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Introduction by Thomas Maddux, California State University, Northridge

Food is not a subject that receives much attention at the annual conference of the Society for Historians of American Foreign Relations, in *Diplomatic History*, or the Cold War journals such as the *Journal of Cold War History* and *Cold War History*. Agricultural history and world history are more likely candidates for articles exploring the production of food, the movement of food across borders, and its involvement in international relations. Food history, however, “is big on our profession’s most current menus,” notes David Webster, pointing out that the 2009 American Historical Association meeting had five panels on food, and most of the articles featured in the roundtable issue of *Agricultural History* first appeared at the AHA meeting in 2007. Claire Strom, editor of *Agricultural History*, welcomed the opportunity to publish the papers and one additional article from the 2007 panel’s commentator, and seconded a colleagues hope that “it would be great if Agri History could do it [publish the papers] before *Diplomatic History* got the chance!”

As Strom makes clear in her introduction to the journal, *Agricultural History* has devoted considerable attention in the past to articles on agricultural policies pursued by the United States and other countries but has offered very few articles that examine the involvement of agriculture in diplomacy in general as well as the Cold War period. Thus, the articles, as indicated below, open up “new ground ... for our field,” Strom notes, and provide a significant introduction to an “international understanding of agricultural diplomacy.” (pp. 1-2) As the reviewers and Strom favorably emphasize, the articles have a number of interconnections that demonstrate the global nature of agricultural trade and agricultural issues in the post-1945 Cold War period. Strom points to three important threads in the articles: “they consider agriculture as a diplomatic weapon, they address how this weapon was used during the Cold War, and they look at the weapon in the hands of countries other than the United States.” (p. 2) Kathleen Rasmussen agrees that “one of the most impressive things about this issue of *Agricultural History* is how well its articles hang together ... [and] offer complementary perspectives on agriculture and the Cold War.” (5) The articles include

- Robert Mark Spaulding, “‘Agricultural Statecraft’ in the Cold War: A Case Study of Poland the West from 1945 to 1957”
- Greg Donaghy and Michael D. Stevenson, “The Limits of Alliance: Cold War Solidarity and Canadian Wheat Exports to China, 1950-1963”
- Yixin Chen, “Cold War Competition and Food Production in China, 1957-1962”
- Jacqueline McGlade, “More a Plowshare than a Sword: The Legacy of US Cold War Agricultural Diplomacy”

The reviewers are impressed with the quality and contributions of the articles even if they have some reservations on a range of issues including

- 1) The reviewers favorably emphasize the insights gained from the articles on the Cold War. Kathleen Rasmussen points out how the articles reveal the multi-polarity of

the Cold War on all sides. “The permeability of the Iron Curtain and the elasticity of alliance are also clear,” Rasmussen concludes, “as hunger created interests among enemies and conflicts among allies.” (5) In Robert Spaulding’s article on Poland and the Western allies interaction over Poland’s agricultural economy, the United States, Great Britain, West Germany, Canada and other allies maneuvered to advance their own economies and political interests vis-à-vis Poland rather than holding a consistent Cold War stance against economic collaboration with a key member of the Eastern bloc. David Webster finds a similar fracturing of Western allies in Greg Donaghy and Michael D. Stevenson’s study of Canada’s sustained wheat sales to China in the face of Washington’s efforts to maintain non-recognition and economic isolation of Mao’s China. Faced with the U.S. Trading with the Enemy Act of 1957 and Washington’s PL 480 subsidized wheat aid that undercut Canadian wheat in traditional markets, Canada under John Diefenbaker resisted criticism from President John F. Kennedy and other leaders in Japan and India in its pursuit of the China market. (2-3) Alan Dobson endorses the strengths of the article’s insights on conflicts within the Western alliance, but he would have welcomed more analysis on prior precedents of Washington “calculating the relative costs and benefits to the alliance of allowing imports of agricultural goods and timber from Eastern Europe.” Dobson also refers to earlier British-American debates on how hard to pressures neutrals against trade with Nazi Germany as well as British challenges to Washington on the China trade. (2-4) Roger Horowitz raises the general question with respect to all of the articles as to whether agricultural exports represented an exception in the Cold War competition since “food did not have overtones of potential use for military purposes and as an item (at least superficially) that could attest to the humanity and generosity of the supplying companies and nation.” (2)

