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EMPTY STOMACHS AND FULL CAMBRIDGE BELTS

Address by Senator Hubert H. Humphrey (D.-Minn)
upon introduction of Senate Joint Resolution
"To Provide for the Creation of an International Food Reserve."

Mr. President, I am proud to join the distinguished Senator from Montana (Mr. Murray) as co-sponsor of a joint resolution to provide for the creation of an International Food Reserve.

The resolution would instruct the United States representatives to the United Nations and its Food and Agriculture Organization to initiate negotiations toward establishing the International Food Reserve within the existing facilities of those international agencies.

The purpose would be to provide a means of absorbing temporary market surpluses of agricultural products and make them available wherever they are most needed in the world to prevent famine and starvation.

I sincerely hope that every member of the Senate will give this far-reaching proposal the serious consideration it so justly deserves. I am convinced that it offers a tremendous new opportunity for strengthening the entire Free World in its struggle against communistic imperialism, while at the same time providing practical domestic benefits that would considerably strengthen the agricultural foundation of our economy.

By such a course, our nation would be instilling a positive, humanitarian force into the world's ideological struggle.

It would be seizing the initiative in foreign policy, at a time when the whole world is tensely waiting to see who shall make the next move in the grim conflict between freedom and communism.

It would serve notice to the whole world that the United States is concerned with empty stomachs, not just with full cartridge belts.

Communism progresses on empty stomachs and frustrated spirits. Democracy marches forward on full stomachs and abiding faith.

The hope of communism consists of arousing starving people against their present misery.

The hope of democracy should be to offer such people a better alternative for eliminating such misery--a better future where hunger and mass starvation need not exist.

In such a struggle, a million dollars for food might equal ten million dollars for ammunition.

As long as there are empty stomachs in the world, we'll have to keep our cartridge belts full.

But full stomachs we may can in time replace the full cartridge belts as our greatest defenders of democracy.

The proposal for creating an International Food Reserve offers us the opportunity of providing constructive leadership in that direction.

The Senator from Montana has explained the International Food Reserve proposal in detail, and very capably outlined the domestic and international circumstances supporting such a course at this time.

I want only to review its purposes very briefly, and emphasize the significant contributions I believe it can make both as a forward-looking, positive, and humanitarian addition to our foreign policy, and as a logical and practical supplement to our domestic agricultural policy.

The resolution does not commit the Congress to any specific plan for an International Food Reserve, but opens the door toward such a program by directing the United States representatives to initiate negotiations for such action through existing facilities of the United Nations and the Food and Agriculture Organization.

The specific plan and agreement which would be developed under the resolution would subsequently be presented to the Congress for approval.

But the resolution does set forth certain principles as guideposts for the negotiations of such an international agreement.

It recognizes that economic isolationism is as outmoded as political isolationism in the world of today. It provides for the creation and storage of international food reserves in a manner that will help to prevent extreme price fluctuations in the international market for agricultural products, thereby providing an incentive to keep production expanding to meet the world's pressing need for more food and clothing.

It recognizes the tragic weaknesses of either international or domestic policies that permit accumulation and even destruction of

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unwanted food surpluses in one part of the world, while millions suffer the degradation of hunger and want elsewhere on earth. It provides that the International Food Reserve shall absorb temporary market surpluses of agricultural products, and use them where and when needed to prevent famine and starvation.

It recognizes the dollar shortage in many areas of the world as responsible for drastically restricted foreign markets for American farm products. This handicaps our farmers as well as the consumers in other lands wanting and needing to share in our farm abundance. It provides for the use of national currencies for the purchase of agricultural products from the International Food Reserve. These funds, through cooperation with the appropriate international lending, economic development, and technical assistance agencies, are then to be used for financing approved self-liquidating economic development programs within the country from which the funds originated.

Increased amounts of national currencies would be channeled into such necessary economic development projects through food purchases, thus lessening the drain upon American dollars for the same purpose.

