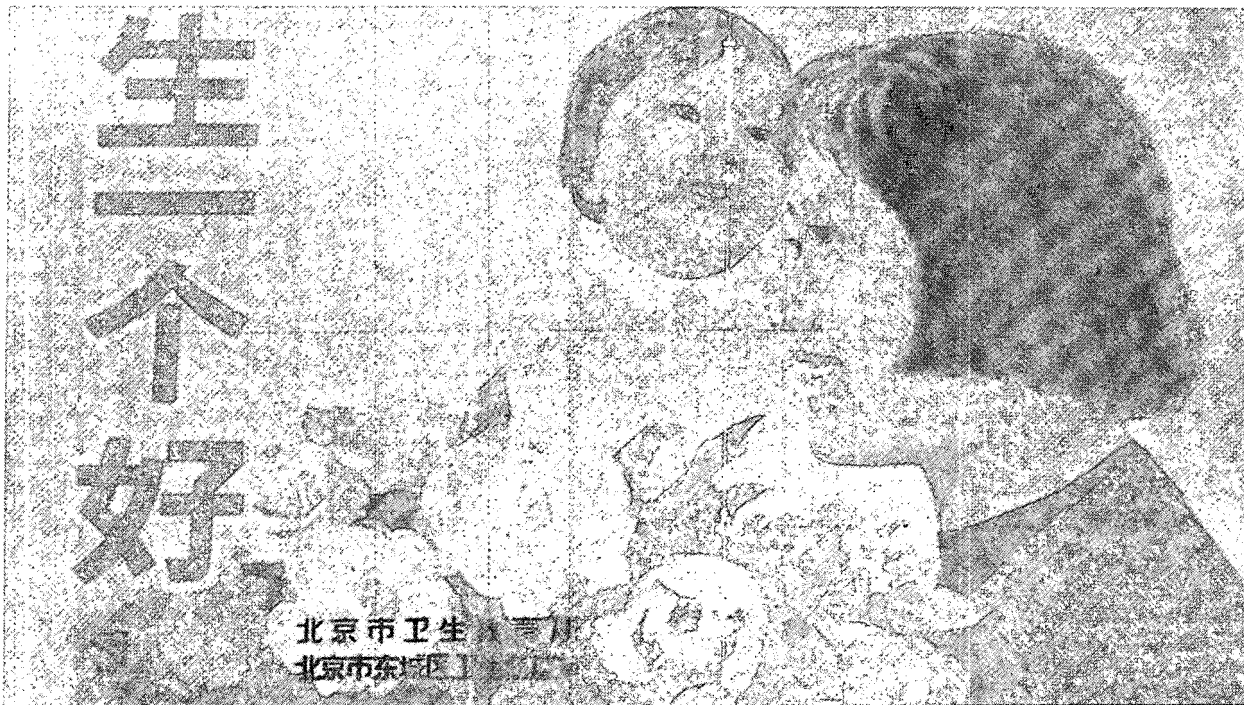


Figure 3. "Just one will do," says a huge poster in Beijing.

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Figure 4. Women factory workers learn about birth control techniques.

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Figure 5. A traditional rural family—three generations under one roof—will benefit from rural reforms rewarding household units with a greater number of laborers.

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family planning, an idea that strongly conflicts with their tradition. There are also marked regional differences in the acceptance and implementation of policy directives from the central government, particularly in those provinces where ethnic minority groups are numerous.

Problems of implementing family planning policy are greater in rural areas, where bureaucratic administration is often inefficient and where many cadres—party or government workers—are part of the communities in which they work. Cadres are torn between their responsibility to uphold and be models for an often unpopular governmental directive and their empathy for the economic and social perceptions of the peasants with whom they live. Beijing continues to pressure cadres to vigorously promote family planning goals as they did successfully in the 1970s and threatens to hold them personally responsible for achieving local targets with monetary or other penalties implied. Nevertheless, motivation and enthusiasm

are lacking and the cadres' political clout is waning, according to Chinese press comments and editorials.

