

SECA PRESENTS



FIRING LINE



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Guest: Father Theodore Hesburgh, president, Notre Dame University

Subject: "FOOD AND THE CHRISTIAN CONSCIENCE"

Panelists: Robert Kuttner
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MR. BUCKLEY: The great world food conference in Rome has come and gone and the results of it blur in the memory, except that we know now with a greater statistical refinement than before that the Malthusian age isn't a bad dream or a projection for the faraway future, it is here in all its hideousness. Starvation. For how many? The estimates range. The figure two million people over the next nine months will not be challenged except by those who say it is too low. Meanwhile the privileged of this earth are in fact eating better and better; that is to say, their diet is more varied and more nutritious. An awesome philosophical question arises whether the juxtaposition of that plenty and that want are spiritually tolerable. An altogether different question arises whether given all the good will in the world, it would be possible to help the needy by taking from the sated.

These are questions into which many men have inquired, not least Father Theodore Hesburgh, the president of Notre Dame University, who, with several other distinguished prelates of other faiths, has called on the United States to raise sharply its commitment to send food abroad in 1975.

Father Hesburgh was born in Syracuse, New York, and educated at Notre Dame and at the Gregorian University in Rome and became a priest in the Holy Cross Order in 1943. If there is an honor he has not since received or a university that has not given him an honorary degree, it can only have been oversight or a hangover from the religious wars. He has been president of Notre Dame since 1952. He is the author of a dozen books, most recently *The Humane Imperative*, taken from the Terry Lectures he delivered at Yale. He has served in dozens of civil and Federal agencies, devoting approximately one-third of each year to Federal philanthropy, most conspicuously in the field of civil rights. He had something of a public brawl with Richard Nixon during the last years of Mr. Nixon's Administration, which brawl, however, has nothing to do with the question of feeding hungry people.

I should like to begin by asking Father Hesburgh if he will be patient with me and discuss most minutely and exactly, for a few minutes, his understanding of Christian duty in a world in which John has more than James. The first question is this: Does Christianity distinguish between voluntary giving by John to James and involuntary giving by John for the benefit of James?

FR. HESBURGH: I think that it does so distinguish, but I think there is a kind of moral imperative, if you believe what the Christian religion teaches us, that if our brother's in need we have to stretch ourselves to help him. That goes all through the Old Testament, it goes all through the New Testament, and the words are very strong. In fact, in the very words of judgment that our Lord uses, he puts it in terms of feeding, and he says, "I was hungry and you gave me to eat; and I was thirsty and you gave me to drink; and I was in prison and you visited me; and I was naked and you clothed me," and he said, "They will ask, 'When did I see you hungry, thirsty, naked, or in prison?'" and he said, "When you did it to one of my least brethren, you did it to me."

And the judgment, curiously enough, is put out in those terms, of helping those who are the least brethren. And I think, while government programs have always been to take from the rich and give to the poor in a Robin Hood fashion, the fact is that there is an inner imperative for all of us if we really believe what the Lord taught, that we have to have compassion for the poor and we have to help them within our power to do so.

MR. BUCKLEY: Well, is this--Of course, I understand, but I have marveled at the apparent failure of people like yourself to translate individual charity into the corporate terminology in which it has to be considered.

FR. HESBURGH: Yes.

MR. BUCKLEY: If you're discussing not your helping me when you have surplus and I have a shortage, but you, a country, helping other countries.

FR. HESBURGH: Yes.

MR. BUCKLEY: Let's look at it in terms of economic--I won't use the word realities because you might dismiss that as presumptuous--in terms of economic insights. It has been said, for instance, that your specific proposal that

we send over an extra four million tons of grain to the rest of the world during 1975 would, in fact, have the following economic effect, that the price of grain would instantly be bid up on the basis of the existing scarcity, which we know to be at a historic 20-year low, such that the total amount of money that would then be appropriated would buy not any more grain than is currently slotted to go.

Now, expanding that for a moment, and then I'll let you expand at any length you want in your answer, we do know that the United States, taking the most conspicuous country in the world in terms of philanthropy, since 84 percent of all the food that has been donated during the past 15 years has been our own, faces a very severe trade deficit which brings an extrinsic relevance to grain giveaways, extrinsic to the homilies of the New Testament; so that even with all the good will in the world, suppose that every single human being in America were the Good Samaritan, it could very well prove an economic impossibility to redistribute the wealth or the residue in such terms as would satisfy a Christian conscience. Now, to what extent have you tried to come to terms with those realities?

FR. HESBURGH: I've thought of those realities, and I think in the letter I wrote to the President I took all of them into account. First of all, what I was saying was that the real starvation is going to come in the spring of the year, February, March, April, before the spring crop comes in in these countries which are mostly tropical. Secondly, I was asking only for two million tons immediately, since if it doesn't get on the boats and get on its way in January, it won't get there in time to help much, and an additional two million tons at the end, provided that we're matched by the other countries. And I think that has already begun to happen, although we haven't done our part yet.

MR. BUCKLEY: Why provided? What's the point of that?

FR. HESBURGH: Well, the point is I think we have to say--

MR. BUCKLEY: This isn't college endowments.

FR. HESBURGH: Yes, we can't do everything, and, as a matter of fact, the Canadians have already promised one million tons, which proportionate to their GNP is far more than we're doing ourselves. But let me just put it in the background.

In 1965, we were giving 18 million tons a year to the poor and starving countries of the world, under the PL 480, the Food for Peace program. By the early Seventies, that had been cut in half, down to nine million tons a year. Our allocation this year was set at 3.3 million tons, which is getting down pretty far below the 18 million, and even that has not been bought and sent out already. It'll probably come below three million because of the rise in prices, which you already indicated.

I think if we could have handled 18 million in 1965, it's a little incredible that we can't handle an additional two million right now, this year.

MR. BUCKLEY: Well, excuse me, but--

FR. HESBURGH: Although the stocks are different, I grant you.

