

II. CURRENT AND PROSPECTIVE TRENDS IN WORLD POPULATION AND AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION

U.S. foreign policies of the past decade have had the twofold objective of helping the less developed countries improve their economic well-being and of laying the basis for expanding our world trade in agricultural products. For the future, these objectives will need to be pursued with even greater intensity. The gap between food production and consumption of the less developed countries and of the western industrialized countries is basic. There is little evidence in the current and prospective trends in agricultural production that the gap will be materially reduced during the next decade without a greater sense of urgency both in the industrialized countries and in the less developed countries.

The much publicized population eruption is progressing at an annual rate 50 percent greater in the less developed countries and in the Sino-Soviet bloc than in the industrialized Western countries. While food production in the less developed countries has increased since World War II, it has not been sufficient to materially overcome the persistently rising requirements. If the experience of the past 10 years is taken as a guide the per capita production of grains, pulses, roots, and tubers of the less developed countries 10 years hence will still be only 40 to 45 percent of the per capita production of the industrialized West. It has been about 41 percent in recent years.

The population trends in the less developed countries may be taken as a reasonable guide as to what to expect during the decade of the 1960's. This does not mean that the population growth must continue its pace unchecked, but it is extremely doubtful that material progress can be achieved in changing the social and economic factors involved in the next few years. But agricultural production and consumption trends can be tilted upward by the foreign aid programs and Food for Peace activities if they can capitalize on the experience of the past decade and on the more recent developments in agricultural production technology and food processing.

The population trends that we will have to live with during the 1960's are shown in chart I. For the countries included in the group, industrialized Western countries, the yearly rate of population increase is 1.3 percent. At this rate, the total of 541 million persons in these countries will rise to about 635 million 10 years hence. During the 12-year span, 1959 to 1971, the increase here will probably be nearly 100 million. For the countries in the Sino-Soviet bloc the current annual rate of increase is 2.1 percent or about 50 percent greater than that of the Western countries. The bloc's population increase from 1959 to 1971 may be about 300 million, from 1,004 million to 1,300 million, or about three times as great as the increase for the Western area. For all the other countries, the annual rate of increase is also about 2.1 percent and at this pace we may see an increase here from 1,334 million in 1959 to about 1,750 million, or about 420 million. This