

REMARKS BY SENATOR HUBERT H. HUMPHREY

WORLD FUTURE SOCIETY

WASHINGTON, D.C.

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No event has been more frightening to the world, nor casts a deeper shadow on prospects for the future, than "The World Food Problem." It is the more vexing in that it represents the undoing of an assurance we had come to rely on -- that technology and science and economics had banished widespread hunger from the earth.

Now that sureness is being put to the test by a realization that hunger is today widespread, and that famine on a major scale is a real possibility.

And so we ask, "How could this happen? How is it that mankind, whose technology could send men to the moon, and whose advances in communications permit instant contact between people throughout the world, has not conquered this oldest of threats?"

The answer is, of course, that in spite of all his advances, mankind is still a highly diverse species, and the resources of the earth, as well as the benefits of technology, are most unevenly divided.

To understand the present crisis, it might be well to go back only five or six years, to the end of the 1960s. That was a period of high optimism for those who were concerned with the balance between population and food supplies.

Grain stocks in the developed countries of the world were very high and even burdensome to American farmers.

Progress in agriculture among several of the heavily populated developing countries was indeed impressive. Several types of programs, including the introduction of newly-developed high yielding varieties of rice, corn and wheat (the "Green Revolution") had increased grain production in the developing countries 78 percent in the period 1948-52 to 1966-70.

The end of that period marked the highest point in per capita food production since World War II, at least. Stocks of grains were at an all-time high, and world prices had been relatively stable throughout the sixties.

Production in the developed nations -- starting from a much higher base -- increased 64 percent over the same period. And in spite of government programs designed to restrict production, the 1969-70 world carryover was more than 185 million tons of grains. A large proportion of those grains were held by a small number of countries, among them Canada and the United States.

There was confidence that food shortages in the developing world could be handled through a variety of food assistance programs, including the World Food Program and our Food for Peace program.

In each of the last five years of the sixties, combined food aid contributions by the developed nations averaged \$1.2 billion. The United States -- mostly through its Food for Peace program -- accounted for more than 85 percent of those shipments.

Food for Peace, which I helped initiate, had begun in the mid-1950's, with the dual purpose of distributing large surpluses of grains accumulated through our price support programs, and of developing new export markets.

By the mid-1960's, food aid had come to be viewed as an integral part of the development process. P.L.480 shipments were used to finance development projects, as well as to improve nutritional levels in the developing countries. The program also has continued, throughout its existence, to meet emergency assistance and refugee needs.

In spite of the optimism of the late 1960's, there was a lurking dread among close observers of the food situation. Although the promise of widespread adoption of high-yielding varieties of corn, rice and wheat fed the dream, there were some stark realities to be counted.

First, population growth in the poorest nations continued to put heavy pressure on some very impressive gains in food production. By 1970, food production in the developing countries was 26 percent more than in the early years of the sixties. Yet, a population increase of 30 percent allowed only about a 5 percent gain in per capita food supplies.

Second, there was widespread recognition by the end of the decade, that development plans in many of the neediest nations had neglected agricultural development in their zeal to move into the ranks of modern industrialized societies.

Third, improved economic situations in many countries had increased the incomes of large numbers of people in these countries, and this was quickly translated into demand for more and higher quality foods.

Overlaying all of these factors was the new-found realization, nurtured by modern communications, of what was possible in this world. And this provided the impetus for what we term "rising expectations."

All of these factors combined to temper in some observers the optimism that tended to blind others to the awful possibilities inherent in the man-food equation.

And so we moved into the decade of the seventies.

The first two years of the decade saw a continuation of increased production. Overall, world food production was 21 percent more in 1970, and 26 percent more in 1971, than it had been in the early 1960's. In the poorer, developing nations, adoption of new strains was largely responsible for an output of food that was a third more than ten years earlier.

Our present difficulty put in its first appearance in the 1972-73 crop year, when total world food production declined from the year earlier, by a modest 1.6 percent. That seemingly modest shortfall was to prove far more serious than its small size at first suggests.

What made it serious was the distribution of crop failures. It was, first of all, the first time since World War II that total world food production had declined.

But unusually poor harvests in the developing countries -- particularly a 3 percent decline in South Asian countries -- reduced gains in the developing world -- the home of two-thirds of the world's 3.8 billion people -- to zero.

One must keep in mind the fact that high birth rates in these poorer nations continue to add more than 70 million people to that number each year. Even more important, the situation was worsened by disastrous weather in Canada, Australia and the Soviet Union, which reduced production in the developed world as well.

To compensate for its short supplies, the Soviets, for the first time, made massive purchases from stocks held in the United States. Ordinarily a net grain exporter, the U.S.S.R. became the world's largest importer of grains in 1972-73, when its overseas purchases totalled 30 million tons.

Thus, the world's long-time cushion against shortages -- U.S. grain stocks -- were quickly drawn down to their lowest levels in 20 years. What looked like and was greeted by the Department of Agriculture as a bonanza year for agricultural trade, turned to ashes when its consequences were realized.

The result of the 1972 events was a sharp and painful rise in food prices. It disturbed and angered people in the affluent nations of the world -- already beset by inflation. But in the poor and heavily populated developing countries, increased prices profoundly threatened the ability of people to obtain even a subsistence share of the smaller supply.

We went into the 1973-74 crop year in gathering gloom, as almost every month revealed new dimensions in our predicament. We knew there was little margin against the possibility of a second consecutive poor harvest. And we had become dangerously dependent on current production.

The effects of the reduced Peruvian anchovy catch continued to put pressure on supplies of feed grains, when the supply of that important protein was reduced.

The Arab boycott, in late 1973 and early 1974, triggered a price spiral for petroleum and chemical supplies. Fuel for farm equipment, chemicals for fertilizer and pesticides, transportation for farm commodities, all became short of supply and high-priced.

