

RUSK SAYS HUNGER THREATENS PEACE

Tells Senate Unit U.S. Must
Help Feed Poorer Nations

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BY FELIX BELAIR Jr.

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WASHINGTON, March 7—Secretary of State Dean Rusk urged Congress today that future world peace would depend on the ability and willingness of advanced nations to help less developed countries feed their own people.

"It has been a long time since a nation's requirements for food has been made the basis of a policy of aggression," the Secretary said. "But there is a very real relationship between hunger and political stability.

"Unless we act now to meet the problem of hunger we may have to act later to prevent people from seizing the food production resources of their neighbors."

Mr. Rusk made his comments before the Senate Agriculture Committee. He urged approval of the Administration's \$3.3-billion year Food for Freedom program for which President John F. Kennedy has asked a five-year advance authorization.

"The race between food and population in the underdeveloped countries is a critical one," Mr. Rusk told the committee.

He said that, "unless curbed," the "present trend" toward declining per capita food production would become a serious obstacle to important foreign policy goals of the United States.

The Secretary encountered some sharp questioning by Senator John J. Ellender, Louisiana Democrat who is the committee chairman. Mr. Ellender began by saying that "a mighty good case will have to be made before I can support this legislation."

Mr. Ellender particularly wanted to know whether the proposed legislation would remain in the Secretary of Agriculture his present authority to deal with what countries the State Department might negotiate food aid agreements and what commodities they would receive.

As drafted by the Administration the proposed bill gives the Secretary of Agriculture exclusive authority to determine whether United States food reserves are sufficient for food aid shipments. But responsibility for determining questions of need and eligibility of recipient countries is vested in an inter-departmental group of which the Secretary of Agriculture is a member.

The State Department would be in charge of negotiating actual agreements with less developed countries concerning the

terms and conditions of the food aid, including the nature and scope of self-help required.

The State Department along with the Agency for International Development would also participate in the determination of food aid needed by various countries.

Freeman Interpretation

This general understanding appeared challenged by Secretary of Agriculture Orville L. Freeman in responding to questions by the House Agriculture Committee recently. Asked who was to be in charge of the Food for Freedom program, he said "I am."

Then came the President's "clarification order of last Friday designating Secretary Rusk as "director" of all overseas operations affecting two or more Government departments instead of "coordinator" as heretofore.

The White House statement said the President's action "does not affect in any way the statutory responsibilities" of key Government officials or their relations with Congress. By way of illustration, it said the Food for Freedom program would "remain the responsibility of the Department of Agriculture."

Despite prodding by Senator Ellender, however, Mr. Rusk refused to accept a stipulation in the legislation that "the Secretary of Agriculture shall have authority to determine the nations with which agreements [on food aid] shall be negotiated."

As the witness put the matter: "I don't differ with the merits of your suggestion so much as with the procedure it suggests—which is to say that I have been long schooled to consult the Bureau of the Budget before committing myself on procedural questions."

Senator Ellender told the Secretary that his committee did not want the State Department "saying what ought to be done in agriculture."

The committee chairman also complained that the proposed bill had eliminated a number of worthwhile safeguards of the present law that expires Dec. 31.