- 2) The articles’ depiction of the intersection of global and domestic politics is favorably noted by the reviewers. Yixin Chen’s article, for example, examines the relationship between Mao Zedong’s Great Leap forward economic strategy as a Cold War strategy and its disastrous impact on Chinese agriculture that resulted in famine. As Webster notes, Chen clearly identifies Mao’s quest to overtake the British economy and, ultimately, move ahead of the Soviet Union “as leader of the communist camp and ultimately overtaking the United States.” (1) To some extent local party leaders were able to limit the famine by not implementing directives from Beijing. Rasmussen notes how Chen demonstrates the impact of Cold War strategy on the communist side on domestic politics whereas Spaulding and Donaghy and Stevenson explore the impact of domestic concerns on strategy. In Spaulding’s analysis, London needed Polish food imports and Canada objected to the impact on its trade with Britain and Diefenbaker in Canada clearly aimed to keep Saskatchewan voters supportive by insisting on Canadian wheat sales to China regardless of Washington’s complaints. (1-3) Horowitz also explores the general relationship of food as one of many “export commodities generated by powerful economic sectors” that extend domestic interests into international relations. (1-2)
- 3) The U.S. role in all of the essays receives significant attention from the reviewers. As Webster notes, the U.S. is necessarily present and an important player to some

extent in each of the essays. Even in Chen's essay on Mao's policies, the U.S. is a source of competition for Mao and also involved in conflict with Canada over its efforts to expand its wheat sales to China in the wake of the impact of Mao's policies on Chinese agriculture. Ideology certainly influenced U.S. policy in the case of China and Poland as Dobson and Rasmussen point out, noting the U.S. effort to combat collectivization in Poland with technical assistance, acceptance of allied importation of Polish agricultural products, and U.S. food aid to Poland, against the objections of Canada. The maintenance of the Cold War alliance, however, remained a priority for Washington as U.S. leaders backed off in disagreements with allies such as Canada over trade with China. As Rasmussen summarizes this perspective, Cold War alliances "sometimes fractured along fault lines of political-economic reality. Fractured, but did not break: ultimately, economic disputes among allies and commercial interactions among enemies did not result in fundamental shifts in Cold War ideological allegiances." (5)

- 4) In evaluations of Jacqueline McGlade's essay on U.S. agricultural diplomacy, the reviewers raise questions about the nature of U.S. Cold War objectives in dealing with agricultural issues. As Webster notes, the U.S. is necessarily present and an important player to some extent in all of the essays. McGlade explores a change in U.S. policy from donating food as a humanitarian project to the promotion of global agricultural development through policies such as the Marshall Plan and PL 480, the Food for Peace Program. Instead of being a successful weapon in global economic warfare against the Sino-Soviet camp, McGlade emphasizes how U.S. policy evolved and "came to act more as a plowshare than a sword, advancing peaceful initiatives intent on bolstering food supplies, farm modernization, and production parity worldwide," a significant exception to Cold War containment policies. The reviewers question McGlade's suggestion that U.S. policy "made special contributions by elevating world development over geopolitical containment during the Cold War." (81) Dobson would welcome more support for the thesis and suggests, with the support of Webster and Rasmussen, that development concerns and Cold War calculations could reinforce each other. Horowitz also suggests the importance of an evaluation of not only U.S. objectives but also consideration of the impact of U.S. exports and policy-makers' consideration of this: "how the power of western exporting nations could affect the politics and economic structures of the importers, and in so doing serve as a conduit for their foreign policy objectives." (2)

Participants:

Yixin Chen is associate professor of history at the University of North Carolina-Wilmington. He received his undergraduate education in China and his PhD at Washington University in St. Louis. His articles have appeared in *Chinese Historical Review*, *Twentieth Century China*, *Journal of Contemporary China*, and *Social Sciences in China*. He coauthored a book in Chinese, *Paths to Modern Nations* and has published a number of articles in Chinese journals. He is currently working on a book-length manuscript that examines famine in China during the Great Leap Forward from the village-level perspective.

