Food for Peace: Ten Nations To Use Surplus To Aid Development

The Administration this week could point to some small but significant achievements in its efforts to change American farm surplus from a domestic burden to a foreign policy asset.

The change is not coming easily, for the goal of disposing of surplus has been dominant in American food programs since the current basic program was established in 1954. Nevertheless, the principal innovation of the new Administration in regard to foreign use of foods is now taking on considerable significance in the over-all program. This is the use of food for encouraging the developing nations to undertake economic development projects that require large-scale manpower and relatively little material and equipment.

Under programs now in effect in ten countries, food is being used in partial payment for labor on projects such as land clearing, reforestation, irrigation, road building, and school construction. In all cases, the workers receive cash payments in addition to food.

The 500,000 tons of food now committed to the program is a relatively modest portion of the foods that are available for shipment abroad, but it represents the amount that Food for Peace officials feel can be profitably absorbed for the time being. Funds carried over from previous years, along with the vast annual increments in available foods, provide the program with virtually unlimited resources, they point out. What is limited, however, is the ability of recipient countries to organize activities in which this abundance of food can be employed to develop resources that will in turn help them to stand on their own feet.

In a memorandum directing American missions abroad to seek to stimulate interest in this program, the International Cooperation Administration pointed out that "food should be offered only for projects which will enhance social and economic development and which are technically sound." Such projects, it has been found, are not easily arranged, and in this area, as in many others, the Administration is finding that the recognition of a problem and the desire to do something about it often still leave a satisfactory solution a long way off.

The impetus to use food for economic development came from the fact that many of the developing nations lack the capital to undertake simple projects that could play an important role in their economic development. Not surprisingly, it is apparent, they also lack the supervisory personnel and organization needed to take advantage of this program. The program's growth will be more related to developing nations' ability to absorb this assistance than to the willingness of the United States to provide it.

While the economic development program is being pushed hard by Food for Peace, the programs that are based on providing food simply to alleviate hunger are sending more tonnage abroad this year than in any previous year. Efforts are also being made to use some of this food to assist farmers while they are clearing new acreage or developing breeding stock. There are also school lunch programs that are designed to provide better nutrition for children, and also, to lure them to school.

In terms of tonnage, these efforts to promote development with food are small, but they reflect a determination to make imaginative use of our farm abundance.

Mental Retardation: The President's Concern Will Broaden Research

The sorrowful implications of mental retardation are in the personal experience of President Kennedy, whose sister Rosemary has long been institutionalized. Last week, at a news conference dominated by the international crisis, Kennedy devoted several minutes to drawing the nation's attention to the imbalance between the problem of mental retardation and efforts to cope with it. From the forum that he chose and the feeling that he put into his words, it is evident that Kennedy was not employing presidential hyperbole when he stated that the subject "is a matter of the greatest possible interest to me."

In his press conference announcement and in a longer statement issued by the White House, Kennedy pointed out that mental retardation at present afflicts 5 million Americans and that by 1970 an additional 1 million will be added to this group. These figures, he explained, far outweigh the number of persons suffering from many diseases for which great public concern has been aroused. For example, the President noted, mental retardation affects 10 times as many persons as diabetes, 20 times as many as tuberculosis, 25 times as many as muscular dystrophy, and 600 times as many as infantile paralysis. Nevertheless, expenditures for research have remained relatively modest, and, of more immediate concern, facilities for the care of mentally retarded persons are overburdened. The state institutions, he continued, average 367 patients above their rated capacities and have waiting lists averaging 340. For the 160,000 patients in the public institutions, there are only 500 full-time physicians.

To develop an expanded program of research into all phases of mental retardation, the President said, he would seek recommendations from a panel of outstanding persons in a variety of fields. The 24-member group, which was announced on Monday, is headed by Leonard Mayo, executive director of the Association for the Aid of Crippled Children, of New York. It is expected to present its recommendations to the President before the end of next year. In the meantime, the President would seek to double the $10.5 million that the National Institutes of Health spent in this field last year.

Since Congress has no tendency to argue about money for medical research, the President's concern is certain to be reflected in a greatly expanded program in the near future.

Soviet Defections: Conclusions of Broad Discontent Unwarranted

The defection of two Soviet scientists during the past 3 months has stimulated speculation in the press about the state of morale among Soviet scientists. Western scientists who are acquainted with their Soviet counterparts caution, however, that there are no grounds for doubting that the vast majority of Soviet scientists are well satisfied with their regime. These observers add that the defections are no more significant than the few cases involving Westerners seeking refuge in the Soviet Union.

The latest defection involved a 35-year-old biochemist, Alexei Golub, who received asylum in the Netherlands last week. Golub said he sought refuge because his superiors had interfered with his researches into the removal of strontium-90 from the human body. Last August, Mikhail A. Klotchko, a Soviet chemist who holds the Order of Lenin and the Stalin Prize, took refuge in Canada, also protesting against what he described as interference with his work.

