Negative: Cargo Preference for Food Aid – Good

By Katherine Baker

***Resolved: The United States federal government should substantially reform its foreign aid.***

Status Quo policy on US food aid to foreign countries requires at least 50% of the food to be delivered on US-flagged vessels, a policy known as Cargo Preferences for Food Aid, or CPFA. The CPFA requirement used to be 75% US ships, but that was lowered to 50% in 2012 and lobbyists for the maritime industry are successfully telling Congress not to lower it any further. The Affirmative's theory is that CPFA slows down and increases the price of aid, creating harm to hungry people in poor countries.

One Negative strategy you could run would be a counterplan to simply cancel all food aid (under the theory that the resolution requires "reform," and cancellation isn't reform. We expect to have a brief on that topic later.) The other Neg strategy is to argue from this brief that food stockpiled in warehouses solves for the delay problem, and that famine impact estimates are exaggerated or non-existent. And taking business away from the US shipping fleet will create disadvantages to our military, lost jobs in our economy, and possibly political backlash that could even cut food aid long term.

NEGATIVE: Cargo Preferences for Food Aid – good 3

NEGATIVE PHILOSOPHY / OPENING QUOTES 3

Can’t narrow focus to just food aid 3

INHERENCY 3

1. Warehouses solve 3

Aid storage warehouses solve for the supposed problem of cargo preference delays 3

HARMS / SIGNIFICANCE 3

Number of people in crisis overexaggerated. 3

“Cargo preference equals delays and high costs” Response: Aid storage warehouses solve 4

Lack of food aid did not trigger famine 4

DISADVANTAGES 4

1. US National Security 4

Link: Cargo preference protects our national defense 4

Link: Helps the military 4

Link: US controlled food shipments important for national security 5

Link: Reduce military sealift capacity 5

Link: Why target struggling merchant marines 5

Brink: Past reduction in cargo preference resulted in US flag fleet decline 5

Impact: US Merchant Marine vital for US military efforts 5

Impact; Ships crucial for emergency sealift capacity 6

2. Decreased food aid 6

Link: Food Aid needs special interests 6

Link: special interests prevent spending cuts 6

Brink: Cuts do get proposed 6

Impact: Large cuts kill 7

3. Jobs 7

Link and Impact: Over 33,000 jobs rely solely on transport of US food aid 7

Link and Impact: Shipments of food aid support 33,000 US jobs 7

“Few jobs would be lost” Response: Does not consider multiplier affect 7

4. US food shipments harm farmers 8

Big link: AFF plan = increased amount of food aid sent from the US 8

Link: ‘Foreign food aid hurts countries” example: Haiti 8

Link: US Food aid delivery hurts farmers, and nations 8

Link: American food aid competes with local farmers 8

Link: Food aid drives down price for local farmers 8

Link: Tons of aid translates to lower economic growth 9

Impact: Free food slows recovery 9

Impact: US Food aid destroys local economies 9

Impact: Excessive food aid doesn’t help people 9

5. Increased food aid shipments = increased violence 10

Link: AFF plan = increased amount of food aid sent from the US 10

Link: Food aid shipments stolen 10

Impact: Increase in food aid increases violence 10

NEGATIVE: Cargo Preferences for Food Aid – good

NEGATIVE PHILOSOPHY / OPENING QUOTES

Can’t narrow focus to just food aid

Sasha Chavkin, 2013. (International Consortium of Investigative Journalists) “How shipping unions sunk food aid reform” November 6, 2013 <https://www.publicintegrity.org/2013/11/06/13687/how-shipping-unions-sunk-food-aid-reform> (brackets added)

The loudest debate about food aid reform in Congress focuses on its impact at home. Opponents of the reform emphasize American jobs and military readiness. “You can’t look at this thing as if you’re just debating the Food for Peace program,” said [Ed] Wytkind [President] of the AFL Transportation Trades Department [of the AFL-CIO]. “The debate has to be more comprehensive.”