The world also came face to face with its worst fears as the calamity of the Sahel became clearer. In those countries lying south of the Sahara, a long drought affected millions of people, and the specter of famine began to take its toll. Our consciences were assaulted by reports of starving children and the dislocation and disintegration of whole societies.

We recognized a fundamental truth we had almost forgotten -- that life on this planet is a fragile affair. We were brought face to face with a prophesy of doom we have been putting down since Thomas Malthus said it nearly 200 years ago in these words:

"Famine seems to be the last, the most dreadful resource of nature. The power of population is so superior to the power of the earth to provide subsistence . . . that premature death must in some shape or other visit the human race."

This set the circumstances on the condition of the balance between man and food finally brought the nations of the world together this past year in two critically important conferences.

The World Population Conference addressed probably the most intransigent problem facing mankind. It also highlighted the fact that future food supplies are not only the concern of agriculturalists.

Current population growth, like compound interest, is cumulative. At present rates of growth, world population will reach 5 billion by 1986 and 6 billion by 1995.

Worse, population growth in the developing world is two and a half times greater than in the industrialized countries. Thus, while the doubling time for world population is 35 years, in some of the heavily populated developing countries, it is only 18 years or less.

These increases will continue the precarious balance prevailing today, and a fractional change in either food production or population increase can mean starvation to millions.

While there are a few hopeful signs that family planning programs are making progress in some developing countries, the problem clearly needs a lot more effort.

More immediate to the food problem was the U.N. World Food Conference, which met in Rome in November, 1974. There, delegates from 130 countries, 47 United Nations agencies, and some 300 nongovernmental organizations met to tackle a wide range of problems. The work of the conference was organized around several agenda items to consider both national and international programs of action:

- measures for increasing food production in developing countries;

- improvement of the availability of food, and improved nutrition levels in all countries;

- a "world food security" system, comprising better information systems to warn of impending shortages, more effective national and international stock policies, upgraded emergency relief and food aid programs;

- improvements in trade in agricultural products; and

- arrangements for follow-up action.

The Conference did not result in clear-cut agreement on some of the more pressing aspects of the food problem. Some of these -- such as the provision of immediate food relief and the establishment of grain reserves -- were left for subsequent negotiations.

But the Conference did arrive at agreement on a number of recommendations, which, if pursued, would substantially revitalize food production in the developing world.

The Conference adopted a Universal Declaration of the Eradication of Hunger and Malnutrition, which states, in general terms, the condition of world food supplies. It proclaims the right of every person to be free from hunger, the fundamental responsibility of governments to provide incentives to improve food production, and the need for international measures to assist agricultural development.

A group of resolutions dealing with agricultural development were adopted. These call on the developed nations to give increased financial and technical assistance to developing economies. Developing nations were seriously and vigorously urged to pursue programs and policies to improve food production. These included:

- improved rural conditions, including agrarian reform, promotion of cooperatives, education and production incentives;
- an International Fertilizer Scheme to assist in providing additional fertilizer capacity;
- research, training, and extension services to farmers;
- improved soil protection and conservation, and an assessment of lands that can be brought into production; and,
- the adoption of programs designed to stabilize production and trade in agricultural products.

In addition, the Conference recommended establishment of an International Fund for Agricultural Development to finance projects in developing countries.

A second group of resolutions relating to world food security included provisions for increased food aid, the undertaking of extensive research on food and nutrition, the establishment of a global information and early-warning system on food and agriculture, and the establishment of a global food reserve system. These were thorny problems, and the best that could be achieved at Rome was agreement to meet later to try to work out details.

With respect to food aid, both Canada and Australia -- and later, the United States -- agreed to increase their contributions. On the question of establishment of reserves, the matter was subsequently turned over to the International Wheat Council.

A third group of resolutions related to follow-up action including the establishment of a World Food Council,

. . . to serve as a coordinating mechanism to provide over-all integrated and continuing attention for the successful coordination and follow-up of policies concerning food production, nutrition, food security, food trade and food aid, as well as other related matters, by all the agencies of the United Nations system . . .

Other parts of the follow-up machinery include a Committee on World Food security, to monitor food supplies and demand, evaluate the world food situation, and make recommendations for action to assure adequate supplies. A Committee on Food Policies and Programs, to carry out the Conference goals with respect to food assistance, was to be reconstituted. Finally, arrangements were made to coordinate the fertilizer and investment programs.

In the U.S. Congress, a few actions and a number of proposals have already been made. Late last year, we revised our foreign aid legislation to focus more sharply on agricultural production, education, and population programs. We also directed that Food for Peace shipments be directed toward those countries where food needs are most critical.

Several other proposals, which I am supporting, would help implement the goals of the World Food Conference:

-- The development of an improved world agricultural reporting system;

-- Assistance in expanding the role of Land Grant-type institutions in developing countries;

-- Establishment of a domestic food reserves system;

-- Expansion of research in such necessary areas as improved seeds, tropical agriculture, nutrition, and weather; and

-- Providing for needed quantities of food for humanitarian purposes.

The Congress and the nation also must give increased attention to agricultural policies that take account of our responsibilities, not only to American farmers and consumers, but to the people in less fortunate lands. There is no good reason why this cannot be accomplished; more important, there is no alternative in the nation's best interests.

Can one assume from this agenda that there are grounds for optimism? Hardly. The proof of the pudding lies in the implementation of these steps. To the extent the situation is seriously addressed, there is real hope that solutions can be found.

We have only started to address the food problem. It has only begun to receive the attention needed. Our dedication and determination will answer the question as to whether there will be enough food for millions to survive. We can and we must win that battle.

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NO EVENT HAS BEEN MORE FRIGHTENING TO THE WORLD, NOR CASTS
A DEEPER SHADOW ON PROSPECTS FOR THE FUTURE, THAN "THE WORLD FOOD
PROBLEM." IT IS THE MORE VEXING IN THAT IT REPRESENTS THE
UNDOING OF AN ASSURANCE WE HAD COME TO RELY ON -- THAT TECHNOLOGY
AND SCIENCE AND ECONOMICS HAD BANISHED WIDESPREAD HUNGER FROM
THE EARTH.