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Further resistance to family planning involves disaffection of the population at large, and of the younger generation in particular. According to Embassy reporting and the views of scholars who have had lasting contacts, government policy vacillations and the numerous ideological campaigns of the past have traumatized much of the populace; widespread indifference and cynicism exist toward the ideological pronouncements of the party. In addition, the official intrusion into family relationships, traditionally a very private matter, is much more pervasive than in the past and is resented by the conservative-minded peasantry. Chinese media commentary have chided those

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Traditional Values

Traditional values still persist. The heritage of a feudal-patriarchal social system which permeates village life is a significant obstacle to family planning. The expectation of living in an extended family situation surrounded by children and grandchildren is ingrained in the consciousness of the Chinese peasant. Although the government has long attempted to stamp them out, ancient customs and traditions continue to give meaning to an otherwise monotonous and stolid rural life. Peasant marriages, often arranged and including the bride price, are still celebrated with elaborate feasts as is the birth of a child, especially a son.

The traditional preference for male children has rational justifications, especially in rural areas where males have greater economic value. Men produce more in the fields and so earn more because they are stronger and are uninhibited by child care. Although the 1980 Marriage Law gives women the right to work outside the home and guarantees equality for women, these new ideals have been selectively accepted. Women work in the fields, but they work fewer days than men because they are still responsible for overseeing the household and rearing children. Women have less education—girls are often taken out of school to help with domestic chores—and less time to participate in community affairs. Men remain with and support their parents all their lives; most women leave their parents when they marry to live with and help support their in-laws. Girls are considered an economic liability by their own parents; the incentive to have at least one son, preferably two, is still strong in rural areas.

who feel that the party's mixing into family affairs is in opposition to the recently adopted legal code with its emphasis on the rights of the individual.

Economic Implications: More Equals Less?

China's leaders are committed to transforming the world's largest underdeveloped country into a modern industrialized state. The attainment of Beijing's economic development goals depends on the ability of the

economy to generate the necessary amounts of investment capital, the acquisition and effective absorption of a wide variety of advanced technologies, and consistency and coherency in economic planning.

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China's massive and growing population threatens modernization goals in numerous ways. At the most fundamental level, the demands of such a large population for food and the bare essentials place a burden on the economy, making it extremely difficult to generate enough surplus funds for investment in modern industrial plant. Should the agricultural sector be unable to increase food supplies apace with population growth, not only will limited funds be diverted to supply consumer needs, but precious foreign exchange will be required to purchase grain. Premier Zhao Ziyang, speaking to the delegates at the Fifth National People's Congress, December 1981, bluntly stated the problem: if population growth is not controlled, the standard of living cannot be raised and "economic, cultural, and defense construction (that is, modernization) will not be carried out successfully."

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The overabundance of labor relative to land, capital, and entrepreneurial expertise further hampers economic modernization. The agricultural sector has absorbed large increases of workers in the past, but its ability to continue doing so is limited; further increases in agricultural production will depend less on additional labor inputs and more on increased technological inputs—mechanized irrigation, fertilizer, hybrid seeds, and modern machinery. Furthermore, an increase in the cultivated acreage is unlikely. Nonetheless, the huge cohort of working-age individuals must be kept employed at wages adequate to satisfy their minimal consumer needs if social unrest and its consequences are to be averted.

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Modernization goals are further threatened by the effect of the population factor on economic planning. The unpredictable and complex nature of demographic projections complicates the planning process because seemingly minor variations in growth rates translate into such large absolute numbers that the margin for success or failure of development plans is

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Table 2
China: Compound Rates of Change in Population,
Grain Production, and Grain Production Per Person

Period	Population Average		Grain Production Average		Grain Production Per Person Average	
	Millions	Percent	Million Tons	Percent	Kilograms	Percent
1952-55	590	2.28	167	4.00	284	1.63
1955-58	632	2.35	188	2.88	298	0.56
1958-61	662	0.81	170	-9.77	258	-10.51
1961-64	683	1.23	164	8.32	239	6.95
1964-67	724	2.66	201	6.01	277	3.31
1967-70	784	2.72	229	3.26	292	0.46
1970-73	848	2.59	253	3.36	298	0.79
1973-76	905	1.86	276	2.57	305	0.77
1976-79	949	1.34	309	5.10	326	3.65
1979-82	988	1.36	334 ^a	0.30	338	-1.08