INHERENCY

1. Warehouses solve

Aid storage warehouses solve for the supposed problem of cargo preference delays

Maritime Executive, 2013. (The Maritime Executive publishing company was founded in 1997. Its mission is to provide industry leaders with in-depth analysis of maritime issues and to report the news affecting the global maritime community.) “Food for Peace Program Remains in Forefront of U.S. Maritime Issues” 2013-07-16 <https://maritime-executive.com/article/Food-for-Peace-Program-Remains-in-Forefront-of-US-Maritime-Issues-2013-07-16>

At the same time, USAID has for years ignored U.S. maritime industry and other government authorities input and advice as to how to make the program more efficient and effective. USAID sees the U.S. flag industry as a direct impediment to their overall program operation and administration. USAID unfairly blames the U.S. maritime industry for high transportation costs and excessive delays in getting relief cargoes to the people in need. However, they fail to mention that USAID maintains five international food aid storage warehouses for quick response. Meanwhile, the Office of the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR) just released a report on June 27 that found “poor coordination, waste, and mismanagement” of USAID’s agricultural programs in the region.

HARMS / SIGNIFICANCE

Number of people in crisis overexaggerated.

Rasna Warah, 2012. (columnist with Kenya’s Daily Nation newspaper, is the author of the recently published book Red Soil and Roasted Maize: Selected essays and articles on contemporary Kenya) “Don’t feed the world? How food aid can do more harm than good” January 2, 2012 <http://www.redpepper.org.uk/dont-feed-the-world/>

The UN uses a scale developed by the Food and Agricultural Organisation-managed Food Security and Nutrition Analysis Unit to determine levels of food insecurity. This ranges from ‘generally food secure’ to ‘famine/humanitarian catastrophe’. The unit’s estimates for the number of Somali people ‘in crisis’ in the period August–September 2011 indicate that less than half a million people – not the four million cited by the press – were experiencing famine. About 3.5 million people were experiencing some form of food insecurity but they were not dying of starvation as widely reported. And some of the food insecurity was related to inflation and rising food prices, not necessarily to drought.

“Cargo preference equals delays and high costs” Response: Aid storage warehouses solve

Maritime Executive, 2013. (The Maritime Executive publishing company was founded in 1997. Its mission is to provide industry leaders with in-depth analysis of maritime issues and to report the news affecting the global maritime community.) “Food for Peace Program Remains in Forefront of U.S. Maritime Issues” 2013-07-16 <https://maritime-executive.com/article/Food-for-Peace-Program-Remains-in-Forefront-of-US-Maritime-Issues-2013-07-16>

At the same time, USAID has for years ignored U.S. maritime industry and other government authorities input and advice as to how to make the program more efficient and effective. USAID sees the U.S. flag industry as a direct impediment to their overall program operation and administration. USAID unfairly blames the U.S. maritime industry for high transportation costs and excessive delays in getting relief cargoes to the people in need. However, they fail to mention that USAID maintains five international food aid storage warehouses for quick response. Meanwhile, the Office of the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR) just released a report on June 27 that found “poor coordination, waste, and mismanagement” of USAID’s agricultural programs in the region.

Lack of food aid did not trigger famine

Henri Astier, 2006. (BBC news reporter.) “Can aid do more harm than good?” 1 February 2006. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/4185550.stm>

Take the case of Zambia, which at the time banned aid because it worried about genetically-modified US maize. Donors were aghast. "Leaders who refuse to let their people have food, should be put in the dock for the most serious crimes against humanity," the US ambassador to Zambia said. But then something strange happened: nothing. Cutting off supplies did not trigger famine.