MR. BUCKLEY: Of course. You do know that since 1965--in those days we used to talk about a surplus. We now talk about a reserve.

FR. HESBURGH: That's right.

MR. BUCKLEY: We do know that we've reduced our acreage allotments to 74 percent of what we then had; Canada reduced theirs by 50 percent, and Australia by 35 percent.

FR. HESBURGH: That's right.

MR. BUCKLEY: Now, if we want to reverse that, as a practical matter we couldn't right now; but, assuming that we could, assuming that tomorrow, by simply turning the relevant bureaucratic button, we could get X number of farmers and tractors and fertilizers back on X number of million of untended acres, how would we handle that as an economic problem?

FR. HESBURGH: Yes. We're doing it right now.

MR. BUCKLEY: And I'm asking this not as a technologist, but as somebody who simply inquires into the feasibility of it.

FR. HESBURGH: Again the background, Bill. In 1972, we paid \$2 billion to people to keep the acreage out of production--

MR. BUCKLEY: Yes.

FR. HESBURGH: --even though the starvation was already imminent and at hand in Sahel in Africa. And, last year, we put practically all the acreage back into production, but we had a weather problem and the crop was not as good as we expected. The fact right now is that we're intending to send two million tons to Russia to feed animals when we have millions of people, as you mentioned earlier, who are going to starve without it.

Now, I just happen to think human beings are more important than animals and I don't want to take it out on the Russians, but we could delay that shipment and take care of the people in the meanwhile. There's a very limited amount of food available and if this decision isn't made soon--although the President has said he's going to make the decision imminently. If the decision is not made soon, it won't make any difference because the grain will not be put en route and it won't get there in time to help.

They had a meeting last week in Rome, following the World Food Conference, where they all agreed that seven and a half million tons is a shortage. The European Community is coming up with a percentage of that; the Canadians have come up with a percentage. I assume the Australians will. But we produce so much of the world's food; in a good year with 100 million tons export, we export 70 million tons. So we are, in relation to food, what the Arabs are, in some sense, in relation to oil. And if we don't do it, it simply can't be done.

MR. BUCKLEY: Well, but it's also true that our reserves are drastically diminished.

FR. HESBURGH: No question about that.

MR. BUCKLEY: And presumably they are diminished not as a result of *pari passu* a diminution in hunger but a diminution of an idea of how basically nonproductive people can pay for food that has to be produced by people who require rewards of certain kinds.

FR. HESBURGH: That's right.

MR. BUCKLEY: There's a very angry paragraph in one of Arthur Schlesinger's books discussing Franklin Roosevelt's first 100 days in which he rails against left-wing critics of FDR who were criticizing the United States in 1933 for having a lot of garment workers idle when there were a lot of people who were, so to speak, naked, and he says in that passage that the question never is what is the physical capacity of a country to produce, but what is the felt need of other countries, the operative word being felt. Now, how can you in fact year after year, decade after decade, feed, let's say, the 700 people of India--

FR. HESBURGH: You can't.

MR. BUCKLEY: --without compensating--I'm sorry this word has that commercial overtone--the people in Minnesota and Iowa, and so on and so forth, who raise the wheat?

FR. HESBURGH: Well, we've done that traditionally; we've compensated them by a government program.

MR. BUCKLEY: Yes.

FR. HESBURGH: And every country in the world does compensate its farmers, Europeans far more than we do, in fact. But I quite agree with you--Bill, you put your hand on a very important point. We're faced with a double-barreled problem here. We have a short-range problem of people immediately hungry and starving, and we have a long-range problem of what do you do about India, say.

MR. BUCKLEY: Yes.

FR. HESBURGH: And I think the first problem we've been talking about--and the second problem we probably ought to talk about at least to get it out of the

way if nothing else. I think the most important thing is to get people who will otherwise die some food to keep them alive; but having done that, you can't say you're going to do that, responding to crises year after year after year.

Now, about 15 years ago--when I say we here I'm talking about the Rockefeller and the Ford Foundations that I've been working with on this program--we began a program in India to get India self-sufficient in food. And we literally cancelled out that program two years ago because they were at that point self-sufficient. But this year they had three things happen to them. First, they had bad weather and you can't control that. That lost them five or six million tons of food. Secondly, the fuel price went up so high they couldn't get fuel for their pumps and, lacking the fuel for their pumps, they didn't get water in their fields and they lost two or three million tons that way. Thirdly, because the great bulk of fertilizer is nitrogenous, made out of petroleum products and natural gas, and because we cut off all of our export a year ago October, and Japan decided to make automobiles instead of fertilizer--they had to make a choice because of the added fuel price and they can sell the automobiles for cash, getting back to your problem and the other has to be given out on concession or a long-range loan deal to the underdeveloped countries. As a result they lacked something like one million to one million and a half tons of fertilizer, which cost them another five million tons of food, because they get five to ten pounds of extra food for every pound of fertilizer on the land.

Now those three things hit them all at once. Before that happened, they were feeding their people, they were self-sufficient. We had cut our grain shipments to them almost to nothing. People don't realize that when we cut back to 3.3 million tons of grain this year, two-thirds of it went to military people on military considerations. It went to South Korea, it went to Indochina, it went to Israel, it went to places that we thought needed help for military reasons. In the current program there is about as much going to South Korea as there is to India, although the numbers of people involved are enormously different. So that's part of the total complication.

Now, what I would say is the number one imperative is to keep people alive, who otherwise will starve to death, if we can get the food to them; but the more important long-range consideration is let us get on with those agricultural programs to make sure we don't suddenly--we can't control the weather but we can control pumping water and we can control fertilizer to some extent, and we can control new breeds of stock.

MR. BUCKLEY: Well, it is true that India had a couple of good years there. It is unfortunately true that those couple of years would prove relatively insignificant on a graph, and, as a matter of fact, would probably be rather pessimistic in their projections. The fact of the matter is that Russia, for instance, that bid up the price of grain very close to 300 percent in 1972 as a result of its 53rd annual crisis since the socialist revolution, a drought, is still using 50 percent of its people to feed 100 percent.