Note: The early years (1952-58) reflect rapid agricultural recovery and growth following restoration of peace and stability in 1950. The 1958-61 period clearly illustrates the effects of the political extremism of the Great Leap Forward years, coupled with poor agricultural weather (1959-60). The period 1961-67 illustrates the subsequent economic recovery but overemphasizes growth in grain output resulting from the abnormally low grain output levels recorded between 1959 and 1961. The effects of a high population growth rate on per capita output is shown in the data for the years

between 1967 and 1973, despite continuing improvement in grain production. The impact of the family planning campaign on the rate of population growth is suggested by the compound rates of change, 1973-82. The decline in grain output on a per capita basis since 1979 coincides with the introduction of agricultural policies deemphasizing grain targets and the shift of some cropland to growing profitable agricultural cash crops.

^a Preliminary estimate for 1982.

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very thin. In addition, the sociopolitical reactions to the policies required to achieve the population growth projections desired from an economic standpoint may themselves cause difficulty.

The population problem also impinges on modernization goals in the critical area of foreign trade and exchange. To keep the population employed, labor-intensive methods must be maintained and markets found for labor-intensive products. To move into the world of modern industrial technology and competition, the foreign exchange so earned must be channeled into purchase of modern labor-saving industrial technology and plant rather than returned directly to the worker-consumer. To the extent that the agricultural sector cannot sustain personal needs, technological imports will be curtailed and grain imports increased.

The Food and Population Dilemma. Improved agricultural performance is required not only to supply basic food needs and to improve living standards but also to make commodities available for export and otherwise release foreign exchange for investment capital. The leadership's awareness of the food problem is exemplified by then Vice Premier's Li Xian-nian's 1978 statement—"the saying: 'for the people the supreme thing is food, food comes first,' should never be forgotten. If we neglect the problem of food we shall have to face turmoil some day." Despite population growth that has nearly doubled in the more than three decades of Communist rule, grain production generally has kept pace and there has even been a slight improvement in grain production per capita (table 2). The improvement in the overall agricultural picture over the last 30 years, however, masks several important features of the record.

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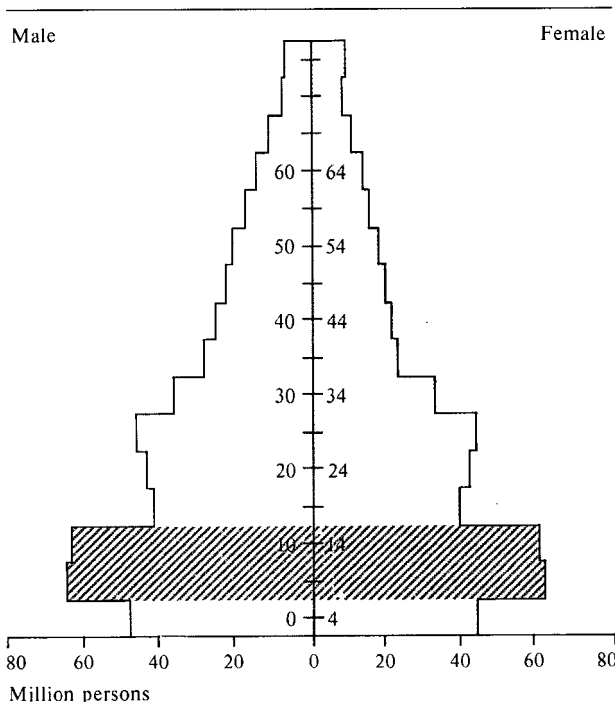
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Primarily as a result of the political aberrations of the Great Leap Forward (1958-59), grain production declined precipitously, food shortages were widespread, and population growth virtually ceased. One result was the beginning of grain imports in 1961, mainly wheat, averaging between 2 and 5 percent of yearly grain output; since 1977 grain imports have been rising both in absolute and percentage terms. Although grain output increased steadily after 1961 and by 1965 reached the 1957-58 level, it was not until the mid-1970s that per capita production levels reached those achieved during the mid-1950s. During the past three years, production per person has virtually stagnated. Whether this trend will continue is uncertain, but the implications are serious as to the realization of China's modernization goals (table 2, note).

