

REMARKS BY SENATOR HUBERT H. HUMPHREY

ST. PAUL ACADEMY AND SUMMIT SCHOOL

St. Paul, Minnesota
February 10, 1975

A great deal has been said and written in the last couple of years on the world food crisis. Its origin and dimensions are unclear to many people and, in particular, to many well-fed Americans.

A number of key factors came together at one time to cause this food crisis:

- increasing population;
- growing demand for food; and
- bad weather which has destroyed crops.

Of course, in the view of some people we have no food problem. It is true that the United States produces more than ample quantities of most food. But we do have our own problems of hunger and malnutrition.

It is interesting that we find ourselves increasingly dependent on other nations for minerals and raw commodities. We need to export our food to be able to buy from other nations, whether it be bauxite or manganese.

The present petroleum crisis indicates how dependent we are on other nations for basic commodities.

However, in the food area, we are in somewhat the same position as the oil producing nations. We produce about half of the food which moves in international channels. And with the addition of agricultural production in Canada and Australia, that figure goes up to about 75 percent of the food which is exported.

Therefore, the world is vitally concerned and affected by what these three nations do with their food. A bad harvest in one or more countries and especially the United States, can bring famine and malnutrition to other nations.

Our export policies and what we do in the field of food aid assistance are of great significance in the world food scene.

We obviously need a strong export market, and our agricultural products presently are earning about \$21 billion.

But we also need to continue to play a major role in providing food aid to the needy nations of the world. We have provided generously in the past, with our grant and concessional sales exceeding \$25 billion.

This generosity has not been exceeded by any nation. But we cannot rest on our laurels. Today we face new problems which will not be solved by pointing to what we did in the past.

The World Food Conference in Rome last November laid out some of the steps which need to be taken in order to alleviate the problem of extensive hunger and widespread starvation in many nations.

There must be a two-fold international strategy. First, we must take emergency action to deal with the present famine threat.

Second, we must develop a longer term strategy of helping developing nations to increase food production and to slow population growth.

There was a great deal of controversy at Rome which involved me and other Senators because we urged that American food aid be increased from 3.3 million tons to 4.3 million tons.

This was a modest proposal, well within our capability to finance and ship.

In 1972 we had provided approximately nine million tons. And the original budget for the current fiscal year projected shipments of around 4.5 million tons.

Our suggestion was based on the understanding that other nations also would respond by increasing their food aid assistance.

In my view the United States missed a golden opportunity at this Conference to provide desperately needed leadership in stabilizing the food situation. We behaved as if we were a bystander rather than the world's leading participant. Because of our critical importance in food production, we can hardly escape playing a major role.

The Administration ultimately turned down the proposal of the Congressional advisers to the U.S. delegation at the World Food Conference, that this one-million-ton increase in food aid be announced. The reason given by the Administration was that this action would be inflationary.

However, Secretary Butz had conceded in Rome that we already were providing food aid at around the 4.3 million ton level.

It is interesting that just within the past week, a final determination was made on the food aid levels, seven months after the start of the fiscal year.

And the level of assistance is now planned at around 5.5 million tons.

I am happy that the food aid level has been raised. But the decision was made so late in the year that it may not be possible to ship this quantity by June 30, 1975.

While this decision will be a useful contribution to helping solve the food crisis, we will need to keep a careful watch on the food situation in countries such as India, Bangladesh and Ethiopia.

Beyond the immediate food needs, we must take a longer look at the problems of food production, particularly on small farms, and population growth in the developing nations.

These are complex problems as was made clear in the recent TV special, entitled "Who Shall Survive," which was narrated by Bill Moyers.

We will need to place more emphasis on increasing agricultural production, and particularly that of the small farmers. Unfortunately, most of the emphasis to date has been on the larger farmers. The ones to benefit most from advances in agricultural extension-services, new seed varieties, fertilizer and credit have been the more affluent farmers.

In addition, a new effort must be made to understand and develop effective population programs. The nations which face the most serious food problems are almost without exception those with the greatest poverty and the highest population growth rates.

Some countries face a population growth of over 3 percent each year and a doubling of their population in 25 years.

These countries face large-scale unemployment which can best be dealt with by creating employment in the rural areas.

Another key requirement is that we squarely face the food reserve issue at both the national and international levels. I hear a great deal of conventional wisdom about how high a price we would pay for storing food commodities. And we also are told that reserves automatically depress prices.

These are reasonable issues for discussion, but I would ask what is the cost of not having a reserve?

It is estimated that the food bill of the American consumers went up by \$17 billion in the past year. The outlook is for a further increase of at least \$20 billion this year.