FR. HESBURGH: That's right.

MR. BUCKLEY: China is using 80 percent of the people, and India's agriculture, as even John Kenneth Galbraith wrote in a series of lectures put into a book which he studiously ignores, shrinks from agricultural progress, largely for ideological reasons. I say shrinks from agricultural--shrinks from absorbing the figures that tend to suggest why it is that the United States, with one-tenth of the world's working force, produces 28 percent of the world's agriculture.

Now, the question I ask is even if we agreed, as I suppose all people would have to agree, that tomorrow's crisis is the one that we have to tend to by waiving all strategic considerations, what do you do about people who ask you about the crisis of day after tomorrow, given that the history of hunger during the last 20 years gives us a very bleak rather than a promising prospect? Have you ever thought of radical alternatives in our dealings?

FR. HESBURGH: I've thought of a lot of radical ones--

MR. BUCKLEY: How radical?

FR. HESBURGH: --but the main radical one is to get people to feed themselves, which can be done. I don't say that in a captious way, because I know it can be done. I've seen it done where people have been given the tools to do it with. We have a whole range of things that can be done. There's only so many--

MR. BUCKLEY: How do you give them the ethos?

FR. HESBURGH: Well, the ethos--I have to say this again, Bill, because I know the figures and I work there, and I've been through all of the programs. The Indian people made an enormous growth in agricultural production through these programs, mainly Rockefeller and the Ford Foundation programs.

MR. BUCKLEY: Point Four stuff?

FR. HESBURGH: No, this was mostly private foundation stuff. We set up all over the world--

MR. BUCKLEY: What did they do, for instance?

FR. HESBURGH: Well, for example, they brought 40 million acres into corn, which they never grew before, because they used to always just eat chapatis made out of wheat.

MR. BUCKLEY: Yes.

FR. HESBURGH: And corn will grow places where wheat... We made a grid of all of India, and said this place is terrible land and you've got to grow sorghum that you can grow almost anywhere. This is great land, but it's acid and it's under water a lot, so grow rice here, and use the new stocks we've delivered from the International Rice Research Institute in Los Baños in the Philippines. It'll multiply your crop by three or four, and that began to be used.

MR. BUCKLEY: Was this your ethos working or singular scientific skills that you alone disposed of? I say by you, Ford and Rockefeller and so on.

FR. HESBURGH: These were both, because what we did, in conjunction with this total program of five basic food grains--They ate grains we don't eat, like millet and sorghum. We feed it to animals, they eat it. Rice, grain, and wheat, of course, are the same. But we took these techniques joined to their farmers, giving them the adequate fertilizer and the adequate drill pumps which would get water on the fields where there wasn't any water, and we set up agricultural and extension units all over India. And as a result of that, we came from a disaster area to an area where we said, "We're going to close down the program. The schools are running, the people are doing it." And then suddenly came this weather setback, the fertilizer setback, and on top of that, the fuel pump setback, and those three things accounted for a little bit more than the annual shortage that is there this year, which is about, in India, I would say between five and ten million tons. If these three things hadn't happened, we wouldn't be in that mess.

MR. BUCKLEY: Well, now, you make--If you'll excuse me, you make it sound terribly easy.

FR. HESBURGH: No, I don't want to oversimplify it; it's difficult.

MR. BUCKLEY: Yes, nor do I want to--

FR. HESBURGH: It's enormously difficult.

MR. BUCKLEY: Nor do I want to belittle your efforts, but it does seem to me that with the resources, say, of the Soviet Union and what we know about the organic advantages of much of their geography, we are entitled to wonder why, after 50 years, they should have traveled from an exporting agricultural nation to an importing agricultural nation.

FR. HESBURGH: I can't--no, no.

MR. BUCKLEY: The ideology figures there somewhere, doesn't it?

FR. HESBURGH: No question. I'm not trying to justify the Soviet Union. They caused the problem, or we caused it with them by selling them that enormous amount of wheat in one bite, which raised the prices three or four times for ourselves and for the world.

But even the Chinese, they want to have labor intensive agriculture and I talked to the best agricultural man I know, Sterling Wortman, who was there recently, and he said their fields are not just cultivated, they're manicured. And they're doing an enormous job. But even that is not enough for India. They need better fertilizer, and they're getting it from Japan when no one else is. They need better kinds of food stocks, and they need more mechanization, I think, although they are labor intensive because they want to be, they have so many people.

But in Rome a couple of weeks ago, I was somewhat infuriated because the Japanese ambassador got up and he--excuse me, the Chinese ambassador got up and he said that this whole problem is America's problem.

MR. BUCKLEY: Yes.

FR. HESBURGH: And he said, "We grow enough wheat and grains and rice to take care of ourselves. We grow all the food we need." "Oh," he said, "we import a little wheat to change the diet somewhat, but we export a comparable amount of rice." Now, that's a lie.

MR. BUCKLEY: Yes.

FR. HESBURGH: Last year, they imported nine million tons of wheat and they exported 1.9 million tons of rice. That's not roughly comparable, 1.9 to 9.

MR. BUCKLEY: No.

FR. HESBURGH: But--

MR. BUCKLEY: As I remember, he made the further point that PL 480 has had the effect of indulging American farmers by maintaining an unnatural price and dumping and, under the circumstances, discouraging the development of agricultural industries in other countries--a point, by the way, which I heard made, for instance, in Thailand. Is this something--Is this a significant point?

FR. HESBURGH: Well, it is true that during a time when we had surpluses we did encourage keeping the prices low by cutting land out of agriculture. We cut down our own agriculture in a sense, and that because grain is available easily, people don't strain to get it. But I must say India has strained, and this very year India has put out \$550 million to buy wheat from us, or food grains from us, and that's \$350 million more than they would have put out two years ago, before the prices went up so high. So they are--And they're rather short on cash.

But I think the fundamental point--

MR. BUCKLEY: You mean in cash they put it out?

