

FDR and Food

In the midst of the Great War against Hitler, between May 18 and June 3 of 1943, President Franklin D. Roosevelt convened what was the first meeting of the United Nations, to deal with an existential question for all mankind—food. The United Nations Food Conference brought together 44 nations at Hot Springs, Virginia, with a mandate to devise a common course of action to attain “freedom from want,” adequate food for the world’s people.

In his June 7 speech to the delegates, at the conclusion of the meeting, FDR outlined the mission:

“You have been dealing with agriculture: Agriculture, the most basic of all human activities; agriculture, the most basic of all human needs. Twice as many people are employed in work on food and in agriculture, as in work in *all the other fields of human activity put together*. And all people have, in the literal sense of the word, *a vital interest in food*: That a child, or an adult, should get the nourishment necessary for full health is too important, all over the world, too important a thing to be left to mere chance.

“You have recognized that society must accept this responsibility. As you stated in your Declaration, the primary responsibility lies with each nation, for seeing that its own people have the food needed for health and life. Steps to this end are for national determination. But, each nation can fully achieve its goal, only if we all work together. And on behalf of the United States, I gladly accept this Declaration.

“You have gone beyond the general recognition of principles, to deal in specific terms and specific projects. You have examined the needs of all countries, for food and other agricultural products, both as they will exist—or rather, to put it this way—rather as they will exist, in the short run of recovery from the devastation of war, the few years when the fighting stops; and as they will exist over the longer run, when our efforts can be fully devoted, to expanding the production of food, so that it will be adequate for health, the world over, and all through the years to come.

“You have surveyed, with courage and with realism, the magnitude of these problems. You have reached unanimous agreements that they can, and

must—and will—be solved.

“It is true that no nation has ever had enough food to feed all of the people, as we now know that human beings *should* be fed. But neither have nations representing over 80% of the world’s 2 [b]illion inhabitants, never before have they joined together in order to achieve that aim. Never before have they set out to bend their united efforts, to the development of the world’s resources, so that all men might seek to attain the food they need....”

It is from this meeting that the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations was formed, launched with great hope. But, within two years, President Roosevelt was dead, and the vision which he had so passionately put forward was beginning to be systematically undermined. Twenty years later, that vision was revived by President John F. Kennedy, who founded the Food for Peace organization and vowed “to outlaw hunger,” but his dream all but died with him.

Today, in the midst of a famine crisis beyond all imagining, governments once again have the responsibility to take up FDR’s mission. We have seen extraordinary moves in that direction from the new Eurasian security alliance of Russia, China, and India (RIC), as they grapple with their own sense of responsibility for the *world* crisis, not just their own backyards. The initiative from Japan on the eve of the summit may not have been directly coordinated with the RIC grouping, but it expresses the same sense of commitment to defeat the British Empire’s dominant diktat of Malthusianism and free trade.

What is missing is the vital role of the United States—the energy and leadership of a new FDR, who will join with the Eurasian alliance in creating a world free from want and fear.

The stakes today are even higher than they were in 1943. A British-run financial oligarchy demands that markets reign, and people starve, and have brainwashed much of the world to follow their lead. Their success would lead to world depopulation through famine and war. To defeat them, will require a total war for humanity, along the same principles enunciated by FDR. Will you act to ensure it happens?