DISADVANTAGES

1. US National Security

Link: Cargo preference protects our national defense

Skip Witunski, 2017. (national president of the Navy League of the United States.) “The U.S. Merchant Marine serves an integral role in the Food for Peace program” April 28, 2017. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/the-us-merchant-marine-serves-an-integral-role-in-the-food-for-peace-program/2017/04/28/5777f79a-2b49-11e7-9081-f5405f56d3e4_story.html?utm_term=.0366dba034c7>

Our nation’s cargo-preference programs, including the Food for Peace program, are instrumental to sustaining the U.S. Merchant Marine and maintaining our national defense sealift capability, with the attendant billions saved. The minor savings from cutting cargo preference must be viewed with the huge cost of acquiring sealift capability by other means and the damage to our U.S. Merchant Marine that would occur.

Link: Helps the military

Samuel Oakford, 2017. (Freelance journalist based in New York, and regular IRIN contributor.) “The battle over the future of US food aid” 8 August 2017 <https://www.irinnews.org/analysis/2017/08/08/battle-over-future-us-food-aid>

Cargo preference law promotes both national security and commercial interests: it is intended to ensure logistics capacity for the military and benefit the maritime industry. Only 120 vessels from some 40 companies are eligible to carry US food aid.

Link: US controlled food shipments important for national security

Patricia Zengerle, 2017. (Reuters reporter) “Exclusive: Trump drops plans for order tightening food aid shipping rules – sources” JUNE 30, 2017 <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-trump-aid/exclusive-trump-drops-plans-for-order-tightening-food-aid-shipping-rules-sources-idUSKBN19L2VU>

Supporters say Trump’s initiative would not only create new U.S. jobs in the shipping industry but that U.S.-controlled food shipments are important for national security because the U.S. fleet could be transferred to the military in case of a conflict.

Link: Reduce military sealift capacity

Sasha Chavkin, 2013. (International Consortium of Investigative Journalists) “How shipping unions sunk food aid reform” November 6, 2013 <https://www.publicintegrity.org/2013/11/06/13687/how-shipping-unions-sunk-food-aid-reform> (brackets added)

The other main argument against the changes is that they would reduce military sealift capacity by driving U.S.-flagged commercial ships known as the merchant marine out of business. Advocates say that in Iraq and Afghanistan, 90 percent of shipping supplies were carried by the merchant marine. “If you start hollowing out the U.S. merchant marine, and you start with eight to 10 ships, its going to call into question whether merchant marine operators have a viable future in the U.S.,” [Ed] Wytkind said. [President of the AFL Transportation Trades Department of the AFL-CIO]

Link: Why target struggling merchant marines

Sasha Chavkin, 2013. (International Consortium of Investigative Journalists) “How shipping unions sunk food aid reform” November 6, 2013 <https://www.publicintegrity.org/2013/11/06/13687/how-shipping-unions-sunk-food-aid-reform> (Wytkind is President of the AFL Transportation Trades Department of the AFL-CIO)

Food aid reform advocates are trying to get part of the changes that were rejected in June back into the farm bill or the FY 2014 budget. Their current goal is for USAID to have the option of spending up to 20 percent of the Food for Peace program, in addition to 20 percent of overall food aid that is already in more flexible programs, on cash aid or local purchases. Shipping unions and their allies question why the struggling merchant marines should be a target for reductions, and are gathering their strength to ensure that enough liberal Democrats line up once again to sink the proposal. “We’re not shy,” Wytkind said. “All these battles are all about the same issue, when you start getting into reform debates like this. They’re about whether we’re going to have a viable US transportation industry that supports good middle-class jobs.”

Brink: Past reduction in cargo preference resulted in US flag fleet decline

Skip Witunski, 2017. (The writer is national president of the Navy League of the United States.) “The U.S. Merchant Marine serves an integral role in the Food for Peace program” April 28, 2017. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/the-us-merchant-marine-serves-an-integral-role-in-the-food-for-peace-program/2017/04/28/5777f79a-2b49-11e7-9081-f5405f56d3e4_story.html?utm_term=.0366dba034c7>

The U.S.-flag international fleet has declined steadily in recent years because of a 2012 reduction in cargo preference for Food for Peace. We should reinstate the 75 percent preference for international food aid, reversing the damage to a national capability through shortsighted savings.