FR. HESBURGH: Yes, they put it out in cash. They bought it in hard dollars from us. It's the only way they could get it, and it's the only way they're going to get it from here on out.

MR. BUCKLEY: And is it your point that they ought not to have been required to pay the cash--

FR. HESBURGH: No--

MR. BUCKLEY: --that we should have given them the old-time credits?

FR. HESBURGH: No, I think that to the extent that they can pay, they should; but the fact is that right now we don't have a PL 480 that is significant enough to help them. When you cut your program from 18 million tons down to 3.3 million tons, closer to three in reality because of the new prices, then you give two-thirds of that on military considerations, that leaves the people who are hungry somewhat out in the cold.

But let me say just one more thing because it relates to something you asked earlier. I noticed when I was over in Africa in the Sahelian countries--Mali, Mauritania, Senegal, Niger, Upper Volta, and Chad--I was looking at the starvation there and trying to find, first of all, what is the long-range process to get people out of this mess. And there was a plan existing, sitting there, but no one had really gotten it going. This is the kind of urgency that people lack in these countries at times.

MR. BUCKLEY: A Western plan or an African plan?

FR. HESBURGH: It was actually a UN plan. It was for Africa. Now, the plan

was simply to put a dam on the Senegal River and open up a million acres to agriculture where water would be there under the new drip-method underground irrigation, where it doesn't evaporate in hot climates. It would be there whether they had water or didn't have water because the river's always got water in it.

MR. BUCKLEY: Yes.

FR. HESBURGH: But at the same time, while that was being planned and done, some Chinese came in and they took a small plot of land, 18 acres, and grew enough food on the 18 acres to feed a village, all year round, of 1,000 people. So it can be done if people would get the will to do it.

The one thing I did notice in the Rome conference was that, while there was a lot of political rhetoric which you can write off--that was the circus in the main room and almost all that can be forgotten because it's meaningless and it doesn't help hungry people. But all round that there were other rooms in which the technical people were talking, and there was a great deal of confidence in those rooms, if we get on with this long-range job, we can do something about it. Now, not infinitely. I don't think the population can go on, on an infinite rise, and there's a time when that has to level off. But the fact is it has leveled off in every developed country in the world. And it hasn't leveled off at all in the countries that don't have hope, that are underdeveloped.

Just to illustrate, 45 percent of the total population increase annually in the world comes from five countries, all underdeveloped--India, China, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Indonesia, in about that order. So you can see that what we've got to do really is to start agricultural development as the one prior order of business in all of these underdeveloped countries. And I think we can do that; I think we've got the technology to do it. I think we have to make sure they have the will to do it.

MR. BUCKLEY: Well, let me ask you this. To what extent do we face difficulties that are primarily ideological in nature? We know from the brief experience in Poland when it was permitted to a few peasants to reserve a few acres for their own development that the increase in the production was dramatic, extraordinary. Now, is it, in your experience, a restraint experienced by American diplomats when dealing with countries like India or Bangladesh or whatever to say, "Try free agriculture, try permitting people to produce for their own benefit," or do we feel that this is an intrusion of sorts?

FR. HESBURGH: I think we're at a point in man's situation, Bill, where we can't afford to think of it in terms of intrusion. It's a question of survival.

MR. BUCKLEY: Yes.

FR. HESBURGH: Now, basically the most classic example I know of in land improvement is Taiwan, and the government went in there to--the Chiang Kai-shek government that gets very much maligned. But this they did. They brought from the Mainland a group called the Joint Committee on Rural Reconstruction, the JCRR, which had two American members and three Chinese members and they condensed it, because of the small island, to two Chinese members and one American member, and they completely redid agriculture on that island so that it's completely self-sufficient. For example, when they made the grid of all the land, first of all they got away from absentee tenant farmers, where a man would raise 100 kilos of rice and have to give 95 of them away to the landlord and the government and taxes and warlords and whatever. And they redid the legal structure of holding land. They returned land through land reform to the peasants. They set up complete systemization of agriculture so that where the best thing to grow is pineapples, you ought to start growing pineapples. They started that and they outproduced Hawaii in pineapples in a couple of years. They said this is the best place for rice, and they redid all the water grids so that they would get effective control, turned it over to the farmers. They had farmer centers where the education went on, the extension went on, they got

fertilizer seeds, credit, everything they needed. It has to be a total package. And I think that given that system it can work.

And Taiwan is a classic example of where people lived in utter poverty and worked hard and got very little return today--Well, I went up to one Chinese farmer, just to make it practical, and I said, "What did you have 15 years ago, and what do you have today?" He said, "Fifteen years ago I was living in that shack back there, which is now a pigsty," and, incidentally, he said, "My wife makes \$200 a year raising pigs in that shack," and he said, "We have now a home that is ample for 29 people." They have a big extended family, going back to the grandparents and down to the latest child born. And he said, "I own 6.5 hectares of land," which would be about 20 acres or more. And it was beautifully sown in rice, and he said, "My kids are all at the university; we're all in good health; we're eating fine. I've got a future and he said, "I'm very happy. But it was disaster 20 years ago; today I'm very happy because I'm on my own now."

MR. BUCKLEY: Yes. I share your enthusiasm for the achievements of Taiwan, but it's also true that there were three factors there that are, unfortunately, not easy to duplicate. One is massive American aid; second was the capital that was released by the expropriation of Japanese industry.

FR. HESBURGH: Yes.

MR. BUCKLEY: And third was the revolution in the production of rice, the three of which combined to catapult Taiwan in the direction you're speaking about. But it is also true that the whole notion of local ownership limited to three or four hectares or whatever it is--

FR. HESBURGH: Yes.

MR. BUCKLEY: --still has had these miraculous results. But I still sense that the devotion to socialized agriculture is the principal enemy of agricultural abundance.

FR. HESBURGH: I wouldn't argue with that, Bill. The last--

MR. BUCKLEY: And the question is how best can we put pressure on it.

