

REMARKS BY SENATOR HUBERT H. HUMPHREY

BEFORE THE MENNONITE CENTRAL COMMITTEE

"THE FOOD CRISIS AND BEYOND"

WASHINGTON, D.C.

MAY 16, 1974

Mr Franz

IT IS A PLEASURE TO BE WITH YOU TODAY. YOUR PEOPLE
HAVE LONG BEEN RECOGNIZED FOR THEIR INDUSTRY, FORTITUDE AND
DEEP RELIGIOUS CONVICTIONS.

THE MENNONITE PEOPLE HAVE ALSO BEEN KNOWN FOR THEIR
CONCERN FOR THE NEEDS OF THE LESS FORTUNATE. YOU REGULARLY
RESPOND TO HELP THE VICTIMS OF DISASTER HERE IN THE
UNITED STATES.

AS THE AUTHOR OF THE PL 480, FOOD FOR PEACE LEGISLATION,
I AM ALSO AWARE OF YOUR HUMANITARIAN EFFORTS ABROAD.

YOUR VOLUNTEERS HAVE BEEN PARTICULARLY HELPFUL IN DEVELOPING
FOOD FOR WORK PROGRAMS - UTILIZING U.S. FOOD GRANTS TO FEED
NEEDY PEOPLE AND ENCOURAGE DEVELOPMENT.

WHILE I AM HAPPY TO PAY TRIBUTE WHICH IS WELL DESERVED,

THIS IS HARDLY A TIME FOR ANYONE TO REST ON PAST LAURELS.

L FAMINE ALREADY STALKS A BROAD BELT ACROSS THE HEART
OF AFRICA, AND THREATENS OTHER PARTS OF THE GLOBE. THE
MAY 13 ISSUE OF TIME FOCUSED ON THESE HARSH REALITIES IN A
MAJOR COVER STORY, ENTITLED "FAMINE CASTS ITS GRIM GLOBAL
SHADOW."

*time
magazine*

L I HAVE REPEATEDLY POINTED OUT THE SERIOUSNESS OF
THE PRESENT SITUATION, THERE IS AN URGENT NEED FOR THE
UNITED STATES - AS THE WORLD'S GREAT BREADBASKET - TO FACE
UP TO THIS PRESENT PERIL.

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LAST WEEK AT THE UNITED NATIONS, I OUTLINED A FOUR-
POINT WORLD FOOD ACTION PROGRAM.

↳ MY FIRST RECOMMENDATION WAS THAT THERE SHOULD BE AN
IMMEDIATE EXPANSION IN OUR FOOD AID. ↳ AMERICAN FOOD AID
HAS BEEN DECLINING AS THE WORLD DEMAND ON THE COMMERCIAL
MARKET HAS GONE UP. ↳ POORER NATIONS NOW HAVE TO DIP INTO LIMITED
FOREIGN EXCHANGE RESERVES TO BUY SCARCE FOOD TO AVOID STARVATION.

↳ I SUGGESTED INITIATING A THREE YEAR PROGRAM AIMED AT
HELPING THOSE NATIONS HARDEST HIT BY DROUGHT, AND BY RISING
PETROLEUM AND FOOD COSTS. ↳ THIS OFFER WAS CONDITIONED ON A
COMPARABLE OFFER FROM OTHER FOOD SURPLUS NATIONS - NOTABLY
THE CANADIANS AND THE AUSTRALIANS.

↳ MY SECOND PROPOSAL WAS THAT WE MUST ESTABLISH A GRAIN
RESERVE TO AVOID MASS STARVATION. ↳ WE HAVE BLITHELY SOLD
ANYTHING THAT SOMEONE WOULD BUY. SOMEHOW, WE ASSUMED,
EVERYTHING WOULD WORK OUT ALL RIGHT.

↳ OTHER NATIONS OF THE WORLD HAVE RELIED ON US IN THE
PAST BECAUSE OF OUR GREAT CAPACITY TO PRODUCE ↳ WE WERE NOT
ONLY THE WORLD'S BREADBASKET, BUT ALSO THE WORLD'S WAREHOUSE!