Impact: US Merchant Marine vital for US military efforts

Skip Witunski, 2017. (The writer is national president of the Navy League of the United States.) “The U.S. Merchant Marine serves an integral role in the Food for Peace program” April 28, 2017. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/the-us-merchant-marine-serves-an-integral-role-in-the-food-for-peace-program/2017/04/28/5777f79a-2b49-11e7-9081-f5405f56d3e4_story.html?utm_term=.0366dba034c7>

The U.S. Merchant Marine is a valuable national asset that has always been there for the United States in times of war and national emergency. The U.S.-flag commercial fleet carried more than 90 percent of the materiel to Iraq and Afghanistan, and the Defense Department has repeatedly stated that its reliance on this public-private partnership saves American taxpayers billions of dollars.

Impact; Ships crucial for emergency sealift capacity

Maritime Executive, 2013. (The Maritime Executive publishing company was founded in 1997. Its mission is to provide industry leaders with in-depth analysis of maritime issues.) “Food for Peace Program Remains in Forefront of U.S. Maritime Issues” 2013-07-16 <https://maritime-executive.com/article/Food-for-Peace-Program-Remains-in-Forefront-of-US-Maritime-Issues-2013-07-16>

Currently, the U.S. food aid portion for cargo preference is approximately 11% with military cargoes making up about 85% and civilian agency cargo (such as Export-Import Bank financed cargoes) coming in at 4%. With the continual draw-down of U.S. war efforts throughout the world, military cargo is steadily decreasing thus putting even more pressure on the other components of cargo preference. Many of these ships and crews are the very same that the Department of Defense depends upon for wartime and emergency sealift capabilities. AMC continues to press forward to make the case and coordinate maritime industry efforts to keep our U.S. food aid program and all other cargo preference programs in place.

1. Decreased food aid

Link: Food Aid needs special interests

Samuel Oakford, 2017. (Freelance journalist based in New York, and regular IRIN contributor. IRIN delivers unique, authoritative and independent reporting from the frontlines of crises to inspire and produce a more effective humanitarian response.) “The battle over the future of US food aid” 8 August 2017 <https://www.irinnews.org/analysis/2017/08/08/battle-over-future-us-food-aid>

Moving away from in-kind food aid threatens the revenue of both shipping and farming industries. Schoeneman, who spoke in June on behalf of industry lobby USA Maritime, urged Congress to “ignore the siren calls for ‘greater flexibility’ from the so-called ‘food aid reform advocates’.” He said further reforms could upset carefully intertwined domestic interests that ensure food aid survives. Politically, the argument goes, food aid needs special interests to avoid being cut.

Link: special interests prevent spending cuts

Samuel Oakford, 2017. (Freelance journalist based in New York, and regular IRIN contributor. IRIN delivers unique, authoritative and independent reporting from the frontlines of crises to inspire and produce a more effective humanitarian response.) “The battle over the future of US food aid” 8 August 2017 <https://www.irinnews.org/analysis/2017/08/08/battle-over-future-us-food-aid>

“For more than 60 years, this domestic support has shielded Food for Peace from harsh spending cuts and efforts to significantly change the program,” Schoeneman noted.

Brink: Cuts do get proposed

Jeremy Konyndyk, 2017. (senior policy fellow at the Center for Global Development, previously served as director for foreign disaster assistance at USAid.) “'Trump's aid budget is breathtakingly cruel – cuts like these will kill people'’ May 31, 2017. <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development-professionals-network/2017/may/31/trumps-aid-budget-is-breathtakingly-cruel-cuts-like-these-will-kill-people>

President Trump’s new budget plans take particular aim at foreign aid spending, proposing an overall cut [of 32%](http://uk.reuters.com/article/us-usa-budget-foreign-aid-idUKKBN18J2DC) to all civilian foreign affairs spending. Facing extensive criticism from Republicans and Democrats alike for the budget’s draconian vision, Trump’s budget chief Mick Mulvaney defended the proposal by arguing it should be judged not “[by how much money we spend, but by how many people we actually help](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/05/22/us/politics/trump-budget-cuts.html).”

