

EIR Feature

Yeutter will wreck U.S. agriculture to feed Russia

by Marcia Merry

During the last weeks of Clayton K. Yeutter's term as trade negotiator, he oversaw the U.S. team's "free trade" posturing at the Dec. 5-9 meeting in Montreal of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), demanding an end to subsidies for the world's farmers, to reduce food production internationally. Now, Yeutter has been nominated by President-elect George Bush to become the new Secretary of Agriculture. But even before Yeutter's appointment is confirmed by the Senate, his trade war policy has escalated, as Washington on Dec. 27 announced a ban on certain food imports from Europe.

Yeutter's three-year tenure as trade ambassador has seen declining world food supplies, and the reorientation of Western food exports to the Soviet Union. If his nomination is confirmed, the continuing destruction of the U.S. system of independent farm-based food output will be guaranteed, while dwindling supplies are shipped out in service of the New Yalta deal with the Russians.

There is no need for such a suicidal policy! The output potential of the United States farm sector, if mobilized through the kind of emergency measures taken in wartime, could restore world food supplies to needed levels. Give the American farmer a parity price—enough to meet the costs of production and enough profit to allow for capital investment and modernization—and he can meet world food needs, including those of the East bloc, whose food shortage is currently one of the most likely flashpoints for World War III.

Yet, thanks to the "free trade" policies of Yeutter, current Agriculture Secretary Richard Lyng, and other flunkies of the food cartel, as of year end, there were no emergency food stocks on hand for use by the United Nations or other relief agencies to meet any disaster needs for the new year. None! Stocks for "routine" daily world consumption (already at below-nutritional requirements) are at the lowest levels in modern times.

There is no mobilization under way to expand world output, to rebuild depleted stocks from the drought-stricken 1988 harvests—quite the contrary. Ongoing harvests in the Southern Hemisphere are low, due to drought, in several of the key grainbelts, like Australia and Argentina. There is no mobilization in the Northern Hemisphere to maximize spring planting. For example, the European Community, where the weather conditions have been good for crops, is enforcing an unprecedented 1989 cropland set-aside program.



Food cartel operatives in the Department of Agriculture: Agriculture Secretary Richard Lyng (left) and Clayton Yeutter, nominated by President-elect Bush as Lyng's replacement. They are shown here at the 65th Annual USDA Outlook Conference, in December 1988.

Robert Baker

In the face of this, the Soviet Union is booking huge quantities of scarce Western grain. This year will likely be the year of the largest grain imports ever by Russia—nearly 50 million metric tons.

Yeutter is one of the architects of this policy: 1) he has facilitated the arrangements of committing food to Moscow, and lied about the adequacy of food stocks in the West to meet exports and domestic needs; 2) he has advocated further dispossession of U.S. farmers, and those of our allies, and lied about the consequences; and 3) he has facilitated world food control by the commodities cartel companies—Cargill, Continental, Bunge, Louis Dreyfus, Garnac/André, ADM/Toepfer, and others. These are all the objectives of the cartel for whom Yeutter has been a faithful servant, getting his training as president of the Chicago Mercantile Exchange for seven years.

Yeutter specializes in international maneuvers and “cover stories” for his cartel-serving functions. His own justifications for the “accomplishments” cited above are that: 1) exports to Moscow are just good business, because bigger agriculture exports help the U.S. balance of trade; 2) U.S. farmers and those in other food-exporting nations will have to “adjust” to world market signals, by being as “low cost” in their production as possible. If many are forced out of farming, then that is part of the necessary “restructuring.” Finally, international food giants pose no threat to national security, since they give consumers “access to buy” from other parts of the world, without having to pay the cost of supporting their own national agriculture sectors.

While Yeutter has been in office, President Reagan called

for total “free trade” by the year 2000. Yeutter made this the official U.S. position at the 1986-90 GATT round of multilateral negotiations. At the Montreal GATT meetings, the U.S. delegation rejected the very idea of a nation's being self-sufficient in food production. Last summer, Yeutter's office even submitted a proposal to GATT from the United States that calls for prohibiting a nation from even attempting to be self-sufficient in food. Yeutter denounces this as “trade distorting,” and therefore unacceptable—at least to the food cartel.

In the face of the Agriculture Department's policy of shutting down agriculture, Lyndon LaRouche and the forces allied with him are at loggerheads with the cartel interests. A newly formed international organization, Food for Peace, is gaining momentum for its pro-production food and farm policies. Founded at a conference of 400 people in Chicago on Labor Day 1988, the group has expanded into 30 countries and 35 U.S. states, and by December 1988 held twin conferences in Chicago and Nauheim, West Germany, to which 1,200 activists came. LaRouche gave the keynote address to the Dec. 10 conference in Chicago, calling for an alliance of “farmers and eaters” to expand food production.

LaRouche has been targeted for trial, jail, and assassination, in part because of his advocacy of world industrial and agricultural development, against the financial interests of the food cartel. It was not properly a surprise, therefore, when it turned out that a functionary of the USDA played a key role as jury foreman in the December federal railroad proceedings that convicted LaRouche and six associates in a frameup trial—as we detail in the accompanying dossier.