↳ NOW THAT 'SURENESS' IS BEING PUT TO THE TEST BY A REALIZATION
THAT HUNGER IS TODAY WIDESPREAD, AND THAT FAMINE ON A MAJOR SCALE
IS A REAL POSSIBILITY,

↳ AND SO WE ASK, "HOW COULD THIS HAPPEN? HOW IS IT THAT MANKIND,
WHOSE TECHNOLOGY COULD SEND MEN TO THE MOON, AND WHOSE ADVANCES
IN COMMUNICATIONS PERMIT INSTANT CONTACT BETWEEN PEOPLE THROUGHOUT
THE WORLD, HAS NOT CONQUERED THIS OLDEST OF THREATS?"

THE ANSWER IS, OF COURSE, THAT IN SPITE OF ALL HIS ADVANCES, MANKIND IS STILL A HIGHLY DIVERSE SPECIES, AND THE RESOURCES OF THE EARTH, AS WELL AS THE BENEFITS OF TECHNOLOGY, ARE MOST UNEVENLY DIVIDED.

↳ TO UNDERSTAND THE PRESENT CRISIS, IT MIGHT BE WELL TO GO BACK ONLY FIVE OR SIX YEARS, TO THE END OF THE 1960s ↳ THAT WAS A PERIOD OF HIGH OPTIMISM FOR THOSE WHO WERE CONCERNED WITH THE BALANCE BETWEEN POPULATION AND FOOD SUPPLIES.

↳ GRAIN STOCKS IN THE DEVELOPED COUNTRIES OF THE WORLD WERE VERY HIGH AND EVEN BURDENSOME TO AMERICAN FARMERS.

PROGRESS IN AGRICULTURE AMONG SEVERAL OF THE HEAVILY POPULATED DEVELOPING COUNTRIES WAS INDEED IMPRESSIVE.

SEVERAL TYPES OF PROGRAMS, INCLUDING THE INTRODUCTION OF NEWLY-DEVELOPED HIGH YIELDING VARIETIES OF RICE, CORN AND WHEAT (THE "GREEN REVOLUTION") HAD INCREASED GRAIN PRODUCTION IN THE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES 78 PERCENT IN THE PERIOD 1948-52 TO 1966-70.

THE END OF THAT PERIOD MARKED THE HIGHEST POINT IN PER CAPITA FOOD PRODUCTION SINCE WORLD WAR II, ~~AT LEAST~~ STOCKS OF GRAINS WERE AT AN ALL-TIME HIGH, AND WORLD PRICES HAD BEEN RELATIVELY STABLE THROUGHOUT THE SIXTIES.

PRODUCTION IN THE DEVELOPED NATIONS -- STARTING FROM A MUCH HIGHER BASE -- INCREASED 64 PERCENT OVER THE SAME PERIOD.

AND IN SPITE OF GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS DESIGNED TO RESTRICT PRODUCTION, THE 1969-70 WORLD CARRYOVER WAS MORE THAN 185 MILLION TONS OF GRAINS. A LARGE PROPORTION OF THOSE GRAINS WERE HELD BY A SMALL NUMBER OF COUNTRIES, AMONG THEM CANADA AND THE UNITED STATES.

THERE WAS CONFIDENCE THAT FOOD SHORTAGES IN THE DEVELOPING WORLD COULD BE HANDLED THROUGH A VARIETY OF FOOD ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS, INCLUDING THE WORLD FOOD PROGRAM AND OUR FOOD FOR PEACE PROGRAM.

IN EACH OF THE LAST FIVE YEARS OF THE SIXTIES, COMBINED FOOD AID CONTRIBUTIONS BY THE DEVELOPED NATIONS AVERAGED \$1.2 BILLION. THE UNITED STATES -- MOSTLY THROUGH ITS FOOD FOR PEACE PROGRAM -- ACCOUNTED FOR MORE THAN 85 PERCENT OF THOSE SHIPMENTS.

FOOD FOR PEACE, WHICH I HELPED INITIATE, HAD BEGUN IN THE MID-1950'S, WITH THE DUAL PURPOSE OF DISTRIBUTING LARGE SURPLUSES OF GRAINS ACCUMULATED THROUGH OUR PRICE SUPPORT PROGRAMS, AND OF DEVELOPING NEW EXPORT MARKETS.

BY THE MID-1960'S, FOOD AID HAD COME TO BE VIEWED AS AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS *(P.L. 480 SHIPMENTS* WERE USED TO FINANCE DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS, AS WELL AS TO IMPROVE NUTRITIONAL LEVELS IN THE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES. THE PROGRAM ALSO HAS CONTINUED, THROUGHOUT ITS ESIXTENCE, TO MEET EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE AND REFUGEE NEEDS.

IN SPITE OF THE OPTIMISM OF THE LATE 1960'S, THERE WAS

A LURKING DREAD AMONG CLOSE OBSERVERS OF THE FOOD SITUATION *that*
there were serious food shortage
problems in the future.

ALTHOUGH THE PROMISE OF WIDESPREAD ADOPTION OF HIGH-YIELDING VARIETIES OF CORN, RICE AND WHEAT FED THE DREAM, THERE WERE SOME STARK REALITIES TO BE COUNTED.

L FIRST, POPULATION GROWTH IN THE POOREST NATIONS CONTINUED TO PUT HEAVY PRESSURE ON SOME VERY IMPRESSIVE GAINS IN FOOD PRODUCTION. By 1970, FOOD PRODUCTION IN THE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES WAS 26 PERCENT MORE THAN IN THE EARLY YEARS OF THE SIXTIES. YET, A POPULATION INCREASE OF 30 PERCENT ALLOWED ONLY ABOUT A 5 PERCENT GAIN IN PER CAPITA FOOD SUPPLIES.