Severe physical limitations and nagging environmental problems pose a major constraint to agricultural growth. According to Chinese statistics, only 10 percent of the total land area (99.4 million hectares) is cultivated; most of the little additional land suitable for agriculture is located in remote areas, is costly to develop, and is generally of comparatively low productivity potential. The small amount of land added annually has been offset by land taken out of cultivation—often in highly productive areas—for urban expansion, new industry, and other agricultural uses. In addition, there is growing environmental deterioration. The deforestation of key watersheds and destruction of grasslands, attributed to poor management and political campaigns calling for growing more grain regardless of terrain conditions, has grievously worsened erosion in many areas. Chinese officials and scientists have warned of the serious short- and long-term effects of environmental degradation on land availability, quality, and productivity.

The Unemployment Drag. Until 1979 there was little mention of unemployment in China, and the general impression—fostered by Beijing and visitors to China—was that almost everyone was working happily and productively. Since then Beijing has admitted that unemployment and underemployment are serious problems. Although publicity has been focused on urban areas and on the plight of returned youth from the countryside, there is also a growing problem of unemployment and underemployment in rural areas

Figure 6
China: Age-Sex Pyramid, 1981



Population born during 1966-75 period

Crude birth rate	20.9 per 1,000
Crude death rate	6.3 per 1,000
Natural increase	14.6 per 1,000

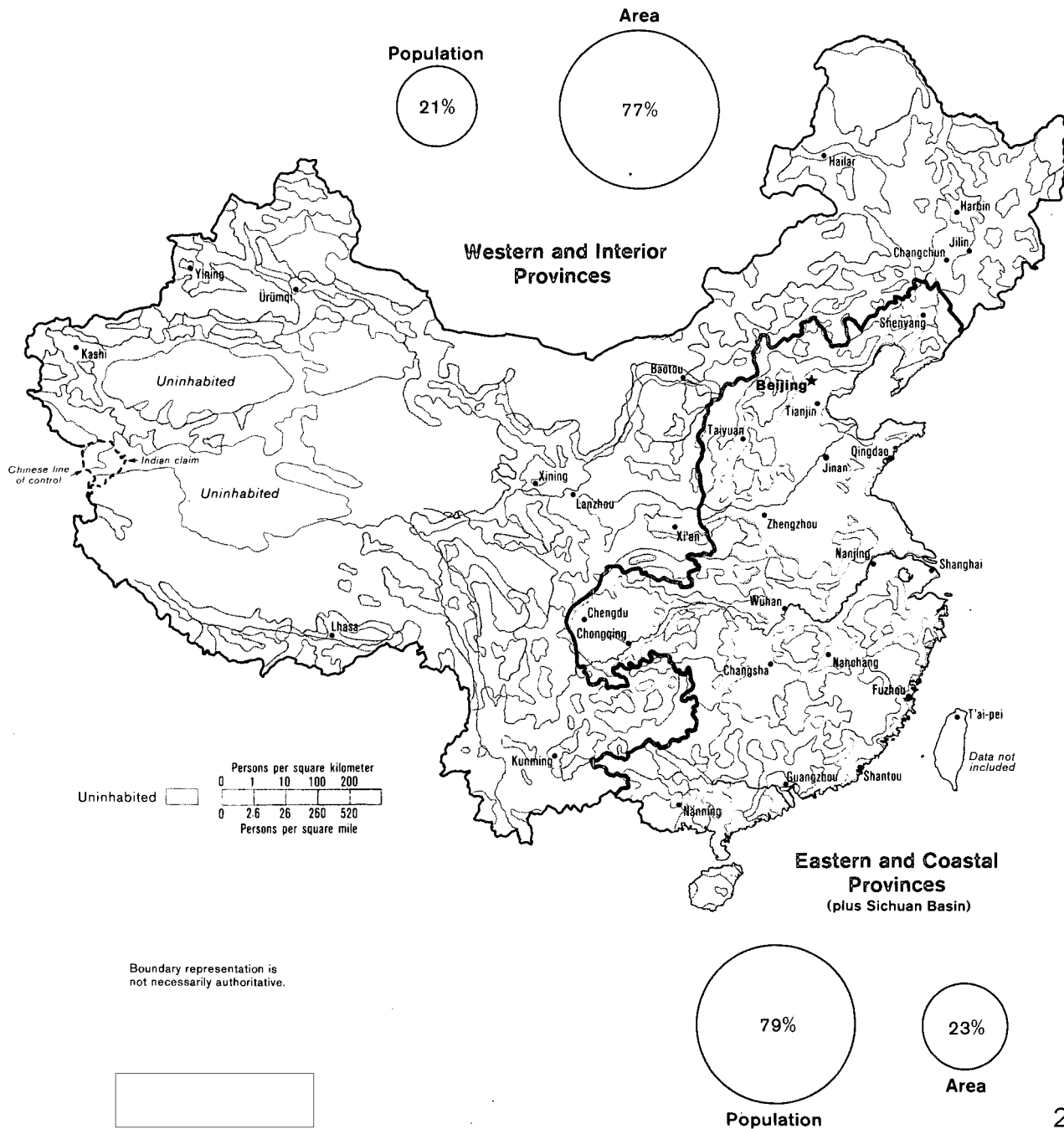
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as well. The problem is a major one, of both current and long-term concern to the Chinese leadership. The age structure of the population means that by the end of the century, the population will most probably increase between 20 and 30 percent, and the labor force will grow between 40 and 50 percent. The great surge in the birth rate from the mid-1960s through the early 1970s is the major cause of this rapid increase in the labor force (figure 6).