The lack of even a modest reserve has caused great volatility in the agricultural economy. This "boom and bust" has not benefited our farmers, nor has it helped our consumers.

And our markets and economy have been more and more unstable as our reserves have declined to their present 25 day level.

A well-managed reserve can help stabilize markets by purchasing surpluses in times of excess production. And reserve stocks can be released -- under carefully controlled conditions -- in times of short supply.

A reserve also is a national security requirement, in my view. We know that the Soviet Union has a strategic reserve, and yet the U. S. Department of Agriculture says that we will sell whatever a customer wants to buy.

The cooperation of countries in establishing an international food reserve program is also essential. World markets suffer today from roller-coaster, up-and-down prices. We need to stabilize food supply levels to end this disruptive situation.

Meanwhile, we should pay a great deal more attention to weather and its long range trends. This is a relatively new area of study, and it is of critical importance in estimating crop harvests and pinpointing potential areas of food shortages or famine.

Some experts feel that the world's weather patterns have been changing in recent years. This could mean that areas such as the Sahel and India will have even more difficulty in growing adequate food supplies in the future.

Another important area which we need to develop is an improved agricultural information system. We need to have better crop and livestock estimates, weather forecasts, and economic trend indicators. All of these factors affect the food availability and demand for food.

I am gratified that my proposal that an improved agricultural information system be established was adopted by the World Food Conference. There will, of course, be difficulties in achieving an effective world-wide information network. Nations such as Russia and Red China have been reluctant to provide crop information.

It is clear that we face an increasingly interdependent world in which easy solutions are not readily available.

I would suggest that we must get back to the basics and not take our food productive system for granted. It is one of the wonders of today's world. But it is like a finely-tuned watch. Damage to one part can disrupt the entire mechanism. And the cost of repair can be very high.

We need to develop a food and agricultural policy which protects our own interests and takes into account our key role in helping to meet the world's food requirements.

It is urgent that we be prepared to act decisively and coherently. To date we have been unwilling to do so.

In the words of the immortal philosopher, Pogo, "We have met the enemy, and they is us."

The nations of the world have become increasingly dependent on one another, and there is no escape through purely national solutions.

We should seize this opportunity to provide the leadership that is so sorely needed.

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Bill Harris

Clifford Caine - ant. Hadmaster

Reserves
impredictability
P.L. 480

FOOD FOR PEACE

REMARKS BY SENATOR HUBERT H. HUMPHREY

Anchovies
Humboldt
current

ST. PAUL ACADEMY AND SUMMIT SCHOOL

ST. PAUL, MINNESOTA

FEBRUARY 10, 1975

world food
conference
argument
3.3 - to 4.3

Food Supplies - + Population

- affluence
- Population
- weather

Emergency Aid 5.5 Million Tons

Food Production

Research - Tropical

Weather - Trends

Reserves - nat. - Intern.

Information

U.S. as Supplier

90% Protein

80% Feed

60% wheat

U.S., Canada, Australia
75% of exports

A GREAT DEAL HAS BEEN SAID AND WRITTEN IN THE LAST COUPLE OF YEARS ON THE WORLD FOOD CRISIS. ITS ORIGIN AND DIMENSIONS ARE UNCLEAR TO MANY PEOPLE AND, IN PARTICULAR, TO MANY WELL-FED AMERICANS.

A NUMBER OF KEY FACTORS CAME TOGETHER AT ONE TIME TO CAUSE THIS FOOD CRISIS:

- INCREASING POPULATION;
- GROWING DEMAND FOR FOOD; AND
- BAD WEATHER WHICH HAS DESTROYED CROPS.

OF COURSE, IN THE VIEW OF SOME PEOPLE WE HAVE NO FOOD PROBLEM. IT IS TRUE THAT THE UNITED STATES PRODUCES MORE THAN AMPLE QUANTITIES OF MOST FOOD. BUT WE DO HAVE OUR OWN PROBLEMS OF HUNGER AND MALNUTRITION.

Imports

↳ IT IS INTERESTING THAT WE FIND OURSELVES INCREASINGLY

DEPENDENT ON OTHER NATIONS FOR MINERALS AND RAW COMMODITIES.

Exports

↳ WE NEED TO EXPORT OUR FOOD TO BE ABLE TO BUY FROM OTHER NATIONS,

WHETHER IT BE BAUXITE OR MANGANESE.

↳

THE PRESENT PETROLEUM CRISIS INDICATES HOW DEPENDENT WE ARE

ON OTHER NATIONS FOR BASIC COMMODITIES.