Robert Spaulding is associate professor of history at the University of North Carolina, Wilmington. He is the author of *Osthandel and Ostpolitik: German Foreign Trade Policies in Eastern Europe from Bismarck to Adenauer* (1997) and has written widely on the European and Cold War political economy. He is currently working on a book tracing the formation of a unified commercial regime for the Rhine River in the nineteenth century and the impact of this process on German economic and political unification.

Alan Dobson is Professor of Politics at Dundee University, Scotland. He is editor of the *Journal of Transatlantic Studies* and Chair of the Transatlantic Studies Association. He has published extensively on Anglo-American relations and the politics and diplomacy of the international airline system. His most recent publications are *Globalization and Regional Integration: the Origins, Development and Impact of the Single European Aviation Market* (London/New York, 2007), *US Economic Statecraft for Survival 1933-1991* (London/New York, 2002), and with Steve Marsh, *US Foreign Policy Since 1945* 2nd edition, (London, 2006).

Roger Horowitz (PhD, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1990) is Associate Director of the Center for the History of Business, Technology, and Society at the Hagley Museum and Library and currently serves as Secretary-Treasurer of the Business History Conference. Recent publications include *Food Chains: From Farmyard to Shopping Cart* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), co-editor with Warren Belasco; *Putting Meat on the American Table: Taste, Technology, Transformation* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006); and "Meat for the Multitudes: Market Culture in Paris, New York City, and Mexico City over the 'Long' Nineteenth Century," *American Historical Review* 109, 4 (Oct. 2004), co-authors Jeffrey M. Pilcher and Sydney Watts.

Kathleen Rasmussen is a historian at the Office of the Historian, U.S. Department of State, where she has compiled two volumes in the *Foreign Relations of the United States* series, one on foreign economic policy from 1973 to 1976 and the other on relations with Western Europe during that same period. She is currently finishing her third volume, which documents the Carter administration's foreign economic policies.

David Webster is a Kiriyaama research fellow at the Center for the Pacific Rim, University of San Francisco, where he is studying non-state actors in international relations including Asian independence movements and North American technical advisors in Asia. He received his Ph.D. from the University of British Columbia in 2005. His book *Fire and the Full Moon: Canada and Indonesia in a Decolonizing World* is forthcoming from UBC Press. Previously he co-edited *East Timor Testimony* and has published several articles on Southeast Asian history and Canadian and U.S. relations with Asia.

This is an interesting collection of articles with some fine scholarship in evidence.

The introduction claims that the essays ‘consider Agriculture as a diplomatic weapon, they address how this weapon was used during the Cold War, and they look at the weapon in the hands of countries other than the United States.’ (p. 2) This characterisation, while useful, is a little misleading in that it does not capture the full range of matters under study. In particular, Yixin Chen’s fascinating piece deals with China’s domestic agricultural policy. It is true that it was influenced by long-term foreign policy considerations: in particular, Mao’s determination to compete economically with the West, specifically to overtake Britain’s GDP as a first achievement, and also with the Soviet Union. But this is mainly background noise, the main focus is on the impact of China’s domestic agricultural policy, its failures and the reasons for widespread though far from uniform famine in China as a result. So these essays range through the following topics: Polish agricultural development and food exports and various Western responses prompted by them; Canadian wheat exports to China with their associated policy implications and the problems they created within the Western Alliance; China’s domestic agricultural policy; and a wide-ranging look at U.S. agricultural trade policy in the Cold War and beyond.