FR. HESBURGH: I know in India we were away from socialized agriculture, but, again, what you mean exactly by socialized agriculture I don't know.

MR. BUCKLEY: I mean the kind of stuff that goes on in the Soviet Union--

FR. HESBURGH: Yes. Well--

MR. BUCKLEY: --and most of Poland and most of East Europe.

FR. HESBURGH: No one in his right mind--at least I would not try to justify that, I don't believe. And I think it's wrong and I agree with you that the moment you give people something of their own they work harder on it. If it belongs to a big commune, they're not inclined to work that hard. But the interesting point was that Taiwan, while they got massive American aid, was one of the first countries to get completely off American aid.

MR. BUCKLEY: Yes.

FR. HESBURGH: They don't get any American aid.

MR. BUCKLEY: Yes, but they had 10 years of it.

FR. HESBURGH: I know, and that's--But our secret ought to be in every one of these programs to get in, to help and get out. Any program where we're in it forever--

MR. BUCKLEY: But we're now about to go back into India--

FR. HESBURGH: Well, because of the crisis.

MR. BUCKLEY: --for pressing, humane reasons.

FR. HESBURGH: Because of the crisis, Bill. I think actually I have great confidence, given a stabilization of population, which is possible, and it will only come with development, given that development, mainly focused on agriculture and forget about steel mills and atom bombs and all the rest for a while--although I would have to say to you that it wasn't until they got an atom bomb that they were called on by our secretary of state. People know what gets them respect and what doesn't, and that's what drives them to these kinds of things. But, anyway, let's not get into that.

MR. BUCKLEY: Well, no, I think that was a little hit-and-run, so I think we

should get into this idea.

FR. HESBURGH: Okay, fair enough.

(laughter)

MR. BUCKLEY: The fact of the matter is that Dulles was in India and was received indifferently. There seems to be some sort of a tropism that--

FR. HESBURGH: Yes, I guess that's true. It's a very, very complicated kind of--

MR. BUCKLEY: Dulles was not well-received there, and it is complicated. It seems to be a natural and rather enjoyable thing for the Indians to dislike Americans. As a matter of fact, when I was there, which was sort of during the Bangladesh business, I really felt that there was a sense in which I was fulfilling a huge humanitarian need because people like to dislike somebody, and it was so easy to dislike us under the circumstances, and I never saw such happy people--

(laughter)

FR. HESBURGH: Yes.

MR. BUCKLEY: --yes, in virtue of their being able to gratify that very human instinct. But certainly if there's any correlation between philanthropy and gratitude, it is absolutely destroyed by India.

FR. HESBURGH: No, and actually I think the worst thing in the world is to try to get either friendship or gratitude or anything else from philanthropy. I think you do it because it's the thing to do and because you have a sense of humanity, but I think the philosophy ought to be get in, put them on their feet, and get out.

MR. BUCKLEY: Yes, I agree, but I also think this, that we may be approaching, and correct me if you disagree, a point at which the American people say, "Look, such are our own difficulties that to translate the homilies of Christian doctrine into international economic conduct, a *pace* Barbara Ward, is impossible."

FR. HESBURGH: Yes.

MR. BUCKLEY: I mean, things like the dollar devaluation happen, you know, which was simply not a subject to which Saint Matthew addressed himself.

FR. HESBURGH: Yes.

MR. BUCKLEY: And, under the circumstances, we've got to make certain that people whom we bail out proceed along extrasuperstitious, nonideological grounds to help themselves.

But before we go to the panel, I would like to ask you this, since you are a Catholic priest. Is there a sense in which in your concern for starvation you feel that your commitment to Catholic doctrine is a genuine impediment?

FR. HESBURGH: Not really. I think it's the other way around, Bill. I feel that--If you're talking about population control--

MR. BUCKLEY: Oh, sure.

FR. HESBURGH: I think one has to say that the population cannot grow exponentially or geometrically. It just cannot do that.

MR. BUCKLEY: Yes.

FR. HESBURGH: Just to give you an example--

MR. BUCKLEY: Therefore it has to be controlled.

FR. HESBURGH: So it has to be controlled. The argument gets to how do you control it? And I've spent a good deal of my life encouraging means to find a wide variety of means of controlling it. We have a number of limited, fairly primitive, means at the moment, with somewhat bad effects. But I honestly believe, maybe because I spent so much time in scientific research with the Science Board 12 years, that I really think that it's possible, and we are spending a great deal of money in many of the top research centers today, to try to find a whole spectrum of means, any four or five of which would be agreeable to any religion, I think, and any culture. It isn't just a--But I have to say that if you look at it just pragmatically today, at the actual situation--Let me just give you a few interesting

comparisons that I think say that it's a matter of development and hope that leads to control of population, rather than religion and culture being the overriding things that affect that.

For example, take two Catholic countries, if you will--although we may argue about how Catholic they are. Italy and Spain have exactly the same slow population growth, doubling every 88 years roughly, as Sweden and Russia, hardly Catholic countries. Or take three Catholic countries that are underdeveloped--Paraguay, Haiti, what's another, Bolivia.

MR. BUCKLEY: Yes.

FR. HESBURGH: They have exactly the same fast growth, doubling every 22 years, as three Moslem countries--Syria, Morocco, Pakistan. And no matter how you study this question of population control, it comes down to one thing, that every developed country in the world controls its population, including ours. We're practically at zero growth right now. And every underdeveloped country in the world does not control its population. And there is something in the makeup of man when he starts getting hope he finds ways of controlling his population because he isn't faced with what he is faced with in the underdeveloped countries today; for example, Sahel in Africa, where I asked the paramedics, "How many of these children die before the age of five?" And they said, "About 60 percent of them." I said, "Every year?" And they said, "Every year, famine or no famine." If that's the way life is, that you have to have eight children to keep four or three, there's not much point in saying, "I'm going to stop at three," because you wind up with none.

MR. BUCKLEY: No, I think what you say is, of course, correct, but I intended to licit your views on a touchier point--

FR. HESBURGH: Which is?

