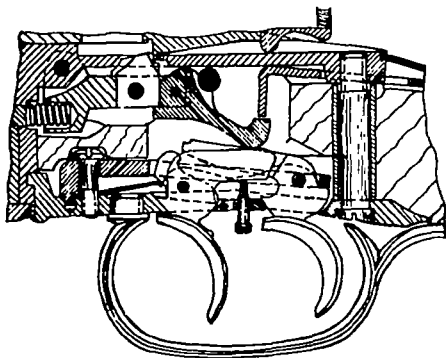


against which the public reaction has been the strongest. Some official opinions, too, have been critical. In a statement issued by the Political Consultative Committee of the Warsaw Pact, meeting in Bucharest July 6, 1966, the States Parties declared their condemnation of the use of napalm. Grave burn injuries are particularly painful, hard to treat medically, and likely to cause permanent physical and psychological disabilities. Moreover, many of the incendiary weapons, in particular napalm, seem by no means indispensable from the viewpoint of national defense. In the U.K. War Manual a note declares that the use of flamethrowers and napalm bombs against personnel would be contrary to the laws of war insofar as it is calculated to cause unnecessary suffering. There is ample ground for the public reaction and the official statements.



Another category of weapons that deserves to be in focus right now is that of the small-caliber automatic rifles. A new generation of projectiles—smaller than the 7.62 mm. caliber that is now used by both Warsaw and NATO pacts—is now being designed in many states. Tests indicate that some of these new bullets may have much more injurious effects than the current type. These effects seem mostly to be the result of bullet breakup or early tumbling of the bullet. It is urgently needed that all major weapons-producing states confer to avoid a new generation of bullets causing worse wounds than the old ones. This is the most common weapon used in all armed conflicts.

One area in which a measure of agreement has appeared is rules regarding the mapping of land minefields. Many people have been killed or injured by land mines that have remained after the end of hostilities. Agreement seems attainable at least that armed forces should chart all minefields over a minimum size and that such charts be made public at the end of hostilities.

The humanitarian gains that can be made through agreements on nonuse of certain particularly cruel or indiscriminate conventional weapons are perhaps marginal but by no means insignificant. So far the intergovernmental discussions at the Diplomatic Conference in Geneva have been painfully slow. One reason has probably been that public opinion has not made itself much felt. We are not concerned here with weapons of any vital importance for the strategic balance of forces in the world.

Nor should the question of control of respect for rules on *nonuse* pose a problem—as it often does for proposals on the physical elimination of weapons. If napalm were used in violation of a ban, it could easily be seen.

The Colombo Conference of Non-Aligned Countries that met in August, 1976, urged

all states to accelerate negotiations, with a view to securing, as rapidly as possible and within the context of the Diplomatic Conference to be convened in Geneva next year, the prohibition of certain conventional weapons of an indiscriminate or cruel nature, particularly the prohibition of the use of napalm and other incendiary weapons.

There can be no doubt that tangible success for the conference in this regard would mean tremendous encouragement in the broader field of disarmament. But such success will not come without good political will by governments and interest shown by public opinion.

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EXCURSUS III

Jerald Ciekot on **Making Hay While the Sun Shines**

In spite of good crops in many countries this year the world still lives hand to mouth, from one harvest to the next. As recently as 1970 the world had the equivalent of ninety days of grain consumption on reserve, including idled U.S. cropland. Now, six years later, U.S. cropland is in full use, and world stocks are down to the pipeline level of a mere thirty-day supply. This represents virtually no reserves: Moreover, by 1985 the cereals deficit of developing nations is expected to jump from its 1969-72 average of 16 million tons to 85 million tons annually.

Recognizing this grim reality, nations represented at the November, 1974, World Food Conference agreed to create an international reserve system. This was regarded as especially important for poor nations, those hardest hit by food shortages and the doubling of grain prices.

At the time of the Rome conference the only major impediment to beginning this reserve system seemed to be the size of the next harvest. That harvest turned out to be a fairly good one, and the current harvest is looking even better. But the reserve system is still nonexistent. In fact, the international discussions concerned with hammering out a workable plan are stymied.