Mark Spaulding’s focus lies with Poland and its domestic agricultural development, its export of food and the impact that this had on policy-making in both Poland and in the West. The central themes and findings are as follows. Poland’s immediate post-war situation with the potential for large exports of food to a hungry Britain (and West Germany) gave it a powerful bargaining hand for extracting commercial concessions from the British, which had significant Cold War political implications. After 1950, with the onset of collectivisation, Poland soon lost its bargaining lever as its output diminished and its export potential dwindled. Then, as Polish agriculture struggled after 1950, it became subject in turn to Western demands for political concessions, especially from the USA and West Germany. Ironically, the USA, which had taken the lead in arguing for the constriction of trade with communists, began to urge trade in foodstuffs with Poland and did so partly to bolster independent peasant farmers in the hope that this would arrest the progress of collectivisation (pp. 8-9). The U.S. soon ended up selling wheat to the Poles at discounted rates, much to the annoyance of Western allies such as the Canadians who felt that this distorted the market and pre-empted their commercial exports of grain. And finally, and perhaps most importantly from a Cold War policy perspective, Spaulding claims that ‘agricultural considerations worked to alter larger U.S. economic strategies.’ (p. 13)

This last claim is largely correct and Spaulding demonstrates well the way promoting agricultural trade, as opposed to restricting trade with the communist bloc, was an important departure from the West’s general strategy. However, this was not the first time that the USA had bent and stretched economic embargoes. What the present writer would like to see is this tactic explained more fully within the overall policy of Western economic statecraft. Restricting trade was not always the most beneficial policy to pursue in the broader conflict between East and West. The Americans recognised this early on when

calculating the relative costs and benefits to the alliance of allowing imports of agricultural goods and timber from Eastern Europe. If that trade were stopped, either the Americans would have to supply such goods from the dollar area, or allow Europeans to go hungry: there was also the danger that in reaction to the U.S. trying to stop such imports, the West Europeans would simply have refused to co-operate in establishing the wider multilateral embargo that the U.S. wanted.

Similar arguments had taken place between the British and the Americans over the embargo against Nazi Germany and the extent to which neutrals should be squeezed in order to get them to restrict their trade with the enemy. The problem was that Britain was dependent on certain imports from neutrals. That dependence had to be weighed in the balance in case neutrals retaliated to allied pressure by closing off such trade. There was also the danger of pushing the neutrals fully into the arms of the Germans. The point then is that the episode of Polish agricultural imports was not a Damascene episode concerning how economic embargoes should or should not be carried out by the West and the USA in particular. Spaulding may not be suggesting that it ever was a Damascene experience, but one reading of his work could come to just such a conclusion. He does say in his preface that agricultural strategies 'bent, stretched, and limited some well-established practices in Cold War relations ...' (p. 5) There's little doubt that bending, stretching and limiting went on, but it is less convincing to claim that they applied to well-established practices. Experience in the Second World War and in the early Cold War period itself had taught all but the most highly-charged U.S. ideologues that bending, stretching and limiting policies were necessary to accommodate allies and to achieve the most effective results calculated not just in economic, but also in political and longer-term strategic terms. Agricultural imports from Poland were an important episode in the development of U.S. policy and brought home once again the multifaceted character of economic embargoes and the way that they have to be qualified in the light of assessment of relative gains and political considerations.¹ A detailed context explaining more fully the complexity of waging what Tor Egil Forland rightly dubbed cold economic warfare would make meaning and intent clearer.

The account of Britain's involvement in agricultural imports from Poland, the significance of the relationship and the British concessions that had to be made to secure that trade makes valuable points, but to claim that trade 'profoundly altered the depth of East-West Cold War rivalries and also, perhaps unavoidably, stretched the limits of the western alliance at the same time.'(p. 19) needs more support. Or, at least, the impact of Britain's agricultural imports from Poland should be compared to that, of say, its exports of Rolls Royce Derwent and Nene jet engines to the Soviet Union². These had far more impact on both communist war-making potential and relationships within the Western Alliance than agricultural trade with Poland. A clearer perspective on relative importance would be good

¹ There are lengthy discussions of political considerations and embargoes that cost more than they gain in economic terms in Alan P. Dobson, *US Economic Statecraft for Survival 1933-1991* (London: Routledge 2002).