Impact: Large cuts kill

Trumps proposed cuts would cut nearly 30 million from food aid

Jeremy Konyndyk, 2017. (senior policy fellow at the Center for Global Development, and previously served as the director for foreign disaster assistance at USAid.) “'Trump's aid budget is breathtakingly cruel – cuts like these will kill people'’ May 31, 2017. <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development-professionals-network/2017/may/31/trumps-aid-budget-is-breathtakingly-cruel-cuts-like-these-will-kill-people>

Let’s not sugarcoat this: humanitarian aid is lifesaving assistance, so cuts like these will kill people. As the head of foreign disaster response for the Obama administration, I had to weigh up budget trade-offs every year, knowing that saving lives in one region meant we would save fewer elsewhere. But I never faced trade-offs this extreme. Laying waste to US relief aid would be hard to defend even if the world were in decent shape. But proposing this amidst the worst slate of humanitarian crises in recent decades is breathtakingly cruel. This budget would cut nearly 30 million people from food aid rolls even as aid groups struggle to hold off four potential famines. It would undermine refugee aid even as global refugee numbers hit peaks not seen since the second world war and new South Sudanese refugees flee their country by the tens of thousands. And it would obliterate funding for the health, clean water, nutrition, and shelter programmes that keep victims of conflicts and natural disasters alive.

1. Jobs

Link and Impact: Over 33,000 jobs rely solely on transport of US food aid

Sasha Chavkin, 2013. (International Consortium of Investigative Journalists) “How shipping unions sunk food aid reform” November 6, 2013 <https://www.publicintegrity.org/2013/11/06/13687/how-shipping-unions-sunk-food-aid-reform>

A statement by USAMaritime, an industry group that represents shipping companies and unions, states that “over 33,000 Americans’ jobs depend upon the transportation of U.S. food aid alone.”

Link and Impact: Shipments of food aid support 33,000 US jobs

Claire Provost, 2012. (journalist who worked on the Guardian's Global development site including as a data journalist following the money in international aid; Bertha fellow at the Centre for Investigative Journalism (2014-2016).) “US food aid: the special interests blocking reform” July 19, 2012. <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2012/jul/19/us-food-aid-special-interests-reform>

Last month, President Barack Obama lowered the share of US food aid that must be transported on US ships from 75% to 50%; USA Maritime, a coalition of shipping companies and maritime trade and labour associations, was quick to protest. It said shipments of international food aid support 33,000 US jobs and help maintain a merchant marine that can be called upon by the department of defence in cases of war or national emergency.

“Few jobs would be lost” Response: Does not consider multiplier affect

Sasha Chavkin, 2013. (International Consortium of Investigative Journalists) “How shipping unions sunk food aid reform” November 6, 2013 <https://www.publicintegrity.org/2013/11/06/13687/how-shipping-unions-sunk-food-aid-reform>

This figure has been called into question. When congressional supporters of food aid reform asked the Pentagon how many shipping jobs would be lost, it estimated that only 360 to 495 mariners on a total of eight to 11 ships would be affected. Wytkind noted that this figure does not consider the multiplier effects of the initial jobs being lost, nor the broader threat posed to the U.S. shipping industry as a whole.

