FOREIGN AID: THE MYTH SLOWLY CRUMBLES

House closes “Food for Peace” loophole

The House of Representatives last week voted to end one of the most glaring abuses of an American foreign aid program by drastically reducing the funds available to the Thieu and Lon Nol regimes under the Food for Peace program. The House action came on an amendment to the Agriculture Appropriations bill by Republican Congressman James Johnson of Colorado. Johnson's amendment stipulates that no more than 10% of the funds appropriated this year under Title I of the Food for Peace program can be allocated to any one country.
FOOD FOR PEACE: HOW IT WORKS

Title I: American surplus food commodities are sold to foreign countries. The money derived by these sales is turned over to the local governments for use in their budgets. In South Vietnam and Cambodia these funds have been used for military purposes.

Title II: The food commodities are given, through governmental or private voluntary agencies, directly to needy people.

Note: For Vietnam and Cambodia, less than 1% of Food for Peace commodities for FY 1974 were given under Title II.

Last year alone South Vietnam and Cambodia received over $500 million in Food for Peace commodities—almost one-half of the world-wide program. Since the entire Title I program for FY 1975 consists of approximately $425 million, the House action set a limit of $85 million for South Vietnam and Cambodia combined. Therefore, the Johnson amendment effectively cut $400 million in aid to the two American-financed governments in Indochina. The Title II food grant program was not affected, however, so the channels for potential assistance to hungry people in Indochina and elsewhere were kept open.

To most House members the contradictions were shockingly clear. The legislation reflected a growing awareness of the gulf between the ideals and the effect of American foreign aid programs—particularly in Indochina. Originally intended to make American food surpluses available to hungry people around the world, the Food for Peace program in the last two years had become an outright war subsidy for the Theiu and Lon Nol regimes—revenues from Title I sales going directly into the military budget. It was, in fact, a mask for larger and less-benevolent Administration foreign policy objectives. Like the House's rejection of the Administration's supplemental aid request earlier this year, last week's vote once again exposed and rejected an attempt to circumvent Congressional control of Indochina spending.

There was really no way that responsible law-makers could continue to countenance such abuses. Sensing an overwhelming defeat and not wishing to go on record in opposition to the amendment, Administration supporters even avoided a roll-call vote.
FOREIGN "AID": DEVELOPING THE ANALYSIS

The contradictions within the Food for Peace program are a microcosm of the larger contradictions inherent in American foreign aid. The focus of that contradiction is Indochina.

Originally conceived as an attempt to export the ideals of democracy and to re-inforce economic development and well-being throughout the world, the foreign aid program, since its inception following World War II, has become one of the shibboleths of the American liberal. "They need us" has become one of the underlying myths of American foreign policy-- even in the minds of some of our best-intentioned legislators. Fully developed, this myth once led to the presence of 500,000 US combat troops in Vietnam.

The continuation of American "aid" is in part a further extension of that underlying myth. The crux of the problem lies in the question "Who are 'they' who need us?". Certainly not the Vietnamese people. American "aid" has led only to their continued suffering and the corruption of their society.

The gulf between the ideals and the effect of American foreign aid programs can only be overcome by making the distinction between 'governments' and 'peoples'. The vote on Food for Peace, we think, is a good beginning.

We would hope that the Foreign Aid program will receive the same critical treatment. Committees in both Houses are now reviewing this legislation. The House Foreign Aid Authorization bill will come up for a floor vote in late July. The Senate Foreign Aid Authorization bill will come up for a floor vote sometime shortly thereafter. As it now stands the Administration's FY 1975 Foreign Aid package would contain $940 million in "Indochina Post-war Reconstruction aid" (economic assistance) and $364 million in military aid to Cambodia. Both of these figures represent substantial increases over the levels authorized last year:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Economic Aid to Indochina:</th>
<th>Approved by Congress FY 1974</th>
<th>Administration Request FY 1975</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Military Aid</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For. Aid Bill:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cambodia</td>
<td>$334 million</td>
<td>$364 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laos</td>
<td>$1.0 billion</td>
<td>$1.6 billion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defense Dept. Bill:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laos</td>
<td>$117 million</td>
<td>$86 million*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Vietnam</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*This military aid has not been approved by the Laotian Coalition Government. See attached news clip.
In terms of this year's Indochina aid, three legislative goals are most important:

I) Reduce economic aid to Indochina substantially below last year's level

II) Eliminate or at least substantially reduce military aid to Cambodia

III) Terminate military assistance to Laos

Since any of these objectives may be achieved at the committee level prior to floor votes, the following committee members are extremely important:

**SENATE**

**FOREIGN RELATIONS**

J. W. Fulbright (D Ark.), chairman
John Sparkman (Ala.)
Mike Mansfield (Mont.)
Frank Church (Idaho)
Stuart Symington (Mo.)
Claiborne Pell (R.I.)
Gale W. McGee (Wyo.)
Edmund S. Muskie (Maine)
George McGovern (S.D.)
Hubert H. Humphrey (Minn.)
George D. Aiken (Vt.)
John F. Kuchel (Calif.)
Dick B. Breaux (La.)
James A. Lovinger (N.J.)
Charles H. Percy (Ill.)
Robert F. Griffin (Mich.)