The present stalemate poses tremendous risks. Any serious crop failure in almost any major producing region, if not balanced by bumper harvests elsewhere, will lead to excessive price rises and threaten the lives of millions.

But we can break out of this dilemma if we have the will. Recent studies show that between now and 1980 as much as 125 million tons could be accumulated to build reserves, assuming continued full production by exporters and normal production by importers. The margin each year is small and might be easily squandered, so a deliberate set-aside effort is required.

Adequate reserves would assure enough grain to meet emergencies and provide market stability by eliminating extreme price gyrations. Thus both developed and developing countries would benefit. However, a reserve system based on an international agreement would put these benefits on firmer ground and *protect the producer* as well.

Without an international agreement the U.S. and Canada might decide, for example, to cut their acreage rather than reaccumulate stocks on a significant scale. This would endanger grain markets in a year of low yields. With an international agreement, the accumulation and distribution of reserves would be governed by internationally agreed upon guidelines, so the farmer would be protected from any weekend government decision to release reserves to depress prices. Furthermore, the cost of building and maintaining reserves would be shared, rather than resting solely on the North American consumer and taxpayer.

In the absence of an international agreement, several developed importing countries are protecting themselves by bilateral trade agreements. Such agreements in effect in 1976 already preempt a full 35 per cent of the cereals available from the major exporters and increase the vulnerability of developing nations to higher prices.

Energetic U.S. initiatives, inviting constructive responses from other countries, are now needed to rekindle the momentum to reach an international agreement and focus world attention on any obstructionists. This is one area in which we literally constitute a majority of one. Some steps the U.S. might take:

1. Press for serious negotiations. (We did present a proposal to the International Wheat Council in September, 1975, but have not vigorously pursued the discussion.)

2. Make available now to poor grain-short nations on a grant basis our estimated share of the yearly financial assistance needed to help them build their reserve components (about equal to the cost of one F-14 fighter-bomber).

3. Actively seek channels within transnational organizations such as the IMF for multilateral assistance to enable poor nations to start their reserve components.

4. Announce a \$2 billion reduction in our defense spending, calling on the USSR to do the same, and

rechannel these funds to grain reserves. Do this with the announced attention of decreasing our defense budget by 10 per cent if other nations do likewise, channeling these additional funds to food aid and small farmer development.

The New International Economic Order aims to make the adjustments needed so poor nations can become self-reliant participants in the global community. Stabilizing the price and availability of cereals is critical, for much of the human suffering and economic inflation experienced in 1972-74 was due to dislocations in the grain market.

Any international agreement involves compromise. Exporters sacrifice windfall profits in bad crop years, while importers sacrifice bargain-basement prices in good years. Compromise is necessary for a joint compact benefiting both over the long term. Moreover, a reserve agreement could serve as a model for other commodity agreements.

There is no reason to expect a repeat of the North American performance of doubling its grain exports in the years ahead, as we did during the 1970's. The world's food supply and demand are in precarious balance, and the odds are against any improvement without deliberate steps to generate food security. It would be simply foolhardy if we did not begin to protect ourselves now when we have the capacity to do so.

Jerald Ciekot is Director of the American Friends Service Committee's World Hunger Project.

QUOTE/UNQUOTE

The Still on the Hill

A Souse-Senate conference committee agreed early today to extend Federal revenue sharing to state and local governments through September, 1980....

—*New York Times*, September 28

Prisoners by Any Other Name...

An interesting word game surrounds the prisoner subject, I've discovered since returning to the U.S. If I mention Vietnamese "political prisoners," friends supportive of the Vietnamese government sharply correct me: they are not prisoners, they are "students" or, a compromise word Lacouture uses, "detainees." I prefer plain English and words that don't mute the sting of reality. We are talking about men and women held at gunpoint. They are not free to return home, not free to question, not free to explore any subject of study, political or otherwise.

I'm reminded of the word game that was supposed to camouflage my own existence when I was "detained" for draft resistance in this country. Throughout my 13 months under lock and key, I wasn't