

*Embargo  
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and related  
industries*

Africa and what kind of "trade-offs" can be achieved. The proponents of food power would like to use it against the oil-rich Middle Eastern Arab countries. It is, however, obvious that a relationship of interdependence puts great limitations on the use of food power. During 1973-74, the U.S. bid to use food as leverage to roll back oil prices was not very successful and had to be abandoned in favour of a more co-operative policy. A U.S. House of Representative study on food embargoes indicates that the OPEC countries can easily afford to procure their food elsewhere and, in fact, large quantities of food imported by these countries already comes from other sources. Besides, a U.S. food embargo against the Middle East will seriously hurt the U.S. farmers, grain-traders, railroads and other groups related to industries based on agriculture. External collaboration, not only from the food-surplus countries but also from countries like France and the U.S.S.R., will be another serious obstacle.

#### **One factor**

Food represents only one factor in the international power equation. There are other energy and non-energy industrial raw materials that are equally likely to be used as instruments of international power politics. U.S. independence is gradually being eroded in the area of minerals and in future its dependence on imports will increase. It is evident that exercise of food power has to be examined in the context of a highly-complex pattern of interdependence between producers of various raw materials and their consumers, which imposes serious constraints on exercising food, "petro" or various other kinds of "power".

Hunger must today be tackled at every level — at the family, village, province, country and region as well as the global level — for no unit of society bears any graver responsibility than that of feeding its people. In our present world community we are everywhere faced with an agonizing awareness of starvation wherever it occurs; and finding means to harness production around the world to alleviate it poses a challenge to our ingenuity as well as to our compassion. . . .

We know from experience that expanding food production on a secure basis is not easy. It demands adaptation of land and water, technology, research, finance, modernized storage and transport facilities, marketing organizations, planning, and government services — all of which may require changes to traditional modes of life.

In the absence of a co-operative international strategy to alleviate the world food shortages in future, the international community may face serious security problems. As the CIA's Office of Political Research indicates, there is a possibility of massive migrations into food-surplus regions, with the use of force. Piracy on the high seas — hijacking of shiploads of food — may become a menace in the era of chronic food shortages. It is difficult to predict how countries like India and Japan would react if they could not procure the food they needed for their survival. They certainly have the military, economic and technological potential to grab what they need from their less-powerful neighbours. Chronic food shortages will seriously undermine the internal security in regions like the India-Pakistan subcontinent, where society is already deeply divided along ethnic and ideological lines.

The ultimate solution lies in enabling the developing countries to become self-sufficient in food by transforming their primitive agriculture into modern and highly-productive systems. Effective population planning is indeed a prerequisite to any solution of food scarcity. Technical and financial assistance will play a key role in this transformation. It will be necessary to discourage commodity aid in the agricultural sector and emphasize investment. In the meantime, food aid for emergencies will be required. Bilateral food aid should be limited only to serious emergencies. Multilateral arrangements, as recommended by the World Food Conference, are more suitable for food aid and price stabilization. It is evident that, if the world community fails to act soon and if the world food strategy, as initiated by the World Food Conference, fails to materialize, millions of people will starve to death in the Third World.

Increased production is also facing barriers arising from supply shortages of certain "inputs", notably nitrogenous fertilizers. No *deus ex machina* will remove these impediments overnight, and each country must come to terms with them in its own way. Where Canada can help to make these problems more manageable it will, and it will strive to see access to "inputs" maintained internationally on an equitable, non-discriminatory basis.

The situation of the "vulnerable groups" in food-deprived areas is a reproach to us all. The spectacle of 200 million malnourished children, and of nursing mothers suffering on a similar scale, makes a mockery of the ideals professed by every society. *Allan J. MacEachen at the World Food Conference in Rome, November 1974.*