L SECOND, THERE WAS WIDESPREAD RECOGNITION BY THE END OF THE DECADE, THAT DEVELOPMENT PLANS IN MANY OF THE NEEDIEST NATIONS HAD NEGLECTED AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT IN THEIR ZEAL TO MOVE INTO THE RANKS OF MODERN INDUSTRIALIZED SOCIETIES.

THIRD, IMPROVED ECONOMIC SITUATIONS IN MANY COUNTRIES HAD INCREASED THE INCOMES OF LARGE NUMBERS OF PEOPLE IN THESE COUNTRIES, AND THIS WAS QUICKLY TRANSLATED INTO DEMAND FOR MORE AND HIGHER QUALITY FOODS.

OVERLAYING ALL OF THESE FACTORS WAS THE NEW-FOUND REALIZATION, NURTURED BY MODERN COMMUNICATIONS, OF WHAT WAS POSSIBLE IN THIS WORLD. AND THIS PROVIDED THE IMPETUS FOR WHAT WE TERM "RISING EXPECTATIONS."

ALL OF THESE FACTORS COMBINED TO TEMPER IN SOME OBSERVERS THE OPTIMISM THAT TENDED TO BLIND OTHERS TO THE AWFUL POSSIBILITIES INHERENT IN THE MAN-FOOD EQUATION.

AND SO WE MOVED INTO THE DECADE OF THE SEVENTIES.

THE FIRST TWO YEARS OF THE DECADE SAW A CONTINUATION OF INCREASED PRODUCTION. OVERALL, WORLD FOOD PRODUCTION WAS 21 PERCENT MORE IN 1970, AND 26 PERCENT MORE IN 1971, THAN IT HAD BEEN IN THE EARLY 1960'S. IN THE POORER, DEVELOPING NATIONS, ADOPTION OF NEW STRAINS WAS LARGELY RESPONSIBLE FOR AN OUTPUT OF FOOD THAT WAS A THIRD MORE THAN TEN YEARS EARLIER.

OUR PRESENT DIFFICULTY PUT IN ITS FIRST APPEARANCE IN THE 1972-73 CROP YEAR, WHEN TOTAL WORLD FOOD PRODUCTION DECLINED FROM THE YEAR EARLIER, BY A MODEST 1.6 PERCENT. THAT SEEMINGLY MODEST SHORTFALL WAS TO PROVE FAR MORE SERIOUS THAN ITS SMALL SIZE AT FIRST SUGGESTS.

WHAT MADE IT SERIOUS WAS THE DISTRIBUTION OF CROP FAILURES. IT WAS, FIRST OF ALL, THE FIRST TIME SINCE WORLD WAR II THAT TOTAL WORLD FOOD PRODUCTION HAD DECLINED.

BUT UNUSUALLY POOR HARVESTS IN THE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES -- PARTICULARLY A 3 PERCENT DECLINE IN SOUTH ASIAN COUNTRIES -- REDUCED GAINS IN THE DEVELOPING WORLD -- THE HOME OF TWO-THIRDS OF THE WORLD'S 3.8 BILLION PEOPLE -- TO ZERO.

ONE MUST KEEP IN MIND THE FACT THAT HIGH BIRTH RATES IN THESE POORER NATIONS CONTINUE TO ADD MORE THAN 70 MILLION PEOPLE TO THAT NUMBER EACH YEAR. EVEN MORE IMPORTANT, THE SITUATION WAS WORSENER BY DISASTROUS WEATHER IN CANADA, AUSTRALIA AND THE SOVIET UNION, WHICH REDUCED PRODUCTION IN THE DEVELOPED WORLD AS WELL.

TO COMPENSATE FOR ITS SHORT SUPPLIES, THE SOVIETS, FOR THE FIRST TIME, MADE MASSIVE PURCHASES FROM STOCKS HELD IN THE UNITED STATES. ORDINARILY A NET GRAIN EXPORTER, THE U.S.S.R. BECAME THE WORLD'S LARGEST IMPORTER OF GRAINS IN 1972-73, WHEN ITS OVERSEAS PURCHASES TOTALLED 30 MILLION TONS.

↳ THUS, THE WORLD'S LONG-TIME CUSHION AGAINST SHORTAGES -- U.S. GRAIN STOCKS -- WERE QUICKLY DRAWN DOWN TO THEIR LOWEST LEVELS IN 20 YEARS. ↳ WHAT LOOKED LIKE AND WAS GREETED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AS A BONANZA YEAR FOR AGRICULTURAL TRADE, TURNED TO ASHES WHEN ITS CONSEQUENCES WERE REALIZED.

↳ THE RESULT OF THE 1972 EVENTS WAS A SHARP AND PAINFUL
RISE IN FOOD PRICES. IT DISTURBED AND ANGERED PEOPLE IN THE
AFFLUENT NATIONS OF THE WORLD -- ALREADY BESET BY INFLATION.

↳ BUT IN THE POOR AND HEAVILY POPULATED DEVELOPING COUNTRIES,
INCREASED PRICES PROFOUNDLY THREATENED THE ABILITY OF PEOPLE
TO OBTAIN EVEN A SUBSISTENCE SHARE OF THE SMALLER SUPPLY.

↳ WE WENT INTO THE 1973-74 CROP YEAR IN GATHERING GLOOM,
AS ALMOST EVERY MONTH REVEALED NEW DIMENSIONS IN OUR PREDICAMENT.
WE KNEW THERE WAS LITTLE MARGIN AGAINST THE POSSIBILITY OF A
SECOND CONSECUTIVE POOR HARVEST, AND WE HAD BECOME DANGEROUSLY
DEPENDENT ON CURRENT PRODUCTION.