² See J. A. Engel, *Cold War at 30,000 feet: The Anglo-American Fight for Aviation Supremacy* (Cambridge Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2007), pp. 141-3.

here. It would also be helpful to know how U.S. policies, which did not directly contribute to halting or reversing Polish agricultural collectivisation 'helped the Polish regime maneuver through difficult economic choices in the short run.' (p.23) What were they and how did U.S. policies help?

The references to US-Canadian relations are interesting, but perhaps do not go quite far enough. Spaulding explains how Canada disliked the U.S. selling discounted grain to Poland, which distorted the market and undercut Canadian sales. That led, at least in part, to the development of a major Canadian-Chinese grain trade. All this is well catalogued in the article and it is often annoying for authors when reviewers suggest that they should have written about things beyond their remit, but carrying things forward into the 1980s, or at least a brief mention, might have been apt. It was then that the Americans further antagonised the Canadians by stepping into the China market to try to replace their lost sales to the Soviet Union due to the grain embargo they had imposed in response to the latter's invasion of Afghanistan. This was particularly aggravating to the Canadians as they were being urged at the time not to expand their grain sales to the Soviet Union. Adding in this episode would have made the point more robust about US-Canadian rivalries and the difficulties of free-market economies waging strategic economic embargoes.

These are largely minor quibbles and hopefully constructive suggestions for a piece that is well-crafted and scholarly, and which brings new evidence to bear on the early development of U.S. Cold War economic policies. It makes a valuable contribution to the literature.

Greg Donaghy and Michael D. Stevenson offer an interesting insight into U.S. – Canadian relations through the issue of Canadian grain sales to China. They demonstrate clearly how the sale of grain was not just a foreign policy issue, but an important Canadian domestic matter (p. 34) that pushed Canadian leaders to differ with their American colleagues about the wisdom of the grain trade with China. It is also a story of Canadians pushing and the U.S. retreating. For example, when the U.S. Foreign Assets Control provisions threatened the flow of Canadian grain to China in the early 1960s (pp. 39-42), the U.S. quickly backed away into a face-saving compromise to meet Canadian demands. The point is also well-made that trade is always a form of interdependence and China was quick to use the profitable flow of grain to its shores to persuade Canada to reciprocate by buying Chinese textiles. Again there were problems with the USA and there was a difference of perspective. The U.S. almost always placed emphasis on the value of trade as a stick to beat the communists into more acceptable policies, for example regarding Vietnam, whereas Canada emphasised the idea of using trade to socialise the communists into Western ways.

All this is good, but it needs to be shown that Canada was less a front-runner in these policies than a bald reading of the article suggests. Britain was far more of a thorn in Washington's side over trade with China and as McGlade points out in her article, Britain and Denmark were very early critics of the severity of the COCOM embargo (p. 86) and ahead of Canada on such matters. Britain recognised the People's Republic virtually straight away, and a long time before Canada, among other reasons because of the *entrepot* trade through Hong Kong, because of the island's vulnerability to possible Chinese

aggression and because of British investments in China. It had great difficulty with the Americans over trade with China during the Korean War and led the movement for reductions to the COCOM list in 1954 (curiously COCOM is not mentioned in the context of the establishment of CHINCOM). Britain also led the charge to abandon the China Differential in 1957. These developments do not sit very comfortably with some of the claims made about the importance of Canadian contributions to the Western strategic embargo and its revisions. For example, the claim 'Canadian officials alone redefined the contours of the Cold War in Asia, drifting beyond the American embrace' seems somewhat over-stated. (p. 31)

On two minor points: it would be interesting to have more information about the common export controls adopted by the USA and Canada in the Second World War (p. 32) and it should be made clear whether the reference to Sino-Canadian trade at the bottom of page 37 simply refers to grain or to a broader category of goods, including those on the strategic embargo list. Funnily enough, rather like Spaulding's article, this one also might have benefited from a brief excursion into the 1980s and the effects on Canadian and U.S. grain sales to China of the U.S. grain embargo on the Soviet Union in the aftermath of the latter's invasion of Afghanistan.

