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Meeting on World Hunger

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Senator * or Department*: **BAUCUS**

Instructions:
- Prepare one form for insertion at the beginning of each record series.
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Record Type*: Speeches & Remarks

MONTH/YEAR of Records*: December-1981
(Example: JANUARY-2003)

(1) Subject*: Meeting on World Hunger in Helena
(select subject from controlled vocabulary, if your office has one)

(2) Subject*

DOCUMENT DATE*: 12/05/1981
(Example: 01/12/1966)

* "required information"
THAT FILM WAS A POWERFUL DEPICTION OF THE SUFFERING IN SOMALIA. ABOUT HALF OF THE REFUGEES THERE ARE CHILDREN.

I SAW CHILDREN LIKE THEM IN CAMBODIA IN 1979. WHEN I VISITED CAMBODIA, MORE THAN 3 MILLION CAMBODIANS WERE IN DESPERATE NEED OF FOOD AND MEDICAL ASSISTANCE. I MET SUFFERING REFUGEES AND HELD INNOCENT, STARVING CHILDREN IN MY ARMS.

BUT THERE ARE MANY AMERICANS WHO WILL NEVER SEE THIS FILM OR ANYTHING LIKE IT. AND THERE ARE OTHERS WHO SEE PICTURES OF STARVING CHILDREN AND SAY, "THE PROBLEM'S TOO BIG. WE CAN'T DO ANYTHING ABOUT IT."

ALL OF YOU HERE TODAY ARE CONCERNED ENOUGH ABOUT WORLD HUNGER TO COME TO A SATURDAY MEETING DURING THE CHRISTMAS SEASON. BUT HOW CAN WE GET OTHER PEOPLE INTERESTED?

LET ME SUGGEST THAT A NEW APPROACH IS NEEDED. I SUGGEST THAT WE NEED TO SHOW HOW MEETING THE NEEDS OF THESE PEOPLE IN EAST AFRICA AND ELSEWHERE IS IN AMERICA'S SELF-INTEREST. ANYONE WHO IS CONCERNED ABOUT THE NATIONAL SECURITY OF THE U.S. -- AND THAT IS A BIG CONCERN THESE DAYS -- OUGHT TO KNOW THAT WORLD HUNGER PRESENTS A MILITARY AND POLITICAL DANGER TO OUR COUNTRY.
IN SEPTEMBER, A BREAD FOR THE WORLD STATEMENT WAS ENDORSED BY EX-PRESIDENT GERALD FORD. PART OF THE STATEMENT SAID, "THE ELIMINATION OF HUNGER AND ITS CAUSES SHOULD BE IN THE FOREFRONT OF UNITED STATES RELATIONS WITH DEVELOPING COUNTRIES." THE STATEMENT THEN LISTED A BROAD RANGE OF PROBLEMS THAT DIRECTLY AFFECT OUR SECURITY AND THAT DEFY MILITARY SOLUTIONS.

IN ADDITION TO FORD, OTHER SIGNERS WERE FORMER CIA DIRECTOR WILLIAM COLBY, FORMER DEFENSE SECRETARY HAROLD BROWN AND REPUBLICAN SENATORS ROBERT DOLE AND MARK HATFIELD.

THIS NEW APPROACH OF EMPHASIZING THE CONNECTION BETWEEN WORLD HUNGER AND OUR NATIONAL SECURITY COULD LEAD TO A BROAD CONSENSUS, CROSSING PHILOSOPHICAL AND PARTY LINES. IT IS POSSIBLE THAT BOTH THOSE WHO FAVOR MILITARY BUDGET INCREASES AND THOSE WHO QUESTION SUCH A BUILDUP COULD POSSIBLY AGREE THAT HUNGER AND POVERTY IN OTHER PARTS OF THE WORLD POSE A REAL THREAT TO AMERICAN DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL SECURITY AND INTERESTS.

LET'S FOCUS ON EAST AFRICA, SINCE THAT IS THE TOPIC OF THIS MEETING. WHY SHOULD THE U.S. BE CONCERNED ABOUT AN AREA SO REMOTE FROM US?

Somalia is an American ally, at war with Ethiopia, a Russian ally. Somalia provides naval and air bases support to U.S. forces in the Indian Ocean area. Kenya and Uganda are also American allies and military partners.