MR. BUCKLEY: --which is, do you consider it a responsibility of the government of the United States, insofar as it accepts the responsibility of spreading technology--

FR. HESBURGH: Yes.

MR. BUCKLEY: --to spread not only a positive technology about how to raise more food but a negative technology about how to raise fewer people, or do you feel that what is critical there is the means by which the government authorizes the negative technology?

FR. HESBURGH: Yes, our government, in many places in the world, and our private organizations, have tried like mad to bring population down in underdeveloped countries without, at the same time, working for development. It was like Sears Roebuck throwing out gadgets and saying that's going to solve the problem. It never worked. It never worked because people didn't have the motivation, the same as agriculture wouldn't work if people didn't get any return from their crop.

MR. BUCKLEY: Why isn't starvation a motivation?

FR. HESBURGH: It's beginning to be a motivation, but actually, curiously enough, Bill, and I have the statistics; I won't bore you with them, but there are statistics on this that even though people are starving, they continue to procreate. I suppose because they figure everything's going to be dead, and they might start--It's like the first thing you do after the plague.

MR. BUCKLEY: Isn't it a form of listlessness? Isn't it?

FR. HESBURGH: I don't know. Not having ever been involved in it, I can't get into it, but I don't think it's listlessness as much as hopelessness. People don't have much hope. They have a life where maybe all they have is their family, so they don't think much about what the controls are in the family.

MR. BUCKLEY: But isn't it also true that people's experience with a family has, in all but extreme circumstances, led them to believe that an individual human being always creates something more than his own exact needs, and therefore is a net economic benefit?

FR. HESBURGH: I guess that's probably at the bottom of their thinking. I wouldn't argue with that, Bill, especially in an agricultural economy where you're labor intensive. If you don't have kids to put out in the field, you don't get the crop in or you don't get it planted, even.

MR. BUCKLEY: Yes.

FR. HESBURGH: You realize, everyone of those little rice plants being put individually into the ground--

MR. BUCKLEY: By hand, yes.

FR. HESBURGH: --and being cared for, it's really a--I can remember working in corn fields out in the West when I was in the novitiate, training to join the order, and we used to go out in those days--I don't suppose they do it anymore--and we'd plant four kernels of corn in every little hill, and then we'd come back once they came up, and we'd pull out the three weakest and leave the strong one. That was labor intensive, because we were slave labor at that time, but when you see the agriculture in these countries, there's no question about it, the whole family's out there working all the time.

MR. BUCKLEY: And therefore the larger the family, the--

FR. HESBURGH: It's a kind of a technique, but also don't ever forget the fact that more than half of them die before the age of five. That is a terrible--

MR. BUCKLEY: Yes, but that's not from starvation.

FR. HESBURGH: No, from mostly intestinal disease and other things.

MR. BUCKLEY: Yes, yes.

FR. HESBURGH: But it's a variety of cases. Starvation is--

MR. BUCKLEY: Concerning which there's fatalism, right?

FR. HESBURGH: Yes, and they just say, "You know, it happens that way."

MR. BUCKLEY: Yes.

FR. HESBURGH: People forget that millions of people have starved in our lifetimes in China.

MR. BUCKLEY: Yes.

FR. HESBURGH: Not their lifetimes, but ours.

MR. BUCKLEY: Yes, yes. So Malthus was truly a prophet, wasn't he?

FR. HESBURGH: I think if you get into the geometric progression--I don't know that anybody can say this world can only sustain this many people.

MR. BUCKLEY: He didn't say that.

FR. HESBURGH: I know, but he said that the population is going to outrun the productivity, and I don't think that's--When you get into geometric, I would agree with him, geometric progression. But I think as a certain stable population, what it is or isn't I don't know, but I can tell you one thing. There will be close to eight billion people around in the year 2000, no matter what we do today, because that's the way the pipeline is already set up and working, and there's just no way out of that one. Whoever talks about demography will tell you that somewhere between six and eight billion people is what the world is going to have, so we must get on with this agriculture, at least at that level.

MR. BUCKLEY: I'm rather surprised that somebody of your background should accept figures so unyielding.

FR. HESBURGH: Well--

MR. BUCKLEY: For one thing, one doesn't know, you know, whether between now and then God will clear his throat--

FR. HESBURGH: Yes.

MR. BUCKLEY: --or whether between now and then, for instance, some scientist will discover some highly useful mechanism which will make the female sterile in the absence of an antidote.

FR. HESBURGH: Yes.

MR. BUCKLEY: They talk about that. That could change things.

FR. HESBURGH: I know, I know those programs. I don't think--again I'm taking everything. Given the state of the art, given the number of people of today, give the fact even if they had one child and no more--