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Figure 7
China: Population Density and Regional Comparisons



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The dimensions of the problem were suggested by a *People's Daily* article in 1980 which stated that over the next two decades the number of people reaching working age would average more than 3 million annually in urban areas and 20 million per year in the countryside. Despite economic policies introduced in recent years encouraging greater diversification and specialization in agriculture and expansion of the services, trade, and handicraft sectors, it is doubtful that these numbers could be absorbed on China's fixed agricultural land base. The World Bank survey of China's economic development concluded that it would be "difficult" to meet the urgent need to create many more "socially useful" jobs over the next decade. Beijing's *Renmin Ribao* in October 1981 emphasized the large overall surplus of rural manpower and the urgent need to guide this immense surplus labor into productive work. [redacted]

Unemployment problems are intensified by the imbalance in the distribution of population, with extremely high population densities and excess manpower in many coastal provinces in contrast to the lack of manpower in the sparsely populated interior provinces (figure 7). Earlier programs transferring excess labor to the interior have proved highly unpopular and difficult to enforce. Another approach to reduce the amount of surplus labor is China's present attempt to expand markets in developing countries for employing its labor and skilled personnel. Beijing optimistically talks about a million-person labor pool available in the near future for overseas jobs. [redacted]

Social and Political Implications

In addition to the economic ramifications of China's population growth, pressing social and political issues confront the Chinese. Since 1978 the government, through the introduction of numerous programs, has committed itself to alleviating China's many social problems, including the increased crime and overcrowded housing that plague China's cities. Beijing has also promised, through economic reforms and programs, to provide more food and better nutrition, to improve health and child-care facilities, and to increase the quantity and quality of consumer goods. In addition, a governmental objective inherent to the modernization goals is to expand the educational system to produce a literate population, a labor force

with technical expertise, and an intellectual elite to staff the bureaucracy and lead the country. By these actions, widely reported in the press, the leadership believes it can in time ease China's rural and urban labor problems to raise the morale of the people now beset by apathy and cynicism. [redacted]

Population pressures make it all the more difficult to achieve these goals. Investment in social services will compete for the scarce funds needed in the productive sectors of the economy. The Chinese estimate that the cost of rearing a child from birth to age 16 is 1,600 yuan (1 yuan = US \$0.55) in rural areas, 4,800 yuan in small towns, and 6,900 yuan in large cities. These figures are based on a minimum standard of living and the barest education for a laborer; the cost of a higher education is considerably more. Significant increases in the population will enlarge the social burden and force the leadership to make hard choices involving competing priorities. [redacted]

The consequence of population growth becomes politically important when it threatens the success of economic goals and the promises of modernization. The present leadership has introduced sweeping reforms aimed at raising living standards and modernizing the country; past ideological ties have been loosened or discarded so that policy initiatives needed to rejuvenate production could be introduced and income levels increased. The Chinese press and observers indicate that, particularly in the countryside, these measures have led not only to increased production but also to heightened material expectations as well. [redacted]

