

INDO

Food for Peace Is Going for War



Jack Anderson

THE FOOD for Peace Program, established to feed the hungry of the world, has been perverted into a Food for War Program in Southeast Asia.

This sinister change has been manipulated quietly by the National Security Council. Of the \$1 billion worth of food that is shipped abroad for the needy, the council has insisted almost half should go to bolster the military strength of Cambodia and South Vietnam, according to classified documents.

Elsewhere, the food is sold through regular commercial channels to alleviate shortages and prevent hunger. The United States foots the bill, treating it as a low-interest loan to be repaid over a long period.

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BUT IN Cambodia, President Nixon gave the Lon Nol regime special permission to use up to 80 per cent of the proceeds from the sale of American food for "common defense" and "internal security." In South Vietnam, the Thieu regime is permitted to spend a full 100 per cent of the food proceeds on military buildups.

Classified documents show that President Nixon started off this fiscal year with a reasonable request for \$30 million to finance Food for Peace shipments to Cambodia. But bit by bit, the requests ballooned to \$173 million and are likely to go higher.

Even more food aid has been earmarked for South Vietnam, although the jump in the request has been less drastic.

While most food aid to the two embattled countries has been in rice, the documents show that 175,000 metric tons of wheat will be supplied by next July. Yet the wheat shortage at home has pushed up the price of bread to 50 cents a loaf and has forced the United States to import wheat at exorbitant prices.

For years, the Food for Peace Program, along with the Peace Corps, has won friends for the United States among the world's poor. We have seen burlap bags of grain and boxes of cereal, with big "USA" markings, going into impoverished villages.

But in the besieged Cambodian capital of Phnom Penh, one of our informants witnessed a different scene, not far from a camp where hundreds of refugees complained of food shortages. He counted 50 trucks filled with bags of U.S. rice lined up outside a military warehouse. Instead of feeding the starving refugees, it was going for army rations.

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IT WAS with a song and a stein that the late Representative Burr Harrison (Dem.-Va.), wanted to be remembered. So he provided money from his estate to ensure that the mourning would be minimal.

After his recent death, his executor found a handwritten note. It requested that the traditional bar association memorial service be suspended and that his estate provide bourbon for the "next evening debauchery of the gentlemen of the bar."