↳

HOWEVER, IN THE FOOD AREA, WE ARE IN SOMEWHAT THE SAME

POSITION AS THE OIL PRODUCING NATIONS. WE PRODUCE ABOUT HALF OF

THE FOOD WHICH MOVES IN INTERNATIONAL CHANNELS. AND WITH THE

ADDITION OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION IN CANADA AND AUSTRALIA,

THAT FIGURE GOES UP TO ABOUT 75 PERCENT OF THE FOOD WHICH IS

EXPORTED.

THEREFORE, THE WORLD IS VITALLY CONCERNED AND AFFECTED BY WHAT THESE THREE NATIONS DO WITH THEIR FOOD. A BAD HARVEST IN ONE OR MORE COUNTRIES, AND ESPECIALLY THE UNITED STATES, CAN BRING FAMINE AND MALNUTRITION TO OTHER NATIONS.

↳ OUR EXPORT POLICIES AND WHAT WE DO IN THE FIELD OF FOOD AID ASSISTANCE ARE OF GREAT SIGNIFICANCE IN THE WORLD FOOD SCENE.

↳ WE OBVIOUSLY NEED A STRONG EXPORT MARKET, AND OUR AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS PRESENTLY ARE EARNING ABOUT \$21 BILLION.

↳ BUT WE ALSO NEED TO CONTINUE TO PLAY A MAJOR ROLE IN PROVIDING FOOD AID TO THE NEEDY NATIONS OF THE WORLD. WE HAVE PROVIDED GENEROUSLY IN THE PAST, WITH OUR GRANT AND CONCESSIONAL SALES EXCEEDING \$25 BILLION.

FOOD
AID

THIS GENEROSITY HAS NOT BEEN EXCEEDED BY ANY NATION, BUT WE CANNOT REST ON OUR LAURELS. TODAY WE FACE NEW PROBLEMS WHICH WILL NOT BE SOLVED BY POINTING TO WHAT WE DID IN THE PAST,

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L THE WORLD FOOD CONFERENCE IN ROME LAST NOVEMBER LAID OUT
SOME OF THE STEPS WHICH NEED TO BE TAKEN IN ORDER TO ALLEVIATE

THE PROBLEM OF EXTENSIVE HUNGER AND WIDESPREAD STARVATION IN
MANY NATIONS.

2 fold strategy
L THERE MUST BE A TWO-FOLD INTERNATIONAL STRATEGY L FIRST,

WE MUST TAKE EMERGENCY ACTION TO DEAL WITH THE PRESENT FAMINE
THREAT.

2
L SECOND, WE MUST DEVELOP A LONGER TERM STRATEGY OF HELPING
DEVELOPING NATIONS TO INCREASE FOOD PRODUCTION AND TO SLOW
POPULATION GROWTH.

THERE WAS A GREAT DEAL OF CONTROVERSY AT ROME WHICH INVOLVED ME AND OTHER SENATORS BECAUSE WE URGED THAT AMERICAN FOOD AID BE INCREASED FROM 3,3 MILLION TONS TO 4,3 MILLION TONS.

↳ THIS WAS A MODEST PROPOSAL, WELL WITHIN OUR CAPABILITY TO FINANCE AND SHIP.

↳ IN 1972 WE HAD PROVIDED APPROXIMATELY NINE MILLION TONS. AND THE ORIGINAL BUDGET FOR THE CURRENT FISCAL YEAR PROJECTED SHIPMENTS OF AROUND 4.5 MILLION TONS.

↳ OUR SUGGESTION WAS BASED ON THE UNDERSTANDING THAT OTHER NATIONS ALSO WOULD RESPOND BY INCREASING THEIR FOOD AID ASSISTANCE.

IN MY VIEW THE UNITED STATES MISSED A GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY AT THIS CONFERENCE TO PROVIDE DESPERATELY NEEDED LEADERSHIP IN STABILIZING THE FOOD SITUATION. WE BEHAVED AS IF WE WERE A BYSTANDER RATHER THAN THE WORLD'S LEADING PARTICIPANT.

BECAUSE OF OUR CRITICAL IMPORTANCE IN FOOD PRODUCTION, WE CAN HARDLY ESCAPE PLAYING A MAJOR ROLE.

↳ THE ADMINISTRATION ULTIMATELY TURNED DOWN THE PROPOSAL OF THE CONGRESSIONAL ADVISERS TO THE U.S. DELEGATION AT THE WORLD FOOD CONFERENCE, THAT THIS ONE-MILLION-TON INCREASE IN FOOD AID BE ANNOUNCED. THE REASON GIVEN BY THE ADMINISTRATION WAS THAT THIS ACTION WOULD BE INFLATIONARY.