1. US food shipments harm farmers

Big link: AFF plan = increased amount of food aid sent from the US

Link: ‘Foreign food aid hurts countries” example: Haiti

Rasna Warah, 2012. (columnist with Kenya’s Daily Nation newspaper, is the author of the recently published book Red Soil and Roasted Maize: Selected essays and articles on contemporary Kenya) “Don’t feed the world? How food aid can do more harm than good” January 2, 2012 <http://www.redpepper.org.uk/dont-feed-the-world/>

Like Somalia, Haiti offers a perfect example of how aid can destroy a country. This island in the Caribbean has received so much foreign aid over the years that it has been described as ‘a poster child for the inadequacies of foreign aid’ because of its extremely poor development record and widespread poverty. Every few years, a new disaster strikes Haiti and the world rallies around through massive fundraising campaigns. But Haiti, like its distant cousin Somalia, continues to remain poor, under-developed and the site of much misery – ideal ingredients for yet another fundraising campaign.

Link: US Food aid delivery hurts farmers, and nations

PETER DUFFY, 2010. (freelance journalist since 1999, writing for The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, New York magazine, The New Republic, Slate, and many other outlets.) “Lessons From Haiti: How Food Aid Can Harm” AUG 31, 2010 <https://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2010/08/lessons-from-haiti-how-food-aid-can-harm/62252/>

But perhaps the greatest problem is the damage our food aid causes to farmers in developing countries, who are essential to the future health of their societies. Often in the news lately has been the harm that U.S. deliveries have done to the Haitian rice industry over the past few decades. On March 10, in testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Bill Clinton apologized for his administration's role in exporting cheap U.S. rice to Haiti, undercutting local growers. According to a study by the Center for Economic and Policy Research, Haitian farmers provided 47 percent of the country's rice in 1988. By the 2008, the figure had dropped to 15 percent. And in a recent report on NPR's Planet Money, reporters described how bags of American rice are still being sold in Haitian markets.

Link: American food aid competes with local farmers

Celia W. Dugger, 2007. (Reporter for the New York Times.) “Charity finds that U.S. food aid for Africa hurts instead of helps” AUG. 14, 2007 <http://www.nytimes.com/2007/08/14/world/americas/14iht-food.4.7116855.html>

CARE, one of the world's biggest charities, is walking away from about $45 million a year in federal funding, saying American food aid is not only plagued with inefficiencies, but may hurt some of the very poor people it aims to help. Its decision, which has deeply divided the world of food aid, is focused on the practice of selling tons of American farm products in African countries that in some cases compete with the crops of struggling local farmers. "If someone wants to help you, they shouldn't do it by destroying the very thing that they're trying to promote," said George Odo, a CARE official who grew disillusioned with the practice while supervising the sale of American wheat and vegetable oil in Nairobi.

Link: Food aid drives down price for local farmers

Henri Astier, 2006. (BBC news reporter.) “Can aid do more harm than good?” 1 February 2006. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/4185550.stm>

A bonanza often undermine self-reliance. "It is axiomatic that flooding the market with food drives down the price for local farmers," Mr Easterly says.

Link: Tons of aid translates to lower economic growth

Ana Swanson, 2015. (Ana Swanson is a Reporter at The Washington Post.) “Does foreign aid always help the poor?” 23 Oct 2015 <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2015/10/does-foreign-aid-always-help-the-poor/>

“I think his understanding of how the world worked at the micro level made him extremely suspicious of these get-rich-quick schemes that some people peddled at the development level,” says Daron Acemoglu, an economist at MIT. The data suggested that the claims of the aid community were sometimes not borne out. Even as the level of foreign aid into Africa soared through the 1980s and 1990s, African economies were doing worse than ever, as the chart below, from a paper by economist Bill Easterly of New York University, shows. The effect wasn’t limited to Africa. Many economists were noticing that an influx of foreign aid did not seem to produce economic growth in countries around the world. Rather, lots of foreign aid flowing into a country tended to be correlated with lower economic growth, as this chart from a paper by Arvind Subramanian and Raghuram Rajan shows. The countries that receive less aid, those on the left-hand side of the chart, tend to have higher growth — while those that receive more aid, on the right-hand side, have lower growth.