MR. BUCKLEY: *Ceteris paribus*, as we used to say before Vatican II.
FR. HESBURGH: That's right. *Ceteris paribus*, that's right. *Ceteris paribus*. Nothing is that absolute, Bill. I didn't mean it to be that absolute, but, I mean, looking at all the elements involved--
MR. BUCKLEY: That's where we're headed.
FR. HESBURGH: --including the state of the art, that is most likely; if you were going to make a good, honest bet with a great chance of being right, that would be the best bet to make.
MR. BUCKLEY: Mr. Robert Kuttner is with *The Washington Post*. Mr. Kuttner.
MR. KUTTNER: Father Hesburgh, to the extent that Spain and Italy have low population growth rates, isn't that to the extent that they're not very good Catholics?
MR. BUCKLEY: Contumacious?
FR. HESBURGH: Oh, I wouldn't say that. That's a judgment I wouldn't want to make.
MR. KUTTNER: What are the figures, though, on what kinds of birth control are popular in those countries?
FR. HESBURGH: I don't know, actually. All I know is I've been looking at the total figures and the ranges of growth, and I found those figures emerged as rather startling to me when I found them. I didn't get into how they got that way. I would guess they probably use most of the means available, whatever they happen to be in those countries. I don't think it would be too unlike what are used in this country. That would be my guess.
MR. KUTTNER: Yes. On the question of socialized agriculture being an enemy of abundance, which country has the relatively more efficient agricultural system, China or India?
FR. HESBURGH: Oh, China by far.
MR. KUTTNER: So which--
FR. HESBURGH: China by far.
MR. KUTTNER: So which way does ideology being the enemy of abundance cut?
FR. HESBURGH: Well, ideology there--I wouldn't say ideology as much as organization. The Chinese are enormously organized. Every single person is out working in those fields. Even the university students have to go out and work in the fields.
MR. BUCKLEY: Well, it takes eight people to feed ten--
FR. HESBURGH: Of course.
MR. BUCKLEY: --in China.
FR. HESBURGH: And they have to keep people busy.
MR. BUCKLEY: And your point is it takes more than that in India.
FR. HESBURGH: That's right. Well, I would say in India, for example, if you want to make a more startling comparison--India has exactly the same acreage as we have in agriculture and produces just half as much. On the other hand, if you put one pound of fertilizer on an Indian field, you'll get 10 pounds of food out of it under normal conditions; you put one pound in Iowa, you'd probably get three or four pounds more because we use so much fertilizer. We're so mechanized.
One thing also I just want to drop in here, because Bill and I didn't get to it, and I don't want to be contentious about it. But we are enormously blessed by having Kansas, Iowa, Indiana, Illinois, at that latitude and that kind of land, and with a great agricultural tradition and having used them right. Technology is a large part of it, but those lands--If we ever had a change in weather out there, the world is--
MR. BUCKLEY: To quote myself, you make it sound like the Bordeaux country.
FR. HESBURGH: That's right, for wine.
MR. BUCKLEY: In point of fact I think specialists will tell you that there are other parts of the world that are identically blessed.
FR. HESBURGH: That's right.
MR. BUCKLEY: That it's what we've done to Iowa and Minnesota and so on and so forth.

FR. HESBURGH: We're using them well, that's right; but when the Russians tried to open up their vast lands, they found they didn't have the right soil, they didn't have the right rainfall. The growing season was too short. We are just awfully lucky, although I grant that the Iowa, Kansas, Indiana farmer works pretty hard. Having worked on some of those farms, I guarantee that's true. It's a great blessing, though.
MR. KUTTNER: But you were saying before that the key factor that made the difference in India, really, was the rise in the price of petroleum.
FR. HESBURGH: Well, three things I said. One thing is the weather, and that's a big thing.
MR. KUTTNER: Right.
FR. HESBURGH: That amounted up, in the Maharashtra region, which was hit the hardest with draught--That really amounted to about five to six million tons, and that's a big part of the shortage right there. The second thing--Norman Borlaug, the Nobel prize winner for peace, said that the people were standing in line with little tin pails for fuel for their pumps, and they stood there for days, but there wasn't any fuel. It cost too much, it wasn't even imported, and they didn't get the water in their fields. And that was another couple of million tons of food lost there. The third thing, the big thing, was, of course, the fertilizer. It's hard to say what happened at that point, but, you know, there wasn't much publicity in this country that Mr. Dunlop took the controls off fertilizer on two conditions: one, that we didn't raise our prices too much at home, and secondly that we didn't make any more export contracts from October through June. And we're one of the biggest exporters of fertilizer in the world. And that had a disastrous effect on--
MR. KUTTNER: But that's petroleum, too.
FR. HESBURGH: Yes. Sure, of course it was. The Japanese did exactly the same thing. They went in to making automobiles and about the only ones they were--They cancelled out some of their contracts and they also said we're going to export fertilizer only to China because they give us petroleum. Now that had a big effect, an enormous effect. And there's been a lot of arguments about how much this amounted to, but the fact is the amount we use on domestic uses, you can almost say quasi-frivolous uses--I can say that since I don't have time to play golf--but cemeteries and things of this sort, it's about the size of the shortage, roughly a million and a half tons.
MR. BUCKLEY: Incidentally, to spell out, if I may, some of the implications of Mr. Kuttner's question, I don't think anybody denies that up to a certain point slave labor can be very efficient.
FR. HESBURGH: No question. I was--
MR. BUCKLEY: I mean, John Kenneth Galbraith, in his book on China, says there used to be a problem in China when people would come from the country to the city because you got higher wages. He said that problem is settled. It's not permitted. And so, under the circumstances, you get as many farmers as you want, but you end up, even in spite of that extraordinary efficiency, requiring eight people to feed ten Chinese. And this contrasts rather vividly with... Now, the Indians are relatively free by Chinese standards.
FR. HESBURGH: That's right.
MR. BUCKLEY: But they're terribly disorganized.
FR. HESBURGH: That's it, and they have the darndest bureaucracy.
MR. BUCKLEY: And that sort of a playboy socialism.
(laughter)
FR. HESBURGH: Well, and the bureaucracy has got to be--I've often said that the government inherited all of the vices of the British and none of the virtues. I mean, the bureaucracy is just extraordinary.
MR. BUCKLEY: Yes.
FR. HESBURGH: And I think, really--I like to feel I'm a friend to everyone in the world, or I'd like to be, and if I were talking to a good Indian friend, I would say, "You've got to get rid of some of this bureaucracy,"

because without it, there's no question, we would have had more fertilizer plants there and they would have been more self-sufficient in fertilizer. But I was part of that exercise and it was just extraordinarily difficult to get a fertilizer plant started, and then when Exxon finally got some in there, they pulled out. They got completely out of there because it was just too much paperwork.

MR. BUCKLEY: Yes, just too much paperwork, yes. Ms. Judith Miller is with the *Progressive* magazine. Ms. Miller.

MS. MILLER: Father, I can remember the good old days of the meatless Friday, which has been eliminated as a requirement for good Catholics. Recently many Americans have called for other Americans to refrain from eating meat and to fast. Do you support this kind of call, and perhaps a reinstatement of the meatless Friday? And if you do, is there any guarantee that the meat that we don't eat will be translated into more grain for the hungry of this world?