↳ HOWEVER, SECRETARY BUTZ HAD CONCEDED IN ROME THAT WE ALREADY WERE PROVIDING FOOD AID AT AROUND THE 4.3 MILLION TON LEVEL.

h IT IS INTERESTING THAT JUST WITHIN THE PAST WEEK, A FINAL DETERMINATION WAS MADE ON THE FOOD AID LEVELS, SEVEN MONTHS AFTER THE START OF THE FISCAL YEAR.

L AND THE LEVEL OF ASSISTANCE IS NOW PLANNED AT AROUND 5.5 MILLION TONS.

{ I AM HAPPY THAT THE FOOD AID LEVEL HAS BEEN RAISED BUT THE DECISION WAS MADE SO LATE IN THE YEAR THAT IT MAY NOT BE POSSIBLE TO SHIP THIS QUANTITY BY JUNE 30, 1975.

critical areas L WHILE THIS DECISION WILL BE A USEFUL CONTRIBUTION TO HELPING SOLVE THE FOOD CRISIS, WE WILL NEED TO KEEP A CAREFUL WATCH ON THE FOOD SITUATION IN COUNTRIES SUCH AS INDIA, BANGLADESH AND ETHIOPIA.

BEYOND THE IMMEDIATE FOOD NEEDS, WE MUST TAKE A LONGER
LOOK AT THE PROBLEMS OF FOOD PRODUCTION, PARTICULARLY ON SMALL
FARMS, AND POPULATION GROWTH IN THE DEVELOPING NATIONS.

THESE ARE COMPLEX PROBLEMS AS WAS MADE CLEAR IN THE RECENT
TV SPECIAL, ENTITLED "WHO SHALL SURVIVE," WHICH WAS NARRATED BY
BILL MOYERS.

WE WILL NEED TO PLACE MORE EMPHASIS ON INCREASING
AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION AND PARTICULARLY THAT OF THE SMALL
FARMERS. UNFORTUNATELY, MOST OF THE EMPHASIS TO DATE HAS BEEN
ON THE LARGER FARMERS. THE ONES TO BENEFIT MOST FROM ADVANCES
IN AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION-SERVICES, NEW SEED VARIETIES, FERTILIZER
AND CREDIT HAVE BEEN THE MORE AFFLUENT FARMERS.

Food & Population

↳ IN ADDITION, A NEW EFFORT MUST BE MADE TO UNDERSTAND AND DEVELOP EFFECTIVE POPULATION PROGRAMS. THE NATIONS WHICH FACE THE MOST SERIOUS FOOD PROBLEMS ARE ALMOST WITHOUT EXCEPTION THOSE WITH THE GREATEST POVERTY AND THE HIGHEST POPULATION GROWTH RATES.

↳ SOME COUNTRIES FACE A POPULATION GROWTH OF OVER 3 PERCENT EACH YEAR AND A DOUBLING OF THEIR POPULATION IN 25 YEARS.

↳ THESE COUNTRIES FACE LARGE-SCALE UNEMPLOYMENT WHICH CAN BEST BE DEALT WITH BY CREATING EMPLOYMENT IN THE RURAL AREAS.

Food Reserve

↳ ANOTHER KEY REQUIREMENT IS THAT WE SQUARELY FACE THE FOOD RESERVE ISSUE AT BOTH THE NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL LEVELS.

I HEAR A GREAT DEAL OF CONVENTIONAL WISDOM ABOUT HOW HIGH A PRICE
WE WOULD PAY FOR STORING FOOD COMMODITIES. AND WE ALSO ARE TOLD
RESERVES AUTOMATICALLY DEPRESS PRICES.

THESE ARE REASONABLE ISSUES FOR DISCUSSION, BUT I WOULD ASK
WHAT IS THE COST OF NOT HAVING A RESERVE?

IT IS ESTIMATED THAT THE FOOD BILL OF THE AMERICAN CONSUMERS
WENT UP BY \$17 BILLION IN THE PAST YEAR. THE OUTLOOK IS FOR A
FURTHER INCREASE OF AT LEAST \$20 BILLION THIS YEAR.

THE LACK OF EVEN A MODEST RESERVE HAS CAUSED GREAT VOLATILITY
IN THE AGRICULTURAL ECONOMY. THIS "BOOM AND BUST" HAS NOT
BENEFITED OUR FARMERS, NOR HAS IT HELPED OUR CONSUMERS.

AND OUR MARKETS AND ECONOMY HAVE BEEN MORE AND MORE UNSTABLE
AS OUR RESERVES HAVE DECLINED TO THEIR PRESENT 25 DAY LEVEL.