↳ TODAY, WE HAVE ALMOST NO FOOD RESERVES ↳ WORLD FOOD
RESERVES ARE ALSO DOWN AND APPROACHING A PRECARIOUS THREE
WEEK LEVEL. ↳ FOR SOME COUNTRIES THIS CLEARLY MEANS
STARVATION AHEAD.

↳ GRAIN RESERVES PROVIDE A MEASURE OF STABILITY IN THE
WORLD FOOD ECONOMY. ↳ IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT THE CONGRESS ACT
QUICKLY TO PASS LEGISLATION I HAVE PROPOSED TO ESTABLISH
A NATIONAL FOOD RESERVE.

↳ THE NEED EXISTS ALSO FOR A WORLD FOOD RESERVE. ↳ THE
NOVEMBER WORLD FOOD CONFERENCE MUST TAKE UP THE PLAN OF
F.A.O. DIRECTOR-GENERAL BOERMA TO COORDINATE NATIONAL
FOOD RESERVE PROGRAMS. SUCH A PLAN SHOULD BE IMPLEMENTED
WITHOUT DELAY.

↳ THE THIRD ELEMENT OF THE WORLD FOOD ACTION PROGRAM
IS TO INCREASE THE PRODUCTION OF FERTILIZER. ↳ A SHORTAGE
OF CHEMICAL FERTILIZER IS ALREADY HAVING SERIOUS CONSEQUENCES
ON AGRICULTURE PRODUCTION IN THE DEVELOPING WORLD.

THIS IS ESPECIALLY TRUE IN SOUTH ASIA;

NOT ONLY HAVE FERTILIZER PRICES SOARED, BUT MANY
POOR COUNTRIES HAVE BEEN UNABLE TO PURCHASE REQUIRED AMOUNTS
AT ANY PRICE. JAPAN, THE UNITED STATES, AND EUROPEAN NATIONS
REDUCED THEIR FERTILIZER EXPORTS TO MEET THEIR OWN DOMESTIC
NEEDS.

A MAJOR COOPERATIVE EFFORT IS NEEDED TO INCREASE
THE EFFICIENCY OF PRODUCTION IN EXISTING DEVELOPING-COUNTRY
FERTILIZER PLANTS. MANY ARE NOW PRODUCING AT BELOW
TWO-THIRDS THEIR CAPACITY.

ADDITIONAL PLANT CAPACITY IS ALSO NEEDED. THE UNITED STATES AND OTHER INDUSTRIAL NATIONS SHOULD ASSURE THE OIL EXPORTING NATIONS -- WHICH ARE BLESSED WITH NATURAL GAS, THE FEEDSTOCK OF NITROGEN FERTILIZER -- THAT WE WILL SHARE OUR TECHNOLOGIES TO OPEN THESE NEEDED NEW SUPPLIES OF FERTILIZER.

IT IS OF VITAL IMPORTANCE THAT WE SECURE THE SUPPORT AND COOPERATION OF THE MIDDLE EAST OIL PRODUCING NATIONS,

THEY POSSESS THE PETROLEUM AND FINANCIAL RESOURCES NEEDED TO ADDRESS THE FOOD AND FERTILIZER PRODUCTION PROBLEMS,

THE FOURTH AND FINAL FEATURE OF THE PROGRAM IS TO LAUNCH A MAJOR EFFORT TO INCREASE AGRICULTURE PRODUCTION. MANY OF THE COUNTRIES NOW IN SERIOUS STRAITS WERE MAKING REASONABLE PROGRESS UNTIL ABOUT TWO YEARS AGO.

↳ WE KNOW THAT THESE COUNTRIES HOLD THE POTENTIAL FOR
SIGNIFICANT INCREASES IN AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION.

↳ MOST OF THEM NOW USE LITTLE FERTILIZER, AND APPLYING
A GIVEN AMOUNT WILL BRING A GREATER RETURN THAN WOULD THE SAME
QUANTITY IN THE UNITED STATES.

