

6/30/53

Mutual Security Food Amendment

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Mr. President, I call up my amendment and ask for its immediate consideration. It is aimed at letting American food and fiber, along with American dollars, fight for freedom in the world.

Our foreign aid program is predicated upon the urgent need of strengthening forces of freedom throughout the world, and mobilizing them for the common cause of standing resolutely against the threat of Communistic imperialism.

America's great agricultural know-how, its great blessing of abundance, can and should share in the mobilizing of the forces and the resources of freedom.

That's what my amendment would seek to encourage.

It is a simple amendment. All that it does is to grant the President authority to make use of some of our agricultural reserves now piled up in storage, whenever it appears in the best interest of our foreign policy to do so, to help friendly countries that may be in temporary need.

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In view of the present world situation in which no effort toward strengthening our ties of friendship can be overlooked, in view of the present heavy stocks of reserves of agricultural commodities now existing in this country, I believe the President should have such authority. He should be able to make use of our abundance, within certain limitations, to alleviate hunger and misery in the world, thereby showing our humanitarian concern for less fortunate as contrasted with the ruthless slave-state oppression Communists have invoked in satellite areas behind the Iron Curtain.

This amendment does not create a giveaway plan, to dump American products indiscriminately throughout the world.

Yet neither does it hang a definite dollar sign on America's humanitarian spirit, so that we haggle over terms while people starve.

What it does is provide flexible enough authority for the President to act under differing circumstances and differing conditions.

It leaves it up to the President to determine terms and conditions for using our food reserves to alleviate famine and hunger.

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Rather than require any rigid, fixed method of financing the sharing of our agricultural abundance with areas urgently needing it, the authority herein provided would open the way for more flexible barter for strategic materials; it would permit sales being made for native currency, where a dollar shortage exists; yet it would also permit us to make food loans or outright food gifts where such methods seemed most desirable in the interests of our own government, as well as best designed to meet the needs of the recipient country.

I believe this is the simplest, most direct way of getting a green light for a start in the right direction of using food as well as dollars in foreign aid.

The amendment I have proposed is not the final answer to stimulating American farm exports, nor making effective and constructive use of all our abundance of agricultural commodities.

It is, however, a step in the right direction for both those purposes, as well as a step in the right direction of humanitarian foreign policy, foreign policy that is concerned with empty stomachs as well as empty cartridge belts.

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I regard the amendment as just one more constructive step in efforts to stimulate increased use of America's agricultural abundance, and I think most of you are aware of the urgent need for every possible step in that direction.

If we are going to open any new channels for wider use of our agricultural commodities in support of our foreign policy at this session of Congress, I believe this amendment offers us the only practical chance of doing so.

Any action on a completely separate and more comprehensive bill in this field, involving lengthy committee hearings, is obviously very unlikely this late in the present session.

However, such use of our agricultural commodities to aid countries in need is logically a supplement to our other foreign aid -- military and economic -- and therefore the proposal is quite properly advanced as an amendment to the Mutual Security Bill.

I believe enactment of this amendment will be an important policy

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declaration by the Congress -- an expression of our determination to make the best use of all our available resources in strengthening the free world for its struggle against Communism.

We cannot afford to let Communist propagandists exploit us as a rich Uncle hoarding huge food supplies like a dog-in-the-manger, letting them spoil in storage before we will distribute them to the hungry to eat.

Instead, we should be seizing the initiative firmly in our own hands by assuring distressed countries of the world that we aren't going to let them starve -- that we have ample food, and one way or another will be worked out so we can share our abundance with them, accepting whatever they have to offer in return.

Earlier in this session, I joined with several other Senators in sponsorship of a resolution calling for creation of an International Food Reserve aimed at just such a purpose -- of finding a meeting place between those who have more food than they know what to do with, and those who haven't enough to exist decently. Every argument advanced for

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that worthy purpose now supports my amendment, for it would permit us to do on our own what many of us hoped the International Food Reserves could do on a united basis.

Famine and hunger can't wait for debates or negotiations. Starving children can wait neither for a new international body to be created, nor for the Congress of the United States to act, if it should be in recess. That's why it appears sensible and advisable to me to give this simple authority to the President -- so that he may act when action appears necessary, and make use of more of our food reserves when opportunities present themselves that would be advantageous to all concerned.

Instead of complaining about our heavy food supplies, we should be thankful for the agricultural know-how of our farm producers.

We should welcome our plentiful food as a blessing other countries do not enjoy, and make use of our opportunity to win friends in the world through sharing our abundance -- on whatever terms may be necessary.

Instead of sending American dollars in foreign aid alone, let's send some American food or fiber -- and in that way we can be helping our own farmers while we are helping hungry people in other lands.

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I'm convinced this proposal is thoroughly justified from the standpoint of our foreign aid program alone, entirely aside from its possible benefits to domestic agriculture.

Yet I do not think we need to overlook -- nor should we overlook -- the increasingly serious economic plight confronting our own American farmers, while we are debating sending aid to foreign shores.

America's farmers have shared every sacrifice and every challenge confronting our nation down through history, and still remains steadfast as a real, solid bulwark of democracy. They are willing now to assume their fair share of the burden of defense in the struggle against Communism, if they have any income out of which to pay their taxes. Yet I am sure many a hard-pressed farmer would look more kindly upon our foreign aid program if he knew food that he produced was going to be part of that program -- that he was sharing in building a better world, by helping feed our friends and our allies.

I ask and urge that agriculture be made a definite part of our foreign aid program in the manner I have proposed -- that we no longer

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sit idly by with our grain elevators and cold storage warehouses

bulging with food, while other peoples of the world are starving.

I urge that we make war on misery and suffering, as part of our efforts to strengthen the free world.

I urge that we adopt a little of the philosophy of President Eisenhower's famous address to the American Society of Newspaper Editors, by showing now that we are as concerned with human beings as we are with military might.

We can do so by adopting this amendment.

If we do so, it will be a major forward step by this Congress -- a humane addition to the foreign aid program, and a constructive step toward stimulating wider consumption of American farm products.

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