This is a good article. There is much of value in the information about Canadian policies and Canada's interaction with both the USA and China, but it might have been even better if the claims concerning Canada's impact on alliance economic strategies had been a little more measured in the light of Britain's more prominent role there.

Yixin Chen's article is less about international affairs than the others in this collection. The point is plausibly made that Mao Zedong's agricultural policy was driven by his obsession to accelerate industrialisation and challenge simultaneously the world leadership of both capitalism and communism – Mao's two-track competition. In that sense there is a strong foreign-policy dynamic that underpinned what went on, but what went on was largely to do with China's domestic agricultural policy. It is the story of a tragedy of autocratic top-down management mistakes that led to widespread famine in China.

The key sentence in the whole article appears to be: 'Once the Great Leap was launched, the situation worsened as requisitioning needs were now determined by Maoist fantasies regarding grain production rather than by the state's ruthless need for resources.' (p.62) Communist *apparatchiks*, in awe and fear of Mao produced what he wanted to hear, namely grossly inflated grain production estimates. On the basis of those estimates grain was centrally allocated and the net result was that rural populations were often deprived of sufficient nourishment to sustain life. Between 1958 and 1960 rural populations on average had 20-30% below the official minimum set for individual grain allocations. Millions died. However, the death rate was not uniform across China. In some cases local action minimised deaths. Indeed, in Dongshanxia 'not one person ... died of starvation.' It was saved 'by the continuation of an effective traditional leadership that thwarted the implementation of the CCP's destructive policies.' (p. 68) However, when the communist party's *apparatchiks* prevailed mass starvation spread even across grain rich producing regions. (p. 73). With the Communist Party of China only responsive to its leader Mao

Zedong and not to the people, when Mao made a serious error it was difficult to arrest its progressive impact. Tens of millions of people died – three million in Anhui province alone in 1960: ‘It was Mao’s own ambition that set China on the path of the much more radical Great Leap, which produced fantastic goals, unrealistic targets, and exaggerated successes.’ (p. 73) This was indeed a tragedy, not least because as Yixin Chen suggests it could have been avoided if there had been more local leaders willing to stand up and take appropriate measures to cope with this vast humanitarian crisis. Sadly and ironically, the excuse that it was the Soviets who undermined Mao’s Great Leap forward still carries currency in China and helps to camouflage Mao Zedong’s responsibilities.

Jackie McGlade’s focus is on U.S. agricultural diplomacy and her claim is that it shifted from a humanitarian give-away policy to one that sought to nurture global agricultural development through the European Recovery Program (ERP) or Marshall Plan, and PL 480, originally passed by the U.S. Congress to deal with the disposal of U.S. agricultural surpluses. There is considerable detail and much to interest the reader in her consideration of the development of U.S. policy.

The nub of her argument is that from the 1950s and through the 1970s, U.S. agriculture diplomacy ‘came to act more as a ploughshare than a sword, advancing peaceful initiatives intent on bolstering food supplies, farming modernization, and production parity world-wide.’ (p. 81) Unlike other economic Cold War containment policies this did not help to split and drive apart East and West, according to McGlade. Instead, ‘agricultural diplomacy and aid programs made special contributions by elevating world development over geopolitical containment during the Cold War.’ (p. 81)

These are rather grand claims and one could point to some counter-arguments, for example agricultural diplomacy was clearly not elevated above geopolitical containment considerations in 1979-1980 in the immediate aftermath of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan when President Carter imposed the partial grain embargo. Also, some might balk at the part-characterisation of the Marshall Plan as ‘a new world mission of farming redevelopment’ (p. 85). This is not to deny that U.S. policy increasingly became more concerned with development, but the case presented in the article looks over-stated without further evidence to support it. For example, which officials in the ERP mirrored Paul Hoffman’s industrial developmental ideas in the agricultural field? To what extent were the changes in agricultural production an actual policy objective of U.S. policy? And it would be interesting to see some statistics to prove the point about improvements in agricultural productivity specifically attributable to U.S. policies. Even if such evidence to bolster the claims made were forthcoming, there would still be an issue of the diversity of motives behind U.S. policy, which would add a complexity of meaning to what was actually done by the USA.