Impact: Free food slows recovery

Rasna Warah, 2012. (columnist with Kenya’s Daily Nation newspaper, is the author of the recently published book Red Soil and Roasted Maize: Selected essays and articles on contemporary Kenya) “Don’t feed the world? How food aid can do more harm than good” January 2, 2012 <http://www.redpepper.org.uk/dont-feed-the-world/>

George-Marc André, the European Union representative to Somalia, cautiously admits that the EC is concerned that its efforts in Somalia are being hampered by UN agencies flooding the capital Mogadishu with food aid. In an environment where free food is readily available, he explains, farmers do not get value for their produce. Delivering food aid during the harvest season further distorts the food market. André says that UN agencies such as the World Food Programme could actually have ‘slowed down’ Somalia’s recovery by focusing exclusively on food aid, instead of supporting local farmers and markets.

Impact: US Food aid destroys local economies

Rasna Warah, 2012. (columnist with Kenya’s Daily Nation newspaper, is the author of the recently published book Red Soil and Roasted Maize: Selected essays and articles on contemporary Kenya) “Don’t feed the world? How food aid can do more harm than good” January 2, 2012 <http://www.redpepper.org.uk/dont-feed-the-world/>

Given that most of the food aid comes from the US and other countries outside Somalia, there is also concern that declarations of famine do more to help farmers elsewhere rather than supporting local producers. The food aid industry allows countries such as the US to offload food surpluses to poor countries. This distorts local markets and disrupts local food production. In other words, food aid destroys local economies, especially when it is provided over long periods of time, as in Somalia.

Impact: Excessive food aid doesn’t help people

Joshua E. Keating, 2012. (was an associate editor at Foreign Policy.) “Please, Don’t Send Food” June 18, 2012. <http://foreignpolicy.com/2012/06/18/please-dont-send-food/>

There’s been plenty of debate in recent years about whether humanitarian aid actually helps rid the world of extreme poverty. The inability of developed countries to make a dent in the problem, despite spending billions of dollars each year, is what economist and noted aid skeptic William Easterly calls the "second tragedy" of global poverty. But a recent study takes this skepticism to a whole new level, suggesting that food aid not only doesn’t work, but also can prolong the violent conflicts it’s meant to help resolve.

1. Increased food aid shipments = increased violence

Link: AFF plan = increased amount of food aid sent from the US

Link: Food aid shipments stolen

Joshua E. Keating, 2012. (was an associate editor at Foreign Policy.) “Please, Don’t Send Food” June 18, 2012. <http://foreignpolicy.com/2012/06/18/please-dont-send-food/>

The results confirm anecdotal reports that food aid during conflicts is often stolen by armed groups, essentially making international donors part of the rebel logistics effort. According to some estimates, as much as 80 percent of the food aid shipments to Somalia in the early 1990s was looted or stolen. In her book The Crisis Caravan, journalist Linda Polman reported how Hutu rebels who fled Rwanda after the 1994 genocide appropriated aid given out in refugee camps in neighboring Democratic Republic of the Congo, further fueling conflict in the region. Polman also estimated that Nigeria’s 1967-1970 Biafran war — one of the first African humanitarian crises to get global media attention — may have lasted 12 to 16 months longer than it otherwise would have because of the international aid seized by rebel groups.

Impact: Increase in food aid increases violence

Joshua E. Keating, 2012. (was an associate editor at Foreign Policy.) “Please, Don’t Send Food” June 18, 2012. <http://foreignpolicy.com/2012/06/18/please-dont-send-food/>

Looking at a sample of developing countries between 1972 and 2006, economists Nancy Qian of Yale University and Nathan Nunn of Harvard University found a direct correlation between U.S. food aid and civil conflict. For every 10 percent increase in the amount of food aid delivered, they discovered, the likelihood of violent civil conflict rises by 1.14 percentage points.

