



NEWS from U.S. Senator Bob Dole

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STATEMENT OF SENATOR BOB DOLE WEDNESDAY, JULY 10, 1974

FOOD FOR PEACE: 20 YEARS OF SHARING

This is an historic day in world history -- a day which should be remembered as one of this Nation's most honorable and humanitarian anniversaries. For it was on July 10, 1954, that the great leader -- Dwight D. Eisenhower signed the Agricultural Trade and Development Act -- known all over the world as P.L. 480. In terms of lives saved and improved this was and is the most constructive letter number combination in all history. It should be memorialized, and those who were so effective in bringing into being this bipartisan legislative giant should take great pride in their accomplishments.

-- THE WORK OF MANY --

As I look around this hall, I see some great supporters and sponsors of this legislation -- and one former Food for Peace Administrator. There are many unsung heroes in this continuing struggle, such as the bureaucrats who helped draft this proposal and who, with care and a strong humanitarian sense, have been administering it. There are the dedicated men and women of the great voluntary agencies for overseas relief and rehabilitation, such as CARE, the Protestant Church World Service and Lutheran World Relief, Catholic Relief Service and its Caritas counterparts, the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, and a number of similar privately supported humanitarian organizations helping to carry out the U. S. Government's Food for Peace Program.

-- HELPING MILLIONS --

The latest reports indicate that these programs are now reaching, for at least some supplemental feeding, some 45,000,000 school-age children and another 10,000,000 preschool infants, and pregnant or nursing mothers, scattered around the world in 100 countries.

Even that is just scratching the surface. Related to need, only a dent has been made.

There are the men and women in the agribusiness complex whose genius for assembling, processing and transporting great quantities of food is bridging the distance between producer and ultimate consumer.

Starting with President Eisenhower, the legislation has had the support of every succeeding President. Witness the following presidential comments

President Eisenhower

"My earnest hope is that our people will put their hearts as well as their minds into this effort. It is more than surplus disposal, more than an attempt to foster ties and sympathies for America. It is an effort that I consider in full keeping with the American tradition -- that of helping people in dire need who with us are devoted to upholding and advancing the cause of freedom. It is an undertaking that will powerfully strengthen our persistent and patient efforts to build an enduring, just peace."

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President Kennedy

"American agricultural abundance offers a great opportunity for the United States to promote the interests of peace in a significant way and to play an important role in helping to provide a more adequate diet for peoples all around the world. We must make the most vigorous and constructive use possible of this opportunity. We must narrow the gap between abundance here at home and near starvation abroad. Humanity and prudence, alike, counsel a major effort on our part."

President Johnson

"Today the Food for Peace Program is a shining example of human compassion. It is more than a monument to a high moral purpose -- it is a living legacy of practical economic wisdom. Besides meeting the most elementary human need, our food resources are being used around the world to build schools, dig irrigation ditches, pay U. S. bills abroad, and create new markets for American agriculture."

President Nixon

"Food for Peace, which completed its fifteenth year of operation during 1969, is a landmark among humanitarian efforts to improve diets in the developing areas of the world. It plays an important part in the work of developing nations to improve their own agricultural production, marketing, and distribution. Although many of these countries are becoming better able to feed their people, the need for substantial food assistance continues."

"The Food for Peace Program enables the United States to pursue its food assistance goals and development objectives in a number of ways: Bilaterally, through concessional sales programs and government-administered donations programs; privately, through religious and charitable voluntary agencies such as CARE; multilaterally, through institutions such as the World Food Program."

-- DECLARATION OF POLICY --

In the twenty years since the P.L. 480 program was devised out of the hearts and minds of brilliant men, I have watched it with keen interest and with growing awareness of what it has accomplished, and what tasks lie before us.

It is important that all of us understand the great objectives of P.L. 480, as set forth in the preamble of the Act. It follows:

"The Congress hereby declares it to be the policy of the United States to expand export markets for United States agricultural commodities; to use the abundant agricultural productivity of the United States to combat hunger and malnutrition and to encourage economic development in developing countries, with particular emphasis on assistance to those countries that are determined to improve their own agricultural production; and to promote in other ways the foreign policy of the United States."

-- EXPANDING EXPORTS --

It is to be noted that one objective of P.L. 480 is the development and expansion of export markets for U. S. agricultural products. As we look back at the export figures since the inception of this program to the present, one would have to conclude that there has been no period in American history in which we have done as well in our agricultural exports. In the Fiscal Year just ended we had total agricultural exports in excess of \$20 billion. Of this, dollar sales set a new record of \$19 billion.

One of the objectives of Public Law 480 has to do with encouraging economic development. Is the program mainly a crutch for the less-developed countries -- or is it providing strength to help them stand on their own feet? This is a critically important question.

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A good test of economic development is a country's improving ability to buy the things it wants in the commercial marketplace. Already a number of countries that once received food aid have become important commercial customers. The classic examples are, of course, Japan, Italy, and Spain. Under Public Law 480 and earlier aid programs, they received considerable assistance. Today they are among our best cash customers.

These countries, at a critical time in their economic developments, were aided by Public Law 480. They were ready to carry out their own self-help programs, but they needed some help in getting started. Once started, they have moved forward of their own momentum.