**HOUSE**

**FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

Thomas E. Morgan (D Pa.), chairman
Clement J. Zablocki (Wis.)
Wayne L. Hays (Ohio)
L. H. Fountain (N.C.)
Dante B. Fascell (Fla.)
Charles C. Deyo (Mich.)
Robert N. C. Nix (Pa.)
Donald M. Fraser (Minn.)
Benjamin S. Rosenthal (N.Y.)
John C. Culver (Iowa)
Lee H. Hamilton (Ind.)
Abraham Kassen Jr. (Texas)
Lester L. Wolff (N.Y.)
Jonathan B. Bingham (N.Y.)
Gus Atchison (Pa.)
Roy A. Taylor (N.C.)
John W. Davis (Ga.)
Ogden B. Reid (N.Y.)
Michael J. Harrington (Mass.)
Leo J. Ryan (Calif.)
Charles Wilson (Texas)

**APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE**

**FOREIGN OPERATIONS**

Inouye, Daniel K. (Hawaii), chairman
Proxmire, William (Wis.)
Mclntire, Gay W. (Wyo.)
McChesney, John (Ariz.)
Chiles, Lawton (Fla.)
Brooke, Edward W. (Mass.)
Hatfield, Mark O. (Ore.)
Mathias, Charles, Jr. (Md.)

**APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE**

**FOREIGN OPERATIONS**

Otto P. . (La.), chairman
John Rooney (N.Y.)
Clarence Long (Md.)
Edward Roybal (Calif.)
Tom Harkin (Iowa)
J. Edward Roush (Ind.)
Sidney Yates (Ill.)
Bill Chappell (Fla.)
Gus Atchison (Pa.)
Clarence Miller (Ohio)
Silvio Conte (Mass.)
Lawrence Craighead (Pa.)

---

**ECONOMIC AID TO INDOCHINA: WHERE ARE WE GOING?**

***Continued US underwriting of Saigon's dependent economy merely serves to postpone a genuine solution to South Vietnam's political and economic problems. The Paris Agreement envisioned a political settlement through the participation and reconciliation of three elements: the Thieu regime, the Provisional Revolutionary Government, and the neutralist forces. Massive US support of only one side only discourages the Thieu regime from making the political accommodations necessary for a genuine settlement.***

(4)
The $940 million administration request for "Indochina Postwar Reconstruction" is only one portion of the proposed FY 1975 expenditures for Indochina. The sum total of all proposed U.S. assistance to Indochina for FY 1975 exceeds the total of all other economic and military aid programs for the rest of the world combined.

$940 million is the largest economic aid request for Indochina in history, and represents almost double the amount authorized in FY 1974. Congressional approval of any more than $504 million will serve to increase American involvement in a part of the world where most Americans feel that disengagement is now in our national interest.

ABOUREZK AMENDMENTS

Senator James Abourezk of South Dakota will introduce two amendments to the FY 1975 Foreign Aid bill which will deal specifically with political prisoners and American support of various police and prison programs. The first amendment would end all foreign police and prison training and support either in this country or abroad. The amendment would effectively close the Office of Public Safety and its International Police Academy. The second amendment would stipulate that before receiving military aid a country must allow any one of four highly respected international humanitarian organizations, such as the International Red Cross or Amnesty International, to inspect its prisons.

On June 5th, a third Abourezk amendment concerning political prisoners was defeated by a 57-32 vote. The amendment would have prohibited military assistance to South Vietnam until the President notified Congress that he had received formal assurances that the Government of South Vietnam would release by December 31, 1974, all persons imprisoned without the benefit of court trial.
While the House and Senate Foreign Aid Authorization bills work their way through the committee level, important appropriation votes for military aid to South Vietnam are approaching also. As indicated in our last Legislative Update, an attempt will definitely be made on the House floor to substantially reduce the military aid to South Vietnam contained in the Military Appropriations bill.

Last year major reductions were made in the Senate Appropriations Committee, but it is now too early to tell whether that will happen again or whether the issue will have to be taken to the Senate floor.

One significant Senate action has already taken place. On June 11th an attempt by Senators Kennedy and Cranston to cut $150 million in military aid from the DOD Authorization bill lost by a narrow 46-45 margin. But an analysis of the vote is encouraging. The pivotal figure was Senator Harold Hughes of Iowa who had previously made a compromise within the Senate Armed Services Committee. In return for a committee figure of $900 million (a reduction of $700 million from the original Administration request), Hughes committed himself to support the committee on the Senate floor. Hughes' compromise cost us not only his vote but also those of other moderates who were influenced by his position.

Four surprise pro-war votes were cast by Pearson of Kansas, Percy of Illinois, Byrd of West Virginia, and Chiles of Florida. They should be written to immediately!

Two points were most encouraging: Out of the nine people absent, seven can be considered doves who will support future cuts. Secondly, two southern conservatives, Allen of Alabama and Hollings of South Carolina, each cast their first anti-war vote ever. Despite the vote, therefore, we believe that there is a potential group of 55 Senators who will support substantial aid cuts in the future. It's just a matter of getting them together -- and the key to that is constituent interest and support.