Deng Xiaoping and his followers have initiated and are identified with these changes. To the degree that they fail to deliver on their promise of economic improvement, the Dengists will be open to criticism from within the party. A lack of success in carrying out family planning goals, and hence an increase in population pressures, will probably lead to greater social instability and greater political problems for the leadership. [redacted]

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The leadership faces a dilemma. If population growth continues at present levels, despite the broad array of positive and negative measures designed to encourage family limitation, will Beijing shift or modify policies largely responsible for the upsurge in births? One action might be to revise the 1980 Marriage Law and to reinstate the higher age requirements. But of greater importance is the agricultural responsibility system and related measures, credited with stimulating output, raising morale, and improving living standards—but also stimulating and reinforcing traditional values and the rewards of having children. Thus far, Beijing shows no signs of reversing its rural policies. Instead, according to comments made by Qian Xinzong of the State Family Planning Commission to US Embassy personnel, recommendations will probably be to adopt tougher measures—possibly including abortions and sterilizations as deterrents—against couples who have third-child births. An indication of the growing seriousness with which Beijing views family planning was the insertion of a statement in the constitution adopted on 4 December 1982, which was not included in the draft constitution under debate since April, stipulating that all married couples have the “duty” to practice family planning. []

Looking Ahead

We believe that barring extreme events China's population will continue to increase, probably at a rate averaging between 1.2 and 1.5 percent a year, and resulting in a population between 1.25 billion and slightly more than 1.3 billion by the year 2000. Because of the implications and probable consequences of population growth of this magnitude, Beijing's tactics and methods adopted to keep population growth under “reasonable” control will need careful consideration. Policy implementation will require great skill by local officials and cadres so as not to further alienate the population and thereby create additional political problems for the leadership. []

The rural areas, where 80 percent of the population lives, are the key to success or failure of family planning. But we are not optimistic as to the extent of success to be achieved in rural areas—the obstacles are too numerous and the resistance too entrenched.

The agricultural responsibility systems have weakened family planning efforts in many areas. Beijing clearly welcomes the benefits derived from a decentralized rural economy, but it is also clear that the leadership has not yet devised a strategy to resolve the many problems that its reformist policies have set in motion. [] 25X1

To control population growth, the leadership must provide compelling reasons for doing so. Meaningful substitutes will be needed to fill the void if the peasants are to be motivated to sacrifice their ingrained traditional social and family patterns, their deep-rooted values, and their perceptions of the good life; that is, greater prosperity coupled with the joy of many children and grandchildren. In essence, the population is being asked to give up the very traditions and values that contributed to the stability and endurance of Chinese society—slow pace of cultural change, neglect of technological development, and preoccupation with maintaining traditional social relations. [] 25X1

We also believe that the people's faith in government—sorely tried over 30 years of rapid and often extreme policy changes—will have to be reinvigorated and maintained if individuals are to accept government claims that limitation of families to one, or at most two children, is imperative to achieve prosperity. At least some of the populace is probably aware that rapid population growth is not the sole cause of China's current economic situation and that curbing population growth will not necessarily guarantee improved living conditions. We believe that it will be difficult for Beijing to convince the peasantry of the value of family planning, particularly given the long series of political campaigns that have been waged over the years, and to which there have been increasing apathy and indifference. [] 25X1

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Appendix A

Family Planning in China: Origins and Implementation

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One Couple, One Child

Population theories in China since 1950 were rooted initially in Marxist and Leninist precepts. Some time elapsed before adequate rationalizations were developed to match the country's needs and provide policies with an acceptable philosophical basis. The clash between ideology and reality has caused birth control policies to be introduced three times and abandoned twice.

The present family planning program began in the early 1970s with an expanded and improved health care delivery system. By this time sufficient changes in rural life—such as a growing proportion of educated women—had taken place to make young people potentially more amenable to practicing birth control. In 1973 a Staff Office for Planned Births was set up under the State Council with direct control over and responsibility for the planned-birth offices established at every administrative level. Planned-birth committees functioned in residential areas, and institutions and family planning became the concern of the government and the responsibility of the entire society.

The government built its policy on three reproductive norms embodied in the slogan *wan, xi, shao*, meaning "later, longer, fewer." Late marriage, three to four years between births, and a limit of two children for urban couples and three for rural couples was advocated. In 1977 the policy was changed to two children for both urban and rural couples.