FR. HESBURGH: Yes. Judith, it's a complicated question and I'll try to simplify the answer, but it's not going to be too easy to do. One, the reason behind this is it takes roughly 10 to 12 pounds of grain to make one pound of meat, depending on how much you fatten them and force-feed them. Secondly, there's no linkage at the moment to say that if we give up our pound of beef a month that the 10 million tons liberated, if every American were to do that, are going to get to starving people. That's a whole other mechanism. Thirdly, you've got the problem of the people who raise beef. They would shoot me, if they were within shooting distance at the moment, for even talking about this, because they have the problem of making a living, too. But I think market mechanisms--You can't just shut a valve off and on. It takes time.

Now, if the American people were to say, to get down to the heart of your question, "Are we willing to cut down on our lifestyle a little bit to make it possible to link up this saving to the people who are in need?" my guess is the American people would do it in a moment. I give you one example. The Tuesday before Thanksgiving at Notre Dame, we said to our students, "You can eat in the South dining hall if you want the regular meal. If you want to do something for the people who are hungry in the world, you can eat in the North dining hall. Now, in the North dining hall that night, you're going to get a bowl of rice and a cup of tea, period. No sugar, no cream, no lemon, nothing. Just a cup of tea, right out of the pot. And you will save, for every 1,000 who do this, \$1500, and we'll send it over to CARE or Catholic Relief or World Church Service or whatever is working in this area, or OXFAM." And the interesting thing was, with just that announcement--no great propaganda, no big deal--more than half of the student body that night ate the rice and tea, and had their money sent to--They could check off where they wanted it sent.

Now, that's a--I don't think our people eat less than others; I think we have a lot of big eaters at Notre Dame, really. But the fact is that without much fuss, except what's been coming out in the papers, they've become sensitized to the problem that people are hungry, they're willing to do it. And, what's more, they've practically insisted we do this on a regular basis now. How often I don't know. I'm going to let them worry about that; it's their food and their money.

MS. MILLER: But you have the mechanism for translating that into savings, whereas the government--Do you feel the government now has a mechanism to do this?

FR. HESBURGH: The government could--I had a letter from the President just this morning, as a matter of fact, an answer to the request that we send more food. And he said he realizes the government can't do everything. We have all kinds of problems, inflation and shortage of stocks and all the rest, but he said he would be 100 percent behind anything that all the voluntary agencies might do to get at the problem of feeding people who are hungry, and that he really blessed all those efforts and said the government

would do its part and he hoped that we could mobilize forces to do our part. MR. BUCKLEY: Mr. Frank Donatelli is with the Young Americans for Freedom. Mr. Donatelli.

MR. DONATELLI: Yes, Father, I'd like to return to what Mr. Buckley was discussing earlier, and that was this feeling among the American people, "Look, we've helped these guys so often and as soon as we leave the situation gets worse again." To what extent are we reasonably justified in putting strings, if I can use that term, on our aid? A few years ago it was called cultural imperialism, but you were saying maybe it's necessary.

FR. HESBURGH: Yes. It depends on what the strings are.

MR. BUCKLEY: Twenty years ago it was called the Kem amendment.

FR. HESBURGH: That's right. I remember that, the C-A-M. I don't think that you should have a lot of strings, but I think you should say that we are going to, with you--since it's your country and your people and your land--work out a program but we'd like to begin by saying at the end of this program, in X number of years, we're not going to be here anymore. And we're not going to ask something of you that isn't possible to do. But we're going to say we're coming in at this level and going out at this level.

I can recall, for example, when the Ford Foundation decided to help Notre Dame. And they said, "We will give you X number of dollars this year, X minus this, this year," and at the end of five years they were gone. But we lifted the whole place up during that period because it gave us the extra impulse we needed to do it. I think you can do that in agriculture. I think just the fact that you put most of your help in agriculture rather than in steel mills and national airlines and all the silly things people do, or on armaments. The thing that always impresses me when people say--and I'm not just talking about the U.S., I'm talking about the whole world community--that we simply can't finance this, there's too much money involved, I just remind you we spent \$203 billion last year on armaments. When I say we, I mean the whole world, including some underdeveloped countries, like India.

MR. BUCKLEY: But really that surely is irrelevant, isn't it? In the first place, for so long as one attaches extra-material purposes to life, the first of those is liberty--

FR. HESBURGH: Right.

MR. BUCKLEY: --in which is included spiritual freedom.

FR. HESBURGH: That's right.

MR. BUCKLEY: So there's no sacrifice too great. In the second place, we've proved, haven't we, that if we were drastically to reduce the amount of money spent on armaments, it would not necessarily follow that those resources would be devoted to the solution of such problems as you point to.

FR. HESBURGH: No, I grant that, Bill, but I would say--Suppose we just took a little bite. Suppose we said to the Russians, if we could ever find out how much they're spending, which I doubt. But, anyway, let's make a stab at it. "We'll knock off five percent if you will. You pick your countries to help, we'll pick ours."

MR. BUCKLEY: Oh, I'm all for it, sure, sure. But we've been doing that since 1947, and, you know, one of these days they may come around. The only consolation that we know of is that it hurts them more than it hurts us.

FR. HESBURGH: No question. And also it seems to me that more and more the world that these folks are going to be living in, these students, is going to be a unified, small world à la satellite of Barbara Ward's *Spaceship Earth*. We can't go on thinking of the world in these restrictive nationalistic terms.

Now, what I've suggested for their generation, and I wish there were some way of making it come true, is say to every young person in the world, including young Russians and young Chinese and young Indians, "Would you like to be a citizen of the world as well as a citizen of India, China, U.S., U.S.S.R.?" I think we'd be surprised, our generation, how many of them would say, "Yes, I'm willing to do something to be a world citizen."

MR. BUCKLEY: Thank you, Father Hesburgh, thank you, ladies and gentlemen of the panel, thank you all.