



NEWS from U.S. Senator Bob Dole

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DOLE SUGGESTS REFORM IN FOOD FOR PEACE PROGRAM; SALUTES PROGRAM'S 25TH YEAR

WASHINGTON -- Sen. Bob Dole (R-Kan.), along with Sens. George McGovern (D-S.D.) and John Melcher (D-Mont.), today introduced a Senate bill to reform the PL-480 "Food for Peace" program. The bill, the Self-Reliant Development and International Food Assistance Reform Act of 1979, was designed to supplement food aid to developing countries with efforts to help those countries achieve greater self-reliance in food.

"In the long run, developing countries must be encouraged to grow more of their own food if they are to overcome hunger within their own countries," Dole said. "This has consistently been a goal of the PL-480 program. But it has become increasingly clear that food aid given to these countries by the United States and other food-rich nations has not always been helpful, and in some cases has undermined developing nations' efforts to become more independent in food production."

Following are the specific provisions of the reform bill:

1. The first section requires the president to determine that whenever food aid is provided, there is a legitimate need for it in each country, and that the food or the revenues from the sale of that food will effectively benefit the poor. Other countries still receive large quantities of food aid mainly because of U.S. political interests, more than legitimate need, though this tendency has been reduced lately. The amendment would make need and developmental performance the primary criteria for receiving food aid.

2. The bill encourages the use of food aid for developmental purposes, such as increasing local food production, by giving greater assurances of supply to countries that enter agreements to use food aid in this manner. Under existing legislation, Section 401(A) requires that available supplies be used first to meet domestic requirements, adequate carryover, and anticipated exports for dollars, except if the secretary of agriculture determines that some part may be used to carry out "urgent humanitarian purposes." The amendment would extend this exception to cover developmental uses of food aid.

3. It applies debt-forgiveness provisions, newly in use for governments that enter "Food for Development" agreements, to food that is used directly in approved projects that benefit the very poor.

4. The bill guards against sending food aid when it would be a disincentive to farmers in developing countries, in emergency situations as well as in normal times. Emphasis is placed on raising the purchasing power of the poor so they can buy more local as well as U.S. foods.

Sens. Dole and McGovern, and 17 colleagues, recognized the 25th anniversary of the initiation of the Food for Peace program, which was signed by President Eisenhower on July 10, 1954. The senators urged that 1979 be designated as "Food for Peace Year," and that the President approve appropriate ceremonies and activities for the occasion.

Dole said the President should expand the program, and use his authority "to move larger quantities of agricultural commodities into export. I predict that in the 1980s we will see a much greater appreciation of the cost-benefit ratios from this great program.

"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."