↳ THIS EFFORT IS ALSO NEEDED TO BRING EMPLOYMENT TO THE
GROWING NUMBERS OF UNEMPLOYED AND UNDEREMPLOYED PEOPLE IN THE
DEVELOPING WORLD.

↳ THIS APPROACH WILL ALSO PROVIDE THE FOUNDATION TO BRING
FOOD PRODUCTION AND POPULATION BACK INTO BALANCE.

L I HAVE OUTLINED THIS PROGRAM BECAUSE I FEEL THAT WE HAVE
A CRISIS WHICH REQUIRES URGENT STEPS. { GROUPS SUCH AS THE
MENNONITES HAVE RESPONDED GENEROUSLY TO SUCH CALLS FOR HELP
IN THE PAST.

L I ~~HAVE~~ ^{am} INTRODUCED A RESOLUTION TO BEGIN THE PROCESS OF
IMPLEMENTATION. L YOUR SUPPORT - INDEED THE SUPPORT OF ALL
AMERICANS - IS NEEDED NOW TO MAKE CERTAIN THAT WE DO RESPOND,
AND IN TIME.

L WHILE WE NEED TO RESPOND TO THIS CRISIS, THERE IS A NEED
TO LOOK FOR LONGER RANGE SOLUTIONS.

↳ ONE MAJOR QUESTION IN NEED OF EXAMINATION IS THE ENERGY
QUESTION AS IT RELATES TO AGRICULTURE PRODUCTION. AMERICAN
AGRICULTURE IS ENERGY-INTENSIVE -- OUR FOOD PRODUCTION REQUIRES
MAJOR FUEL AND FERTILIZER SUPPLIES. ↳ WHILE OUR PRODUCTION
RESULTS HAVE BEEN TRULY PHENOMENAL, THE WORLD CANNOT ADOPT
THIS SAME FORM OF PRODUCTION. ↳ THE ENERGY IS JUST NOT AVAILABLE.

↳ THUS, AS WE SEARCH FOR WAYS OF DEALING WITH GROWING
FOOD SCARCITY, NEW PRODUCTION METHODS MUST BE DISCOVERED.

↳ ONE APPROACH IS TO FIND NEW SOURCES OF ENERGY TO PRODUCE
FERTILIZER AND POWER OUR AGRICULTURAL EQUIPMENT.

↳ ANOTHER AVENUE - ~~ABOUT~~ A LONG TERM SOLUTION - IS TO
UNCOVER WAYS OF MINIMIZING THE FERTILIZER REQUIRED.

↳ SOYBEANS DO NOT REQUIRE FERTILIZER. IN FACT THEY DO NOT REALLY RESPOND TO IT. THEY "FIX" THEIR OWN NITROGEN THROUGH BACTERIA WHICH CLING TO THE ROOTS.

↳ RESEARCH IS BEING CONDUCTED TO DISCOVER MORE INFORMATION ON HOW THIS PROCESS TAKES PLACE. ↳ PERHAPS OTHER CROPS CAN ALSO BE INDUCED TO "FIX" THEIR OWN NITROGEN. ↳ I AND OTHER SENATORS HAVE CALLED ON THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE TO MAKE A MAJOR INCREASE IN THIS RESEARCH EFFORT.

↳ MOST AMERICANS SELDOM REALIZE - IN TERMS OF ENERGY - HOW INEFFICIENT OUR MODERN AGRICULTURE REALLY IS.

↳ IN AMERICAN AGRICULTURE, WE OFTEN EXPEND FIVE TO TEN CALORIES OF ENERGY FOR EACH CALORIE ^{of food} OBTAINED.

↳ PRIMITIVE SOCIETIES OFTEN OBTAINED FIVE TO FIFTY CALORIES FOR EACH CALORIE OF ENERGY EXPENDED.

↳ WHEN ENERGY WAS READILY AVAILABLE AT LOW COSTS - OR AT LEAST IT WAS THOUGHT TO BE - THE ENERGY EQUATION WAS PRETTY MUCH IGNORED.