∟ THE EFFECTS OF THE REDUCED PERUVIAN ANCHOVY CATCH CONTINUED TO PUT PRESSURE ON SUPPLIES OF FEED GRAINS, WHEN THE SUPPLY OF THAT IMPORTANT PROTEIN WAS REDUCED.

∟ THE ARAB ^{oil} BOYCOTT, IN LATE 1973 AND EARLY 1974, TRIGGERED A PRICE SPIRAL FOR PETROLEUM AND CHEMICAL SUPPLIES, FUEL FOR FARM EQUIPMENT, CHEMICALS FOR FERTILIZER AND PESTICIDES, TRANSPORTATION FOR FARM COMMODITIES, ALL BECAME SHORT OF SUPPLY AND HIGH-PRICED.

THE WORLD ALSO CAME FACE TO FACE WITH ITS WORST FEARS AS THE CALAMITY OF THE SAHEL BECAME CLEARER. IN THOSE COUNTRIES LYING SOUTH OF THE SAHARA, A LONG DROUGHT AFFECTED MILLIONS OF PEOPLE, AND THE SPECTER OF FAMINE BEGAN TO TAKE ITS TOLL.

OUR CONSCIENCES WERE ASSAULTED BY REPORTS OF STARVING CHILDREN
AND THE DISLOCATION AND DISINTEGRATION OF WHOLE SOCIETIES.

WE RECOGNIZED A FUNDAMENTAL TRUTH WE HAD ALMOST FORGOTTEN --
THAT LIFE ON THIS PLANET IS A FRAGILE AFFAIR. WE WERE BROUGHT FACE
TO FACE WITH A PROPHECY OF DOOM WE HAVE BEEN PUTTING DOWN SINCE
THOMAS MALTHUS SAID IT NEARLY 200 YEARS AGO IN THESE WORDS:

"FAMINE SEEMS TO BE THE LAST, THE MOST DREADFUL
RESOURCE OF NATURE, THE POWER OF POPULATION IS SO
SUPERIOR TO THE POWER OF THE EARTH TO PROVIDE SUB-
SISTENCE . . . THAT PREMATURE DEATH MUST IN SOME SHAPE
OR OTHER VISIT THE HUMAN RACE."

THIS SET ~~OF~~ ^{of} CIRCUMSTANCES ON THE CONDITION OF THE BALANCE
BETWEEN MAN AND FOOD FINALLY BROUGHT THE NATIONS OF THE WORLD
TOGETHER THIS PAST YEAR IN TWO CRITICALLY IMPORTANT CONFERENCES.

THE WORLD POPULATION CONFERENCE ADDRESSED PROBABLY THE MOST INTRANSIGENT PROBLEM FACING MANKIND. IT ALSO HIGHLIGHTED THE FACT THAT FUTURE FOOD SUPPLIES ARE NOT ONLY THE CONCERN OF AGRICULTURALISTS.

CURRENT POPULATION GROWTH, LIKE COMPOUND INTEREST, IS CUMULATIVE. AT PRESENT RATES OF GROWTH, WORLD POPULATION WILL REACH 5 BILLION BY 1986 AND 6 BILLION BY 1995.

WORSE, POPULATION GROWTH IN THE DEVELOPING WORLD IS TWO AND A HALF TIMES GREATER THAN IN THE INDUSTRIALIZED COUNTRIES. THUS, WHILE THE DOUBLING TIME FOR WORLD POPULATION IS 35 YEARS, IN SOME OF THE HEAVILY POPULATED DEVELOPING COUNTRIES, IT IS ONLY 18 YEARS OR LESS.

↳ THESE INCREASES WILL CONTINUE THE PRECARIOUS BALANCE PREVAILING TODAY, AND A FRACTIONAL CHANGE IN EITHER FOOD PRODUCTION OR POPULATION INCREASE CAN MEAN STARVATION TO MILLIONS.

↳ WHILE THERE ARE A FEW HOPEFUL SIGNS THAT FAMILY PLANNING PROGRAMS ARE MAKING PROGRESS IN SOME DEVELOPING COUNTRIES, THE PROBLEM CLEARLY NEEDS A LOT MORE EFFORT.

↳ MORE IMMEDIATE, TO THE FOOD PROBLEM WAS THE U.N. WORLD FOOD CONFERENCE, WHICH MET IN ROME IN NOVEMBER, 1974. THERE, DELEGATES FROM 130 COUNTRIES, 47 UNITED NATIONS AGENCIES, AND SOME 300 NONGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS MET TO TACKLE A WIDE RANGE OF PROBLEMS. THE WORK OF THE CONFERENCE WAS ORGANIZED AROUND SEVERAL AGENDA ITEMS TO CONSIDER BOTH NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMS OF ACTION:

-- MEASURES FOR INCREASING FOOD PRODUCTION IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES;

-- IMPROVEMENT OF THE AVAILABILITY OF FOOD, AND IMPROVED NUTRITION LEVELS IN ALL COUNTRIES;

-- A "WORLD FOOD SECURITY" SYSTEM, COMPRISING BETTER INFORMATION SYSTEMS TO WARN OF IMPENDING SHORTAGES, MORE EFFECTIVE NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL STOCK POLICIES, UPGRADED EMERGENCY RELIEF AND FOOD AID PROGRAMS;

-- IMPROVEMENTS IN TRADE IN AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS; AND

-- ARRANGEMENTS FOR FOLLOW-UP ACTION.

↳ THE CONFERENCE DID NOT RESULT IN CLEAR-CUT AGREEMENT ON SOME OF THE MORE PRESSING ASPECTS OF THE FOOD PROBLEM. SOME OF THESE -- SUCH AS THE PROVISION OF IMMEDIATE FOOD RELIEF AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF GRAIN RESERVES -- WERE LEFT FOR SUBSEQUENT NEGOTIATIONS.