-- BENEFITS ABOUND --

Other countries can be cited that are dramatic in their transition from aid to trade; they started with less and have had further to go.

The benefits of exports are shared by nonfarm people. Hundred of thousands of workers and businessmen across the country owe part or all of their incomes to the activities created by agricultural exporting -- handling, transporting, warehousing, processing, packaging, freight forwarding, insuring, financing, and related activities. Exporting has, in itself, become a vast industry.

-- BALANCE OF PAYMENTS IMPACT --

Another benefit to the United States of expanded foreign markets for our farm products is a bettered balance of payments.

It is not generally known -- but it is a fact of which we should be very proud -- that American agriculture, through its export earnings, is today doing more than any other segment of the Nation to hold back the critical outflow of dollars.

As Food for Peace embarks on its 21st year, there is growing indication of the program's substantial contribution to the development of commercial markets for our farm products. In a large sense, these commercial exports constitute Food for Peace at its best -- mutually beneficial, multilateral trade using the efficiency of commercial trade channels. The soundest and the simplest way to maintain our balance of payments would be to utilize to the maximum the productive efficiency of our farmers by finding ways to increase our agricultural exports even more.

-- IMPORTANT ELEMENT OF FOREIGN POLICY --

The Food for Peace Program is far more than just a farm program. It is truly a national program, to support national foreign policy objectives. It reflects the fact that we have wed our world leadership responsibilities with our breakthrough in agricultural technology.

Food and fiber from American farms have saved the lives of millions of people.

There are millions of boys and girls today, throughout the world, who regularly receive school lunches through this program.

-- KEY TO WORLD DEVELOPMENT --

It makes sense for the United States and other exporting countries to share abundance -- God-given abundance -- with millions who lack that abundance. In our foreign aid programs, we recognize more and more that a key factor in economic development will be the future ability of people to feed themselves -- the ability to really close the world's food gap. Thus we seek not only to share our abundance of production with developing nations, but also our abundance of know-how and technology.

Beyond the obvious political and moral reasons for our assistance, there is also a good economic reason.

The real market development for agricultural output has been and is in increasing total dollar markets of the world -- not just in dividing existing markets.

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Our assistance programs are helping to build future export markets for American farm products -- by increasing living standards and purchasing power of the great populations in developing areas of the world.

-- INTERDEPENDENCE OF NATIONS --

These are the lessons of today. That all of us in this Nation, and in this world, are interdependent -- that none of us is isolated from his neighbor.

It is not easy to measure the accomplishments of a program with such multiple objectives as U. S. food aid. During the twenty years, U. S. farm products amounting to \$20 billion were exported under P. L. 480 programs. Food has been furnished to meet emergency situations and to meet nutritional needs as a contribution to the development of the economies of the recipient countries. Loans to foreign governments for economic development are the largest item in the uses of foreign currencies generated under the program.

-- PROGRAM SAVES LIVES --

Malnutrition takes its worst toll in the first five years of human growth, blunting the physical development of preschool children, and very often retarding their mental growth as well. In countries where food shortages are both chronic and widespread, this irreversible process affects up to fifty percent of the infant population.

Millions of youngsters in many lands are alive today as a result of American compassion and American know-how -- and as a result of a unique partnership between the public and private sectors of this country.

-- FLEXIBILITY AND PROTECTION --

U. S. commodities have played a major role in maintaining the precarious balance between world food production and world food consumption for a number of years. The current Act no longer limits food aid to surplus commodities, but encompasses commodities determined to be available by the Secretary of Agriculture. U. S. set-aside acreage has been returned to production as needed for U. S. uses, commercial exports, and food assistance exports.

However, it should be noted that Section 401 of the Act provides the following:

"No commodity shall be available for disposition under this Act if such disposition would reduce the domestic supply of such commodity below that needed to meet domestic requirements, adequate carryover, and anticipated exports for dollars as determined by the Secretary of Agriculture at the time of exportation of such commodity."

We should not overlook the need to be reliable suppliers to dollar customers -- nor should we repeat the soybean mistake with export controls.

Actually, export controls would have to be associated with an embargo on P. L. 480 exports.

-- CALL TO OTHER NATIONS --

There should be an international call upon other highly developed countries to contribute their share to the solution of the world food deficit. The threats which accompany hunger and starvation are so great and the issues so complicated that the experience, ideas, skills, and resources of as many countries as possible must be brought to bear upon the problem. The world community should support the expansion of international food and agricultural assistance programs, including the United Nations World Food Program.

The world community should call upon those countries with oil rich billions to set aside at least a modicum of these riches to implement an oil dollar for food program. This would be a practical recognition that the net effect of their pricing formulae has been to reduce food production especially in developing countries. This would be a great act of mercy worthy of responsible men.

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-- MILESTONE OF MAN'S CONCERN --

As we look back on two decades of effort, the accomplishments are remarkable by any test. Historians of future generations may well look back on this expression of America's compassion as a milestone in man's concern for his fellow man.

Let us, the, who share in the miracle of American agriculture, continue to work for a future in which our energies and our productivity will be devoted to making life happier, freer, and more abundant for the whole family of man.

The Nation's founders insisted on "a decent respect to the opinions of mankind". This Food for Peace Program is a continuing major action on our part in that direction. Today is a birthday to uplift the hearts and minds of men.

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