American food and fiber would be replacing American dollars as part of our contribution toward economic strength in the free world.

Such a policy makes good sense for American farmers, and it makes good sense for our friends and allies in other lands.

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Within recent weeks I have several times called the attention of this body to the increasingly serious economic recession confronting American agriculture. Senator Murray has further documented the downward slide of American farm prices and farm income, at a time when farm costs are remaining high, and the other segments of our economy are relatively prosperous. The danger of such a situation to our entire economy is obvious, and cannot be ignored.

Years ago it used to be said that farmers didn't live on income; they lived on lack of expense.

That's far from true today.

During 1951, farm production expenses amounted to $22\frac{1}{2}$ billion dollars. That is almost exactly three and a half times the total farm gross income of 1932. It is more than the total farm gross income in any year prior to 1943.

Fifty years ago, a farmer could operate for a long time at a loss if he had to. He could liquidate some capital investment to cover expenses for several years. That's not possible for very many farmers today. Expenses are too high--and too rigid. Falling farm price levels can quickly wreck a farmer today because of his fixed expenses for equipment, fertilizer, gasoline, insurance and the like.

Because the farmer is more dependent on cash income today to meet his production costs, his purchasing power has greater effect on the rest of the economy. If it is allowed to dwindle, it will all the more quickly drag the rest of the nation into a depression.

Perhaps not enough people realize the importance of the farm market for the products of city industry. Perhaps not even my fellow Senators realize that farmers use more steel in a year than goes into a year's output of passenger cars--that farmers use more petroleum than is used by any other industry--that they use enough raw rubber to put tires on six million cars--that they use enough electrical power to supply the great cities of Chicago, Detroit, Baltimore, and Houston.

That is a brief picture of the stake the whole nation has in a dependable price level for the products of American agriculture.

That's why many of us are so concerned, and are insisting that something constructive be done to strengthen farm prices, and insure agriculture of greater stability in the future.

We are met by negative complaints about "surpluses", implying farmers must turn off their spigots of production--their only means of making a livelihood.

I have said before and I say again--there can be no surplus of food or fiber as long as there are hungry and inadequately clothed people in the world.

Our job is to put our ability to produce to work for the good of all mankind, not hamstring it with new restrictions aimed at scarcity rather than abundance.

For the sake of our own economy, and for the sake of a politically stable world, we must make our abundance available to those who need it, wherever they may be.

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That's what our proposal for an International Food Reserve would do. It would bridge the gap between our producers and the world's potential consumers now lacking buying power in American dollars.

We know that potential market exists.

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The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, in its 1952 edition of "The State of Food and Agriculture: Review and Outlook", says that in terms of food supply "the world's need for more food has not yet begun to be met."

"In the least developed and most heavily populated regions of the world where the mass of the world's population lives," the FAO reports, "per capita food consumption levels are still substantially below already inadequate pre-war averages. This situation is most acute in Southeast Asia."

Yet in the face of that need for food, United States agricultural exports dropped 15 percent on a dollar-value basis in the calendar year of 1952, according to a report issued this week by the Department of Agriculture's Office of Foreign Agricultural Relations.

Lack of American dollars, not lack of need or desire for our products, is mostly responsible for that sharp decline.

That's why an International Food Reserve is needed as a supplemental outlet for American farm products, permitting other nations to buy with their own currencies beyond what they can now buy with American dollars.

A week ago I introduced a bill to strengthen our farm price support legislation, with particular emphasis upon greater protection for producers of perishable commodities. At that time I offered a number of suggestions for seeking new outlets for commodities such as dairy products now in temporary

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over-supply, including development of international programs for making such food supplies available where they are most needed in the world.

If I may be pardoned for repeating, I said at that time:

"It is to our own interest as a nation, and it is in the interest of freedom and humanitarianism all over the world, that we begin to raise our sights and use some imagination so that our agricultural products can be effectively utilized, and our agricultural economy protected.