A WELL-MANAGED RESERVE CAN HELP STABILIZE MARKETS BY
PURCHASING SURPLUSES IN TIMES OF EXCESS PRODUCTION. AND RESERVE
STOCKS CAN BE RELEASED -- UNDER CAREFULLY CONTROLLED CONDITIONS --
IN TIMES OF SHORT SUPPLY.

↳ A RESERVE ALSO IS A NATIONAL SECURITY REQUIREMENT, IN MY
VIEW, WE KNOW THAT THE SOVIET UNION HAS A STRATEGIC RESERVE, AND
YET THE U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE SAYS THAT WE WILL SELL
WHATEVER A CUSTOMER WANTS TO BUY.

THE COOPERATION OF COUNTRIES IN ESTABLISHING AN INTERNATIONAL
FOOD RESERVE PROGRAM IS ALSO ESSENTIAL. WORLD MARKETS SUFFER
TODAY FROM ROLLER-COASTER, UP-AND-DOWN PRICES. WE NEED TO
STABILIZE FOOD SUPPLY LEVELS TO END THIS DISRUPTIVE SITUATION.

Weather

~~##~~
MEANWHILE, WE SHOULD PAY A GREAT DEAL MORE ATTENTION TO
WEATHER AND ITS LONG RANGE TRENDS. THIS IS A RELATIVELY NEW AREA
OF STUDY, AND IT IS OF CRITICAL IMPORTANCE IN ESTIMATING CROP
HARVESTS AND PINPOINTING POTENTIAL AREAS OF FOOD SHORTAGES OR
FAMINE.

SOME EXPERTS FEEL THAT THE WORLD'S WEATHER PATTERNS HAVE
BEEN CHANGING IN RECENT YEARS. THIS COULD MEAN THAT AREAS SUCH
AS THE SAHEL AND INDIA WILL HAVE EVEN MORE DIFFICULTY IN GROWING
ADEQUATE FOOD SUPPLIES IN THE FUTURE.

Information

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ANOTHER IMPORTANT AREA WHICH WE NEED TO DEVELOP IS AN IMPROVED AGRICULTURAL INFORMATION SYSTEM. WE NEED TO HAVE BETTER CROP AND LIVESTOCK ESTIMATES, WEATHER FORECASTS, AND ECONOMIC TREND INDICATORS. ALL OF THESE FACTORS AFFECT THE AVAILABILITY AND DEMAND FOR FOOD.

I AM GRATIFIED THAT MY PROPOSAL THAT AN IMPROVED AGRICULTURAL INFORMATION SYSTEM BE ESTABLISHED WAS ADOPTED BY THE WORLD FOOD CONFERENCE. THERE WILL, OF COURSE, BE DIFFICULTIES IN ACHIEVING AN EFFECTIVE WORLD-WIDE INFORMATION NETWORK. NATIONS SUCH AS RUSSIA AND RED CHINA HAVE BEEN RELUCTANT TO PROVIDE CROP INFORMATION.

IT IS CLEAR THAT WE FACE AN INCREASINGLY INTERDEPENDENT WORLD IN WHICH EASY SOLUTIONS ARE NOT READILY AVAILABLE.

I WOULD SUGGEST THAT WE MUST GET BACK TO THE BASICS AND NOT TAKE OUR FOOD PRODUCTIVE SYSTEM FOR GRANTED. IT IS ONE OF THE WONDERS OF TODAY'S WORLD. BUT IT IS LIKE A FINELY-TUNED WATCH. DAMAGE TO ONE PART CAN DISRUPT THE ENTIRE MECHANISM. AND THE COST OF REPAIR CAN BE VERY HIGH.

↳ WE NEED TO DEVELOP A FOOD AND AGRICULTURAL POLICY WHICH PROTECTS OUR OWN INTERESTS AND TAKES INTO ACCOUNT OUR KEY ROLE IN HELPING TO MEET THE WORLD'S FOOD REQUIREMENTS.

IT IS URGENT THAT WE BE PREPARED TO ACT DECISIVELY AND COHERENTLY. TO DATE WE HAVE BEEN UNWILLING TO DO SO.

IN THE WORDS OF THE IMMORTAL PHILOSOPHER, POGO, "WE HAVE
MET THE ENEMY, AND THEY IS US."

THE NATIONS OF THE WORLD HAVE BECOME INCREASINGLY DEPENDENT
ON ONE ANOTHER, AND THERE IS NO ESCAPE THROUGH PURELY NATIONAL
SOLUTIONS.

WE SHOULD SEIZE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO PROVIDE THE LEADERSHIP
THAT IS SO SORELY NEEDED,

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