Family planning efforts of the 1970s resulted in a sharp decline in the birth rate from about 30 per thousand in 1972 to about 18 per thousand in 1978, according to Chinese statistics. Although the population growth rate dropped from 23 per thousand in 1972 to about 12 per thousand in 1978, the large population base and the age structure of the population meant that China's population would increase for several decades before the country reached zero population growth. In that time the population would

increase by 30 to 40 percent. The recognition of this threat to the country's development prompted the drastic "one couple, one child" policy in 1979.

Chinese demographers and others report that urban and rural couples respond differently to the "one couple, one child" policy. Best results have been in urban areas where a more rigorous control system is reinforced by the characteristics of an urban society which values education, new ideas, and a more modern and sophisticated lifestyle. Moreover, inherent urban problems such as high population density, housing shortages, and high unemployment make the small family size not only more attractive and acceptable to young urban couples but a necessity.

Incentives and Disincentives. Economic incentives are being used to motivate couples to have only one child. Couples who pledge that they will use birth control measures receive a one-child certificate entitling them to specific material and medical benefits. While the incentives vary between provinces and between urban and rural areas, they generally include extra food rations, a monthly income supplement, free maternal care, priority in housing and private plots on a two-child standard, and higher pensions for the couple. The single child receives preferential treatment in educational, medical, and employment benefits.

Stringent economic disincentives reinforce adherence to the one-child pledge. Couples who subsequently have a second child after receiving the rewards and bonuses must repay all that they received and return the one-child certificate. Not only are benefits stopped, but the burden of repayment is added to the expense of raising a second child.

Severe sanctions are applied to couples who have a third child. Typically, a percentage (5 to 10 percent) is deducted from the monthly wages or workpoints of

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the parents until the child is 14 years old. This money is used to pay the rewards for the one-child couples. Rural families who adopt full responsibility systems will either have less land to work or have their contribution to collective funds raised if they violate their family planning contract. Since 1 January 1980 the child is directly penalized for his first 14 years by ineligibility for family medical schemes and higher food costs. The penalties inflicted on couples increase with each additional child. [redacted]

Pressure and Persuasion

Social and political pressure, ranging from persuasion to harassment and coercion, is brought to bear on young couples. A major goal to the entire campaign is to eliminate traditional values that uphold early marriage, large families, son preference, and the privacy of marriage and family matters. The government is geared to promote new values through various organizational and presentational means perfected over decades of trial and error. [redacted]

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The Government of China has put great emphasis on the development, production, and distribution of contraceptives. A contraceptive delivery system was established to educate couples in birth control practices. Free contraceptives are provided including IUDs, oral contraceptives, tubal ligations, and vasectomies. Women who have undergone an abortion or sterilization are given time off for recovery with full pay or workpoints. Although contraception is the birth control method of choice, where contraception fails or a woman already has three children, abortion and sterilization are promoted. [redacted]

The planned-birth committees invoke a broad range of reasons to popularize family planning. Using colloquialisms and other techniques, cadres stress that fewer children will protect women's health, allow more time to acquire job-related skills and knowledge, and enhance the welfare and quality of the next generation. Other motivational arguments include assisting national economic development and raising living standards. The cadres are expected to lead by personal example in marrying late and having only one child. [redacted]

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Organization and Administration. A multitiered organizational structure, with the State Family Planning Commission at the top, administers the complicated Family Planning Program. Birth quotas for the provinces are established at the top level. Socioeconomic development and ethnic makeup are considered. Given its target, each province then allocates a birth quota to each of its prefectures, a process that continues down the administrative ladder to the production teams; cadres meet with all eligible couples to persuade them to adhere to family planning policy goals. [redacted]

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The same organizational groups that set the birth quotas manage the contraceptive delivery system; this involves committee or leadership groups at each level. At the brigade level, barefoot doctors, assisted by birth attendants and part-time maternal and child health workers, provide contraceptive education, supplies, and counseling, deliver babies, and keep birth records. Provincial governments and major cities are responsible for the massive training programs organized to provide the army of health personnel required to implement the contraceptive delivery system. [redacted]

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Appendix B**Reporting From the Provinces:
Cause for Concern**

During the past year media reports from the provinces have frequently commented on the difficulties of holding to family planning goals and the reasons for the slippage. The provinces are representative of all major regions of the country.