↳ WITH ENERGY NOW AT A PREMIUM, WE CANNOT GO OUR OWN WAY IGNORING THE REST OF THE WORLD WHILE USING THE LION'S SHARE OF ENERGY. ↳ WE WILL NEED TO FIND NEW METHODS TO MAXIMIZE AGRICULTURE OUTPUT WHILE CONSERVING ENERGY.

↳ ANOTHER FEATURE OF THE ENERGY EQUATION IS THE FACT THAT MUCH OF THE GRAIN WE UTILIZE IS CONSUMED INDIRECTLY IN THE POORER NATIONS MOST GRAINS ARE UTILIZED DIRECTLY RATHER THAN IN THE FORM OF MEAT, MILK AND EGGS.

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AS A RESULT, WE CONSUME FAR MORE FOOD THAN AN INDIAN OR
CHINESE. THE EMINENT NUTRITIONIST, JEAN MAYER, STATED THIS
FACT RATHER BLUNTLY:

“THE SAME AMOUNT OF FOOD THAT IS FEEDING 210
MILLION AMERICANS WOULD FEED 1.5 BILLION CHINESE ON
AN AVERAGE CHINESE DIET.”

ANOTHER EXPERT HAS SUMMED UP THIS PROBLEM BY SAYING
THAT THE CEREALS OF THE POOR MAN WERE NOW BEING USED TO
FEED THE RICH MAN'S COW,

THIS IS INDEED A SERIOUS MORAL ISSUE. WE WILL NEED TO
START PAYING ATTENTION TO THE ENERGY EQUATION. \ OUTPUT WILL
HAVE TO BE RELATED TO THE NET ENERGY USED.

↳ ANOTHER CRITICAL LONG RANGE ISSUE REQUIRING URGENT
CONSIDERATION IS THE NEED FOR A NATIONAL FOOD POLICY. ↳ OUR
GOVERNMENT LAUNCHED BLINDLY INTO THE RUSSIAN WHEAT DEAL
WITH THE ASSUMPTION OF CONTINUED PLENTY.

↳ WHILE AMERICANS ARE NOT LIKELY TO GO HUNGRY, WE
HAVE - IN THE WORDS OF FORMER SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE
ORVILLE FREEMAN - A WHOLE NEW BALL GAME.

↳ THE MOTTO OF THIS ADMINISTRATION IS STILL TO SELL,
SELL AND SELL ↳ WE MUST BEGIN TO REALIZE THAT FOOD IS A
FORM OF SECURITY FOR US AND THE WORLD. ↳ IT IS A MORE
EFFECTIVE FORM OF SECURITY THAN TANKS AND GUNS.

A FOOD RESERVE PROGRAM IS ONE IMPORTANT PART OF A
TOTAL FOOD POLICY. AT RECENT FOOD RESERVE HEARINGS BY THE
SENATE AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY COMMITTEE, I REFERRED TO THE
FOOD RESERVE MENTIONED IN THE BOOK OF GENESIS. THERE THE STORY
IS TOLD OF JOSEPH AND THE SEVEN GOOD YEARS FOLLOWED BY THE
SEVEN LEAN YEARS.

SECRETARY BUTZ'S REPLY, UNFORTUNATELY, WAS THAT HE DID
NOT THINK THE IDEA HAD WORKED THEN OR WOULD WORK TODAY.

WE NEED TO RECOGNIZE OUR STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE AS
A SURPLUS FOOD PRODUCING NATION. AMERICAN LEADERS HAVE
BECOME CONCERNED THAT OTHER NATIONS MIGHT GANG UP AND
WITHOLD CRITICAL RAW MATERIALS. OUR FOOD IS MORE CRITICAL
THAN ANY RAW MATERIALS.

↳ WE CAN ALSO SET A COOPERATIVE EXAMPLE IN THE WAY WE USE OUR FOOD. ↳ THIS OPPORTUNITY MUST BE SEIZED FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE WORLD ECONOMY AND ALSO WORLD PEACE.

↳ A FURTHER LONG RANGE ISSUE WE NEED TO FACE IS POPULATION EXPANSION - ONE OF MAN'S MOST THORNY PROBLEMS.