The stability and economy of each of these nations is seriously threatened by the presence of large numbers of starving refugees. Military aid can help in some situations, like Somalia's war with Ethiopia. But military aid cannot eliminate the explosive situation caused by millions of starving people. Civil war has already broken out in Uganda, where rebel bands, some still loyal to Idi Amin, fight against the democratically elected government. Kenya is being swamped by refugees from Uganda and Somalia.

If not faced directly, hunger and the other devastating effects of extreme poverty will certainly cause the downfall of the governments of Somalia, Uganda and Kenya, no matter what military measures are taken. That could lead either to communist governments or to completely chaotic conditions as in Iran. It is thus in our national self-interest to attack the causes of unrest -- chronic hunger, disease and hopelessness.
Developing nations of the world are also important to our self-interest in an economic sense. More than one-third of our exports are shipped to developing countries, including 50 percent of our cotton, 65 percent of our wheat and 70 percent of our rice. More than 800,000 American jobs in manufacturing alone depend on exports to developing countries.

We also depend on imports from developing countries for many essential and strategic commodities, including 100 percent of our natural rubber and 41 percent of our petroleum. Of that petroleum, about half comes from nations outside the Middle East, including Nigeria in West Africa. The economies of the world are so interdependent that weakening in any one sector weakens all.

Later in this meeting you are going to hear about what private relief agencies, including church groups, are doing in East Africa. Right now, let's talk about what the U.S. government should be doing.

Senate bill 1675 has been introduced in the U.S. Senate, entitled the Hunger and Global Security Bill. I am proud to be one of many co-sponsors of that bill. Incidentally, this is a non-partisan bill. The original sponsors included one Democrat and three Republicans. A similar bill in the House had one Democrat and one Republican as primary sponsors with many co-sponsors from both parties.
Let me outline some of the provisions of this massive bill, which was drafted with the help of the National Bread for the World staff. The bill has both short-term and long-term effects. In short-term emergency aid there is one section encouraging the establishment of grain reserves.

Long-term measures are intended to redirect the usual thrust of American aid toward assisting the most needy. In the past, aid has often gone exclusively to large projects like dams and seaports. The rationale was that economic development had to be pursued first. Then the benefits would trickle down to the most needy. Now we are discovering that helping the needy can have direct economic development benefits in increased productivity.

For example, the World Bank examined the effects of treating Indonesians suffering from anemia with elemental iron. It was found that the resulting increase in workers' productivity yielded an economic benefit-cost ratio of 180 to 1. In other words, a simple inexpensive medical treatment may have done more to boost productivity than thousands of dollars of labor-saving equipment.

Waste in foreign aid has been a serious problem for our government. Too often, well-intentioned aid has wound up in the hands of the wealthy, or has supported repressive governments which oppress their people. This bill would require that aid be focused on improving the lot of needy people, defined as those who do not have sufficient income to maintain their health.
Other reforms in the bill require self-help measures by the developing nation in return for food aid, so that dependency is not established.

The Hunger and Global Security bill does not require additional spending by our government. Instead, it reforms existing programs to make them more effective in serving the truly needy. Democracy can only flourish when the basic needs of people are met.

This bill will not eliminate hunger, but it will take a good step toward making the elimination of hunger a national security priority. However, there is strong opposition to parts of the bill. In particular, the Administration has shown a tendency to define problems in purely military terms, with solutions then coming in the form of increased military aid. Chronic world hunger brings military and political problems, but it cannot be solved militarily.

Seeing hunger as a national security problem is only one way to look at the problem, of course. But it offers the possibility of involving conservatives and liberals, Republicans and Democrats, pro-military buildup and anti-military buildup forces on the same side of an issue.
When you are thinking about what you can do in Helena, please don't forget about writing your Congressional representatives -- myself, Senator John Melcher, and Representatives Pat Williams and Ron Marlenee.

We need to hear from you that you are concerned about world hunger. We need to hear that you support specific bills such as Senate Bill 1675. And most important, we need to hear that you think eliminating hunger and poverty is in the best interest of the United States.

As elected representatives, we try to respond to the wishes of our constituents. So, if you are concerned about world hunger, please let the four of us know about it.

Thank you.