Guangdong

The number of people having more than one child is on the increase; the number of people practicing birth control is decreasing; and the number of unplanned pregnancies is still on the increase. Leaders at all levels throughout the province must attach major importance to these problems . . . adopt effective measures and create an upsurge in planned parenthood, work . . .

Guandong Provincial CCP and Provincial People's Government Circular

Guangzhou, Guangdong Provincial Service, 2 May 1982. FBIS, 3 May 1982, p. P3.

Guizhou

It is necessary to suit the new situation that has arisen since the assignment of responsibilities to the households in the rural areas, set up planned parenthood responsibility systems, and link up the planned parenthood targets and the policies on reward and penalty with the assignment of land, production responsibility targets, and cadre responsibility systems.

Report by Vice Governor Zhang Yugin.
Guiyang Guizhou Provincial Service, 13 November 1981. FBIS, 23 November 1981, p. Q1.

Hebei

Since the beginning of this year, a new situation and new problems of planned parenthood have emerged. Many places have let planned parenthood drift . . . The number of births has greatly increased. CCP committees and governments at all levels must . . . vigorously advocate that each couple should have only one child . . . While putting the agricultural production responsibility systems on a sound basis, they must

establish the planned parenthood responsibility system and put it on a sound basis.

Report by Hebei Governor Li Erzhong.
Shijiazhuang Hebei Provincial Service, 23 December 1981. FBIS, 15 January 1982, p. R2.

Henan

The province's population has entered a period of high number of births. Many new problems have been encountered in planned parenthood since the institution of rural production responsibility systems. The development of planned parenthood in the province is very uneven . . . Old notions . . . have reappeared . . . Some peasants want more children, they want sons to increase their family labor force and farm more responsibility fields.

Zhengzhou Henan Provincial Service, 19 February 1982. FBIS, 22 February 1982, p. P4.

Liaoning

Owing to the introduction of production responsibility systems in the rural areas and the increase in the number of newlyweds, birth control work has been effected. In the first half of this year, the number of unplanned births increased, accounting for over 30 percent of the province's total births . . . We must eliminate the surviving feudal ideas . . . that more sons mean prosperity . . . and we must urge every couple to give birth to only one child.

Shenyang Liaoning Provincial Service, 25 October 1981. FBIS, 28 October 1981, p. S3.

Shaanxi

Our work lags far behind the demands of the central authorities on controlling population growth . . . Last year . . . we did not fulfill the population plan . . . Many places have somewhat relaxed planned parenthood work since the second half of 1980 . . . Population growth in some places results from loss of control.

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The number of babies born outside the plan in 1981 accounted for 40 percent of the province's births. The momentum of increase in the natural population growth rate after its decline is very strong.

From a speech by Shaanxi Provincial CCP Committee First Secretary Ma Wenru.

Xian, Shaanxi Provincial Service, 25 February 1982. FBIS, February 1982, p. T4.

Shandong

Because of the enactment of the new marriage law, the number of those married in the first half of this year doubled that of previous years. Responsibility systems in rural areas have promoted development of productive forces. This is very good, but this has also stimulated population growth because people mistakenly think that more children mean more labor forces and more income. They begin to think of having more children—especially sons. Some localities have lost control of population growth. The birth rate in rural areas has begun to climb quickly. If no measures are adopted immediately, our province's population will swell enormously. All the achievements scored in the 1970s will probably be spoiled, and we likely will again commit a historical error.

Radio talk by Yang Haiyan, deputy director of the provincial planned parenthood bureau.
Jinan Shandong Provincial Service, 24 September 1981. FBIS, 29 September 1981, p. O4.

Zhejiang

The number of babies born in 1981 was 120,000 more than the number born in 1980. To raise the peoples' living standard and quicken the pace in economic construction, we must make unremitting efforts in controlling population growth . . . Last year the number of newlyweds in the province increased by more than 100,000 as compared with 1980. There is a trend that this number will continue to increase from now on.

From a speech by Zhejiang Vice Governor Liu Yifu.
Hangzhou Zhejiang Provincial Service, 23 January 1982. FBIS, 28 January 1982, p. O4.



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