Works Cited

1. Sasha Chavkin, 2013. (International Consortium of Investigative Journalists) “How shipping unions sunk food aid reform” November 6, 2013 https://www.publicintegrity.org/2013/11/06/13687/how-shipping-unions-sunk-food-aid-reform (brackets added)
2. Maritime Executive, 2013. (The Maritime Executive publishing company was founded in 1997. Its mission is to provide industry leaders with in-depth analysis of maritime issues and to report the news affecting the global maritime community.) “Food for Peace Program Remains in Forefront of U.S. Maritime Issues” 2013-07-16 https://maritime-executive.com/article/Food-for-Peace-Program-Remains-in-Forefront-of-US-Maritime-Issues-2013-07-16
3. Rasna Warah, 2012. (columnist with Kenya’s Daily Nation newspaper, is the author of the recently published book Red Soil and Roasted Maize: Selected essays and articles on contemporary Kenya) “Don’t feed the world? How food aid can do more harm than good” January 2, 2012 http://www.redpepper.org.uk/dont-feed-the-world/
4. Henri Astier, 2006. (BBC news reporter.) “Can aid do more harm than good?” 1 February 2006. http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/4185550.stm
5. Skip Witunski, 2017. (national president of the Navy League of the United States.) “The U.S. Merchant Marine serves an integral role in the Food for Peace program” April 28, 2017. https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/the-us-merchant-marine-serves-an-integral-role-in-the-food-for-peace-program/2017/04/28/5777f79a-2b49-11e7-9081-f5405f56d3e4\_story.html?utm\_term=.0366dba034c7
6. Samuel Oakford, 2017. (Freelance journalist based in New York, and regular IRIN contributor.) “The battle over the future of US food aid” 8 August 2017 https://www.irinnews.org/analysis/2017/08/08/battle-over-future-us-food-aid
7. Patricia Zengerle, 2017. (Reuters reporter) “Exclusive: Trump drops plans for order tightening food aid shipping rules – sources” JUNE 30, 2017 https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-trump-aid/exclusive-trump-drops-plans-for-order-tightening-food-aid-shipping-rules-sources-idUSKBN19L2VU
8. Jeremy Konyndyk, 2017. (senior policy fellow at the Center for Global Development, previously served as director for foreign disaster assistance at USAid.) “'Trump's aid budget is breathtakingly cruel – cuts like these will kill people'’ May 31, 2017. https://www.theguardian.com/global-development-professionals-network/2017/may/31/trumps-aid-budget-is-breathtakingly-cruel-cuts-like-these-will-kill-people
9. Claire Provost, 2012. (journalist who worked on the Guardian's Global development site including as a data journalist following the money in international aid; Bertha fellow at the Centre for Investigative Journalism (2014-2016).) “US food aid: the special interests blocking reform” July 19, 2012. https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2012/jul/19/us-food-aid-special-interests-reform
10. PETER DUFFY, 2010. (freelance journalist since 1999, writing for The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, New York magazine, The New Republic, Slate, and many other outlets.) “Lessons From Haiti: How Food Aid Can Harm” AUG 31, 2010 https://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2010/08/lessons-from-haiti-how-food-aid-can-harm/62252/
11. Celia W. Dugger, 2007. (Reporter for the New York Times.) “Charity finds that U.S. food aid for Africa hurts instead of helps” AUG. 14, 2007 http://www.nytimes.com/2007/08/14/world/americas/14iht-food.4.7116855.html
12. Ana Swanson, 2015. (Ana Swanson is a Reporter at The Washington Post.) “Does foreign aid always help the poor?” 23 Oct 2015 https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2015/10/does-foreign-aid-always-help-the-poor/
13. Joshua E. Keating, 2012. (was an associate editor at Foreign Policy.) “Please, Don’t Send Food” June 18, 2012. http://foreignpolicy.com/2012/06/18/please-dont-send-food/