↳ BUT THE CONFERENCE DID ARRIVE AT AGREEMENT ON A NUMBER OF RECOMMENDATIONS, WHICH, IF PURSUED, WOULD SUBSTANTIALLY REVITALIZE FOOD PRODUCTION IN THE DEVELOPING WORLD,

THE CONFERENCE ADOPTED A UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF THE ERADICATION OF HUNGER AND MALNUTRITION, WHICH STATES, IN GENERAL TERMS, THE CONDITION OF WORLD FOOD SUPPLIES.

IT PROCLAIMS THE RIGHT OF EVERY PERSON TO BE FREE FROM HUNGER,
THE FUNDAMENTAL RESPONSIBILITY OF GOVERNMENTS TO PROVIDE
INCENTIVES TO IMPROVE FOOD PRODUCTION, AND THE NEED FOR INTERNATIONAL
MEASURES TO ASSIST AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT.

A GROUP OF RESOLUTIONS DEALING WITH AGRICULTURAL
DEVELOPMENT WERE ADOPTED. THESE CALL ON THE DEVELOPED NATIONS
TO GIVE INCREASED FINANCIAL AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO DEVELOPING
ECONOMIES. DEVELOPING NATIONS WERE SERIOUSLY AND VIGOROUSLY URGED
TO PURSUE PROGRAMS AND POLICIES TO IMPROVE FOOD PRODUCTION, THESE
INCLUDED:

-- IMPROVED RURAL CONDITIONS, INCLUDING AGRARIAN REFORM,
PROMOTION OF COOPERATIVES, EDUCATION AND PRODUCTION INCENTIVES;

-- AN INTERNATIONAL FERTILIZER SCHEME TO ASSIST IN PROVIDING
ADDITIONAL FERTILIZER CAPACITY;

-- RESEARCH, TRAINING, AND EXTENSION SERVICES TO FARMERS;

-- IMPROVED SOIL PROTECTION AND CONSERVATION, AND AN
ASSESSMENT OF LANDS THAT CAN BE BROUGHT INTO PRODUCTION; AND,

-- THE ADOPTION OF PROGRAMS DESIGNED TO STABILIZE
PRODUCTION AND TRADE IN AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS.

IN ADDITION, THE CONFERENCE RECOMMENDED ESTABLISHMENT OF
AN INTERNATIONAL FUND FOR AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT TO FINANCE
PROJECTS IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES.

↳ A SECOND GROUP OF RESOLUTIONS RELATING TO WORLD FOOD SECURITY INCLUDED PROVISIONS FOR INCREASED FOOD AID, THE UNDERTAKING OF EXTENSIVE RESEARCH ON FOOD AND NUTRITION, THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A GLOBAL INFORMATION AND EARLY-WARNING SYSTEM ON FOOD AND AGRICULTURE, AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A GLOBAL FOOD RESERVE SYSTEM. THESE WERE THORNY PROBLEMS, AND THE BEST THAT COULD BE ACHIEVED AT ROME WAS AGREEMENT TO MEET LATER TO TRY TO WORK OUT DETAILS.

↳ WITH RESPECT TO FOOD AID, BOTH CANADA AND AUSTRALIA -- AND LATER, THE UNITED STATES -- AGREED TO INCREASE THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS.

↳ ON THE QUESTION OF ESTABLISHMENT OF RESERVES, THE MATTER WAS SUBSEQUENTLY TURNED OVER TO THE INTERNATIONAL WHEAT COUNCIL.

A THIRD GROUP OF RESOLUTIONS RELATED TO FOLLOW-UP ACTION
INCLUDING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A WORLD FOOD COUNCIL,

. . . TO SERVE AS A COORDINATING MECHANISM TO PROVIDE
OVER-ALL INTEGRATED AND CONTINUING ATTENTION FOR THE
SUCCESSFUL COORDINATION AND FOLLOW-UP OF POLICIES
CONCERNING FOOD PRODUCTION, NUTRITION, FOOD SECURITY,
FOOD TRADE AND FOOD AID, AS WELL AS OTHER RELATED
MATTERS, BY ALL THE AGENCIES OF THE UNITED NATIONS
SYSTEM . . .

OTHER PARTS OF THE FOLLOW-UP MACHINERY INCLUDE A COMMITTEE ON WORLD FOOD SECURITY, TO MONITOR FOOD SUPPLIES AND DEMAND, EVALUATE THE WORLD FOOD SITUATION, AND MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION TO ASSURE ADEQUATE SUPPLIES. A COMMITTEE ON FOOD POLICIES AND PROGRAMS, TO CARRY OUT THE CONFERENCE GOALS WITH RESPECT TO FOOD ASSISTANCE, WAS TO BE RECONSTITUTED. FINALLY, ARRANGEMENTS WERE MADE TO COORDINATE THE FERTILIZER AND INVESTMENT PROGRAMS.

IN THE U.S. CONGRESS, A FEW ACTIONS AND A NUMBER OF PROPOSALS HAVE ALREADY BEEN MADE. LATE LAST YEAR, WE REVISED OUR FOREIGN AID LEGISLATION TO FOCUS MORE SHARPLY ON AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION, EDUCATION, AND POPULATION PROGRAMS. WE ALSO DIRECTED THAT FOOD FOR PEACE SHIPMENTS BE DIRECTED TOWARD THOSE COUNTRIES WHERE FOOD NEEDS ARE MOST CRITICAL.

SEVERAL OTHER PROPOSALS, WHICH I AM SUPPORTING, WOULD HELP IMPLEMENT THE GOALS OF THE WORLD FOOD CONFERENCE:

-- THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN IMPROVED WORLD AGRICULTURAL REPORTING SYSTEM;

-- ASSISTANCE IN EXPANDING THE ROLE OF LAND GRANT-TYPE INSTITUTIONS IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES;

-- ESTABLISHMENT OF A DOMESTIC FOOD RESERVES SYSTEM;

-- EXPANSION OF RESEARCH IN SUCH NECESSARY AREAS AS IMPROVED SEEDS, TROPICAL AGRICULTURE, NUTRITION, AND WEATHER;

AND

-- PROVIDING FOR NEEDED QUANTITIES OF FOOD FOR HUMANITARIAN PURPOSES.