↳ THE DIE - IN TERMS OF POPULATION GROWTH - IS ALREADY CAST FOR MOST OF THE REMAINDER OF THIS CENTURY.

↳ I HAVE NO SIMPLE PANACEA TO OFFER. BUT, WE MUST BEGIN TO UNDERSTAND THE PROBLEM IF WE ARE TO BEGIN TO STABILIZE POPULATION GROWTH IN THE FUTURE.

↳ WE CAN DRAW SOME USEFUL CONCLUSIONS FROM OUR OWN EXPERIENCE.

PEOPLE NEED TO HAVE A MEASURE OF SECURITY BEFORE THEY CHOOSE TO HAVE FEWER CHILDREN. THIS MEANS SECURITY IN TERMS OF ADEQUATE FOOD, HEALTH CARE, EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT.

THESE, IN MY VIEW, ARE THE BASICS OF ASSURING DEVELOPMENT IN THE POOR NATIONS. LAST YEAR, I HELPED REDEFINE AND RESHAPE THE FOREIGN AID PROGRAM TO GIVE PRIORITY TO THESE AREAS.

THIS SECURITY FOR PEOPLE IS NOT NOW PRESENT IN MUCH OF THE DEVELOPING WORLD. THERE ARE TOO MANY CHILDREN WITH DISTENDED STOMACHS AND BROOM-STICK LEGS. A 1970 SURVEY OF A PAKISTAN COMMUNITY REVEALED THAT EIGHTY SEVEN PERCENT OF THE CHILDREN DID NOT GET SUFFICIENT FOOD DURING THE CRITICAL FIRST YEAR.

↳ WE ARE ALSO AWARE OF PARENTS WHO VIEW GROWN SONS AS
THEIR ONLY FORM OF SOCIAL SECURITY ↳ TO SPEAK OF FAMILY
PLANNING UNDER THESE CIRCUMSTANCES HAS ALMOST NO MEANING.

↳ LEST WE BE TOO SMUG OVER OUR OWN LOW RATE OF
POPULATION INCREASE, A WORD OF CAUTION IS IN ORDER. ↳ WE
CONSUME MORE RESOURCES, DISTURB THE ECOLOGY MORE AND
CREATE FAR MORE POLLUTION THAN THE EARTH'S POOR PEOPLE.

THUS THERE IS GOOD REASON TO ARGUE THAT IT IS JUST AS
URGENT FOR THE AFFLUENT TO CONTROL THEIR POPULATION INCREASE.

↳ IN REVIEWING THESE LONG AND SHORT TERM PROBLEMS, IT
BECOMES INCREASINGLY CLEAR THAT OUR FATE IS TIED TO THAT OF
OTHER NATIONS.

WE ARE TOLD BY SOME SO-CALLED EXPERTS THAT AMERICANS WANT TO TURN THEIR BACKS ON THE WORLD. I DO NOT BELIEVE THIS, AND FURTHERMORE, IT IS JUST NOT POSSIBLE.

I AM REMINDED OF WENDELL WILKIE'S BOOK, ONE WORLD. THE THEME OF ONE WORLD HAS OFTEN BEEN DERIDED IN THE UNITED STATES.

WHETHER OR NOT WE ARE TODAY WILLING TO CONCEDE THE APPROPRIATENESS OF THE TERM, WE MUST BEGIN TO LIVE AND THINK OF OURSELVES AS CITIZENS OF ONE WORLD.

I HAVE FAITH THAT THE AMERICAN PEOPLE WILL RESPOND TO THIS CRISIS AS THEY HAVE BEFORE. RATHER THAN AGREEING WITH THE PESSIMISTS, I SHARE THE VIEW OF CARL SANDBURG WHO SAID:

"I SEE AMERICA, NOT IN THE SETTING SUN OF A BLACK NIGHT OF DESPAIR AHEAD OF US. I SEE AMERICA IN THE CRIMSON LIGHT OF A RISING SUN FRESH FROM THE BURNING, CREATIVE HAND OF GOD. I SEE GREAT DAYS AHEAD, GREAT DAYS POSSIBLE TO MEN AND WOMEN OF WILL AND VISION."

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