"We should enter into international negotiations through the United Nations to extend the principles of the international wheat agreement, not only for wheat, but for other agricultural commodities. Millions in the world are undernourished and underfed, and can use the health-giving strength and life which American farmers produce in their fields."

The International Food Reserve proposed under this resolution would serve just such a purpose.

It would be the means of developing entirely new outlets for American farm products, in areas where those products are urgently needed.

Let's take dairy products, for an example. The Department of Agriculture's report indicates the most quantitatively significant reduction in farm exports in 1952 occurred in dairy products.

Lack of adequate refrigeration and distribution facilities deprives great masses of the world's people of the essential health-giving qualities of milk.

Yet progress of our food preservation industry in recent years has made possible the retention of all those same health

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qualities in dried whole milk, for which no refrigeration or distribution problems need exist.

While the market for dried whole milk is understandably limited in this country because of our high consumption of fresh fluid milk, there should be a tremendous potential market elsewhere in the world if we provide the means of making such supplies available.

Already, popular acceptance and use of our dried whole milk is greatly on the increase in Venezuela and other Latin American countries. There is no reason why a similar market for dried whole milk cannot be developed in many other countries of the world now lacking in adequate dairy supplies, or in facilities for distribution of such supplies in fresh form.

It should be obvious to see that, entirely aside from its beneficial impact on international good will, the International Food Reserve proposal makes good sense for American agriculture. And it makes good sense for farmers in other lands, too.

In our own country, we have learned the advantages of maintaining adequate reserves of storable products. We have learned that sound storage programs can narrow the speculative risk in agriculture, and increase stability of farm prices. We have learned further that adequate reserves accumulated in time of plenty add to our nation's security by being available whenever crop failures or other emergencies might develop.

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As a country we benefitted greatly by having such reserves at the outbreak of World War II, and again at the start of the Korean conflict. They were our safeguard against shortages in a critical time of stepped-up demand. They have been the means of making our price support programs effective for storable commodities.

Other countries, too, have recognized the importance of assuring farmers fair returns by adopting price support devices of one type or another.

The one gap remaining in farm price support programs here and elsewhere has been the relation of domestic policies to international trade.

The International Food Reserve offers a means of bridging that gap, and of strengthening our entire price support program.

Just as storage of reserves on a national basis has increased stability of domestic farm prices, so can international reserves contribute to greater stability in the international market. And as long as world need remains ahead of world production, such international storage never needs to accumulate beyond a sound amount of safe reserves, such as sometimes threatens domestic storage programs having a more restricted potential outlet.

My reasons for co-sponsoring this resolution, however, go beyond the tremendous benefits I feel it offers to American agriculture.

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Among the masses of underprivileged people in many parts of the world who may eventually sway the balance between freedom and communism, a single, positive act of leadership toward a world of plenty will win more friends for democracy than all the armed might we could assemble.

That is especially true today in the critical areas of southeast Asia.

If our foreign policy is ever to be successful in meeting the great challenge of our time, we must better understand the mind and heart of the Asia we hope to preserve among the world's free peoples.

India's great poet, Tagore, expressed most vividly the secret of winning the minds of Asians when he wrote:

"You do not open a lock with a hammer; you open it with a key devised for the lock."

Food, not force, is the key that fits Asia.

America, with its ability to produce food in abundance, can provide that key.

That is why I am so vigorously supporting this resolution.

It offers us a way to make a positive contribution toward permanent peace, while at the same time protecting the interest of American agriculture.

America's heart is big. No nation has ever shown a more Christian approach of forgiveness to its former enemies.

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No nation has ever shown a more humanitarian spirit of responding to great disasters and emergencies among people of other lands. No nation was ever more desirous of having peace and prosperity shared throughout the world.

Yet the instincts of self-preservation warn us we must not ignore the welfare of our own people, in the process of helping the world.

We should welcome, therefore, such an opportunity as this resolution offers to move forward toward the twin objectives of protecting our own economic security while making a new contribution toward a world of plenty.



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