THE CONGRESS AND THE NATION ALSO MUST GIVE INCREASED ATTENTION TO AGRICULTURAL POLICIES THAT TAKE ACCOUNT OF OUR RESPONSIBILITIES, NOT ONLY TO AMERICAN FARMERS AND CONSUMERS, BUT TO THE PEOPLE IN LESS FORTUNATE LANDS. THERE IS NO GOOD REASON WHY THIS CANNOT BE ACCOMPLISHED; MORE IMPORTANT, THERE IS NO ALTERNATIVE IN THE NATION'S BEST INTERESTS.

↳ CAN ONE ASSUME FROM THIS AGENDA THAT THERE ARE GROUNDS FOR OPTIMISM? HARDLY. THE PROOF OF THE PUDDING LIES IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THESE STEPS. TO THE EXTENT THE SITUATION IS SERIOUSLY ADDRESSED, THERE IS REAL HOPE THAT SOLUTIONS CAN BE FOUND.

WE HAVE ONLY STARTED TO ADDRESS THE FOOD PROBLEM. IT HAS ONLY BEGUN TO RECEIVE THE ATTENTION NEEDED. OUR DEDICATION AND DETERMINATION WILL ANSWER THE QUESTION AS TO WHETHER THERE WILL BE ENOUGH FOOD FOR MILLIONS TO SURVIVE. WE CAN AND WE MUST WIN THAT BATTLE.

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WORLD FUTURE SOCIETY

An Association for the Study of Alternative Futures

Publisher of THE FUTURIST: A Journal of Forecasts,
Trends and Ideas About the Future



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Senator Hubert H. Humphrey
232 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Humphrey:

We plan to publish your excellent remarks made at the food symposium during our Second General Assembly last June, in the December issue of THE FUTURIST. We have edited your speech and have enclosed a copy for any corrections you wish to make.

We would appreciate it if you would return the article to us as quickly as possible because we are on deadline for the next issue and will be sending it to the printer in a few days, so if you have any corrections, please get them to us right away. Perhaps a member of your staff could expedite this by phoning the information to us.

Thanks very much for your thoughtful address and your help in bringing it to the attention of our readers.

Sincerely,

Donald A. Larson
Assistant Editor

*(advisedly corrected
by phone)*

No event has been more frightening to the world, nor casts a deeper shadow on prospects for the future, than the "World Food Problem". It is especially disturbing because it shatters ^{the supposition?} an assurance that we had come to rely on--that technology and science and economics had banished widespread hunger from the earth. We see a great deal of hunger today and realize that famine on a major scale is a real possibility.

To understand the present crisis, it might be well to go back five or six years, to the end of the 1960s. That was a period of high optimism for those who were concerned with the balance between population and food supplies. Grain stocks in the developed countries were very high and even burdensome to farmers. Progress in agriculture among several of the heavily-populated developing countries was impressive. Several types of programs, including the introduction of newly-developed high-yielding varieties of rice, corn, and wheat (the "Green Revolution") had increased grain production in the developing countries 78% in the period from 1948 to 1970. The end of that period marked the highest point in per capita food production since World War II. Stocks of grain were at an all-time high, and world prices had been relatively stable throughout the sixties. Production in the developed nations started from a much higher base and increased 64% over the same period. In spite of government programs designed to restrict production, the 1969-70 world carryover was more than 185 million tons of grain. A large proportion of that grain was held by a small number of countries, notably Canada and the U.S.

There was confidence that food shortages in the developing countries could be handled through a variety of food assistance programs, including the World Food Program and our Food for Peace program. [Food for Peace, which I helped initiate, was begun in the mid-1950s, with the ~~end~~ purpose of distributing large surpluses of grains accumulated through our price support programs, and *meeting foreign policy objectives and helping meet humanitarian needs.* of developing new export markets.] By the mid-1960s, food aid had come to be viewed as an integral part of the development process.]

In spite of the optimism of the late 1960s, there was a growing dread among close observers of the food situation. Although the promise of widespread adoption of high-yielding varieties of corn, rice, and wheat encouraged optimism, there were some stark realities to be counted. First, population growth in the poorest nations continued to put heavy pressure on the gains in food production. By 1970, food production in the developing countries was 26% more than in the early years of the sixties. But a population increase of 30% canceled out this gain. Second, there was widespread recognition by the end of the decade, that development plans in many of the neediest nations had neglected agricultural development in their zeal to move into the ranks of modern industrialized societies. Third, improved

economic situation in many countries had increased the incomes of large numbers of people in these countries, and this was quickly translated into a demand for more and higher quality foods. Overlying all of these factors was the new-found realization, nurtured by modern communication, that life could be more enjoyable. This provided the impetus for what we term "rising expectations".

The first two years of the 1970s saw a continuation of increased production. In the poorer, developing nations, adoption of new strains was largely responsible for an output of food that was one-third more than ten years earlier. The present food crisis put in its first appearance in the 1972-73 crop year, when total world food production declined from the ^{Previous} year ~~earlier~~, by 1.6%. That seemingly modest shortfall was to prove far more serious than its small size at first suggests. What made it serious was the distribution of crop failures. It was, first of all, the first time since World War II that total world food production had declined. But unusually poor harvests in the developing countries--particularly a 3% decline in South Asian countries--reduced gains in the developing world, the home of two-thirds of the world's people, to zero.