Persons familiar with the Soviet scientific community point out that while Western scientists no doubt would find many aspects of Soviet life constricting, Soviet scientists appear to be quite content. Outside of the biological sciences, which have been severely affected by the dominance of Lysenko, there is little evidence that ideology has curbed scientific inquiry. The work of Soviet scientists not only is well supported by the government, but scientists also occupy an elevated position in Soviet society and are rewarded with superior pay scales, living conditions, and prestige.

What is perhaps most revealing on the question of scientific discontent is that defections among Soviet scientists are a rarity, though they are among the most widely traveled of their countrymen. Rigorous screening may, of course, be a factor, but it appears that the comfort that the West might derive from discontent in Soviet scientific ranks has led some persons to arrive at the conclusion that such discontent exists.

Area Redevelopment: Officials Defend Cautious Start

The recently established Area Redevelopment Administration finds itself somewhat haunted by the overly enthusiastic claims made by many of its backers in the course of winning Congressional approval.

The redevelopment program, which was one of the Administration's first major victories in Congress, is intended to bring new permanent jobs to economically depressed areas by helping to finance industrial development and public works needed to support industry.

While backers argued that the relatively small sum of $394 million would go a long way toward stimulating economic development in areas bypassed by prosperity, its opponents contended that the depressed areas could not be revived by spot applications of federal money. A third view was that the program was sound but needed vastly more money, but this was not pushed for fear of arousing antispending opposition.

The program, which has been operating 5 months, has not progressed much beyond the stage of processing applications, and has drawn from Commerce Secretary Hodges the observation that it is moving too slowly.

Redevelopment officials, however, caution that each project they undertake will be regarded as a precedent, and they insist that they prefer to move with care. Their principal problem, they insist, is that localities have been slow to come to them with soundly worked out projects, and under their Congressional mandate, they point out, they cannot go out to the country to drum up business.

What is plaguing them, they say, is that in getting the bill through Congress, backers of area redevelopment attributed to it therapeutic powers that will be a long time in coming, if they come at all.

Fallout Measurement: Soviets Opposed to a Role for the U.N.

The Soviet Union demonstrated again this week that its cooperation with the United Nations' scientific agencies is contingent upon their not undertaking activities which the Soviets regard as conflicting with their Cold War interests. In general, the programs of these agencies have been charted with this sensitivity in mind, and most U.N. scientific activities have flourished amid the problems that afflict the U.N.'s political organs. An exception is the International Atomic Energy Agency, where Cold War issues have arisen, and the Soviets have threatened to walk out.

The Soviet insistence upon what amounts to a scientific veto was emphasized Monday when a spokesman for the Communist bloc denounced a proposal to use the World Meteorological Organization to monitor radioactive fallout. The proposal, made by Canada and supported by 24 other nations, called for employing the existing weather stations in 102 nations and territories to gather and distribute fallout data. It was attacked by the communist spokesman as a propaganda move designed to further the Cold War objectives of the West, and it was made clear that if the WMO adopted the proposal, cooperation from the substantial portion of the world under communist rule would not be forthcoming.

As concern mounts over the radioactive fallout resulting from the Soviet Union's extensive series of atmospheric tests, the Communist bloc is not surprisingly reluctant to contribute data that document the hazard it has been creating.—D.S.G.

Announcements

A regional **counselor program in physics** has been established to promote local cooperation for better physics teaching in high schools. Specific projects of the program, supported by grants from the American Institute of Physics and the American Association of Physics Teachers, will include improving teacher training through cooperation with training institutions; strengthening the state and local syllabus in physics; assisting school systems in the proper selection of apparatus and laboratories; and promoting public awareness of the importance of physics teaching and the conditions under which it is done well.

Forty-one college professors and physicists in industry and government, appointed as counselors in 40 states and Puerto Rico, will interview state superintendents of education and state science supervisors and prepare reports of local developments concerning new curricula, enrollment changes, science projects, and science-teacher recruiting and training programs. (Regional Counselor Office, AIP, 335 E. 45 St., New York 17)

An **electronic information storage and retrieval system** will be developed for the National Library of Medicine by General Electric Company. The computer-based system, to be known as "Medlars," will be designed to process several hundred thousand pieces of bibliographic information annually, thus enabling the library "to broaden and accelerate its services to medical education, research, and practice." It is estimated that the development, installation, and testing of the system will take 2 years.

The National Academy of Sciences is compiling a register of American **scientists interested in overseas assignments**. Specialists in the biological and physical sciences and related fields who wish to be considered for such openings are required to complete and return a special form, available on request. (NAS, Committee on International Exchange of Persons, 2101 Constitution Ave., NW, Washington 25, D.C.)

The National Science Foundation has announced closing dates for receipt of the following proposals:

Design and development of **labora-**