CHAPTER 1

HUNGER IN THE COLD WAR

Primarily agricultural, the less developed countries are historically related to the industrialized West by trade ties, common traditions, and attachment to free institutions, including freedom of religion.

The outcome of the cold war will determine whether these countries, many of which have not achieved stable nationhood, are to retain their historic ties with the West—and their independence—or whether they shall gradually be drawn into the Communist system. What happens in this large area, embracing about half the population of the planet and half the earth's surface, can determine the ultimate position of the West.

In any consideration of the non-Communist world, account must be taken of the contrast between the surpluses of the West and the shortages, particularly of food, that prevail almost universally in the less developed countries.

For more than two-thirds of the world's people, malnutrition is a daily, engrossing concern. The extent of this problem is described in a recent report of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, "The World Food Budget, 1962 and 1966." [1] The analysis indicates that in many of the less developed countries shortages exist in proteins, fat, and calories, and that it is not likely that the food problem will be solved soon. Diet-deficit regions are reported as Latin America, Africa, West Asia, the Far East, and Communist Asia. In these regions, the nutritional gap, projected for 1962, amounts to:

> * * * animal protein equivalent to 1.5 million metric tons of nonfat dry milk; pulse protein equivalent to 150,000 tons of dry beans and peas; fat equivalent to 3 million tons of vegetable oil; and other protein and calories equivalent to 29 million tons of wheat.

Furthermore, "About the same shortages are projected for 1966."

Until these regions can increase and diversify their agricultural production, major reliance for improving diets must be placed on cereal grains. Starch foods, particularly cereal grains, are the critical factor in the world's food supply because of two kinds of efficiency: (1) The caloric content of a pound of milled rice is over 50 percent more than that of a pound of medium beef and equal to that of a pound of medium pork; (2) on the average, the production of a pound of meat requires about 8 pounds of grain. The result is that in the poorer and more crowded sections of the world, nearly all the cereal grains produced are eaten by man, as compared to nearly 70 percent of U.S. grains, excluding sorghums, consumed by animals.[2] Starches represent about three-quarters of caloric intake; grains constitute more than four-fifths of all starches.[3]

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[1] U.S. Department of Agriculture, Foreign Agricultural Economic Report No. 4 (Washington, October 1961). See, especially, tables 3, 4, 5, 23, and 25.
[2] U.S. Department of Agriculture estimates.
[3] Ibid.