One must keep in mind the fact that high birth rates in these poorer nations continue to add more than 70 million people to the world each year. Even more important, the situation was worsened by disastrous weather in Canada, Australia, and the Soviet Union, which reduced production in the developed world as well. To compensate for its short supplies, the Soviets, for the first time, made massive purchases from stocks held in the United States. Ordinarily a net grain exporter, the U.S.S.R. became the world's largest importer of grain in 1972-73, when its overseas purchases totaled 30 million tons. Thus U.S. grain stocks, the world's long-time cushion against shortages, were quickly drawn down to their lowest levels in 20 years. What looked like and was greeted by the Department of Agriculture as a bonanza year for agricultural trade, ^{became a disaster} turned to ashes when its consequences were realized. The result of this was a sharp and painful rise in food prices. It disturbed and angered people in the affluent nations, who were already beset by inflation. But in the poor and heavily-populated developing countries, increased prices profoundly affected the ability of people to obtain even a subsistence ration of the available food.

We went into the 1973-74 crop year in gathering gloom, as almost every month revealed new dimensions in our predicament. We knew there was little margin against the possibility of a second consecutive poor harvest. And we had become dangerously dependent on current production. The ~~effects of the~~ reduced Peruvian anchovy catch continued to put pressure on supplies of ~~food~~ grains such as soybeans for protein supplement in livestock feed. The Arab boycott, in late 1973 and early 1974, triggered a price spiral for petroleum and chemical supplies. Fuel for farm equipment, chemicals for fertilizer and pesticides,

transportation for farm commodities, all became short in supply and high-priced. The world also came face to face with its worst fears as the calamity of the Sahel became clearer. In those ^{sub-Saharan countries} [countries lying south of the Sahara] a long drought affected millions of people, and the specter of famine began to take its toll. Our consciences were assaulted by reports of starving children and the dislocation and disintegration of whole societies. We recognized a fundamental truth we had almost forgotten--that life on this planet is a fragile affair. We were brought face to face with a prophesy of doom ^{that completely disregarded} we have [been putting down] ever since Thomas Malthus said it nearly 200 years ago in these words:

"Famine seems to be the last, most dreadful resource of nature. The power of population is so superior to the power of the earth to provide subsistence . . . that premature death must in some shape or other visit the human race."

Para, [The food crisis finally brought the nations of the world together this past year in two critically important conferences. The World Population Conference in Bucharest in Aug. 1974 addressed probably the most intransigent problem facing mankind. It also highlighted the fact that future food supplies are the concern of everyone, not just the agriculturists. At present rates of growth, world population will reach 5 billion by 1986 and 6 billion by 1995. Worse yet, population growth in the developing world is two and one-half times greater than in the industrialized countries. Thus, while the doubling time for world population is 35 years, in some of the heavily-populated developing nations, it is 18 years or less. These increases will continue the precarious balance prevailing today, and a fractional change in either food production or population increase can mean starvation to millions. While there are a few hopeful signs that family planning programs are making progress in some developing countries, the problem clearly needs a lot more effort.

Para, [More immediate to the food problem was the U.N. World Food Conference, which met in Rome in November 1974. There, delegates from 130 countries, 47 United Nations agencies, and some 300 nongovernmental organizations met to deal with a wide range of problems. The conference adopted a Universal Declaration of the Eradication of Hunger and Malnutrition, which states, in general terms, the condition of world food supplies. It proclaims the right of every person to be free from hunger, the fundamental responsibility of governments to provide incentives to improve food production, and the need for international measures to assist agricultural development. A group of resolutions dealing with agricultural development were adopted. These call on the developed nations to give increased financial and technical assistance to developing economies. Developing nations were seriously and vigorously urged to pursue programs and policies to improve food

production. These resolutions included:

1. Improvement of rural conditions, including agrarian reform, promotion of cooperatives, education, and production incentives.
2. An International Fertilizer ^{program} Scheme to assist in providing additional fertilizer capacity.
3. Research, training, and extension services to farmers.
4. Improved soil protection and conservation, and an assessment of lands that can be brought into production.
5. The adoption of programs designed to stabilize production and trade in agricultural products.
6. The establishment of an International Fund for Agricultural Development to finance projects in developing countries.

para [A second group of resolutions relating more specifically to world food security included:

1. Provisions for increased food aid.
2. The undertaking of extensive research on food and nutrition.
3. The establishment of a global information and early-warning system on food and agriculture.
4. The establishment of a global food reserve system.

These were ^{difficult} thorny problems, and the best that could be achieved in Rome was agreement to meet later to try to work out details. With respect to food aid, both Canada and Australia, and later the United States, agreed to increase their contributions.

in 1973
Late last year in Congress we revised our foreign aid legislation to focus more sharply on agricultural production, education, and population programs. We also directed that Food for Peace shipments be directed toward those countries where food needs are most critical. Several other proposals, which I am supporting, would help implement the goals of the world Food Conference. They are as follows:

1. The development of an improved world agricultural reporting system.
2. Assistance in expanding the role of land-grant type institutions in developing countries.
3. Establishment of a domestic food reserve system.
4. Expansion of research in such necessary areas as improved seeds, tropical agriculture, nutrition, and weather.
5. Providing for needed quantities of food for humanitarian purposes.

I believe that the United States, which is the leading food reserve country in the world, must also be the leader in formulating an international policy on food and population. That doesn't mean that we're going to give people orders. It means that we must be the "convener's" ~~and help bring people together and find~~ *so to speak. We* *have got to push economic development when we talk family planning, because that is the only approach for* *if we don't, the people in the developing countries will think all we're trying to do is "put them down"* *which makes the population problem* *difficult*. We must be willing to take some of the resources that we have been peddling off in military assistance and start putting it into programs of land management, agricultural production, family planning, food and nutrition, and health and education. Then people will feel more in control of their own lives and will start managing their families and having fewer children. That will be the beginning to the solution of the population problem, and hopefully we won't have to bow to Malthus after all.

2nd sentence

FOR PARAGRAPH 33 ON PAGE 1:

Through Food for Peace, which I helped initiate in the mid-50's, we distributed large surpluses of grains accumulated through our price support program, we developed new export markets, we met foreign policy objectives; and we helped meet the world's huge humanitarian needs.



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