On more minor issues, it would be good to see a fuller explanation of the following: the pessimistic (probably correctly so) claim that the Doha Round of trade talks has ‘finally collapsed’ (p. 79); the International Development and Food Assistance Act and the way that it ‘installed world food development as the overriding mission of PL 480 after 1977’ (p. 95); the claims about the changes wrought by the Kennedy and Johnson administrations to

make U.S. agricultural export policy more altruistic; Kissinger's toying with food diplomacy in the 1970s and in particular his idea of striking a grain deal with the Soviets in return for cheap oil; and finally the musing about the effects of 9/11 might be more fully teased out to explain the changes wrought to agricultural diplomacy.

This is an interesting and thought provoking article that deserves much attention, but some of the claims about U.S. agricultural diplomacy need to be explained and substantiated more fully. It is often the case that different motives inform the same policy, and therefore different policy-makers, in this case involved in U.S. agricultural diplomacy, see and value outcomes in rather different ways. One suspects rather strongly that this was the case with the particular policies examined in this article. Some U.S. policy-makers may indeed have worked relentlessly though PL 480 to raise agricultural productivity world-wide, and did so for developmental and humanitarian reasons. Others maybe did so for those reasons too, but also prioritised other more political gains connected with containment and garnering goodwill for the USA in the global conflict with communism. Others, and possibly Henry Kissinger, notwithstanding what the author says (p. 94), almost certainly relegated humanitarian considerations in his agricultural diplomatic moves below his realist pursuit of power and security.

Since my training in diplomatic history consists of an undergraduate course with Akira Iriye at the University of Chicago thirty years ago, my comments will not address how these essays engage with current directions in this field. Instead I will look at them as a historian of food and business, and for their intersections with international relations. In doing so, I am sure we are all mindful of the powerful influence of food politics on international relations. I see three core points in these cogent and well-researched essays.

First, they show the fragility of the Cold War consensus when confronted by interest group politics. The need to obtain food for impoverished postwar populations in Mark Spaulding's essay trumps ideological efforts to isolate the Communist bloc. Correspondingly, the essay by Greg Donaghy and Michael D. Stevenson shows how pressure by agricultural interests for export markets strained Cold War alliances to the breaking point. The Cold War consensus seems rather tenuous if wheat exports can upset supposed partners so easily.

Second, we see how domestic food policies are intertwined with international relationships. Yixen Chen's essay on China's Great Leap Forward addresses this point most directly, but it is also an element of the Donaghy and Stevenson article and a major subject of Jackie McGlade's contribution. So while the first point indicates how economics can overwhelm political ideology, these essays also indicate how ideology can shape food policy.

Third, but not with the same level of robust argumentation, the essays indicate the articulation between the domestic politics of exporting and importing nations. Spaulding suggests how U.S. policy was informed by efforts to influence Polish politics by supporting its small-landholding peasantry, and Donaghy and Stevenson indicate how Canadian politics were influenced by the conflicts over food exports to China. In general, though, there is less here on how agricultural exports impacted domestic policies of the importing nations – an important topic, it would seem, for international relations. I'll return to this point later.

Generalizations about approaches to international relations drawn from these essays would seem to rest on to what extent food forms a special case. Food is distinctive in two ways in these essays: first as a subsistence commodity that did not have potential military applications, and second as the product of tremendously powerful national economic groups. So as a commodity on the demand side, food seems quite special, almost innocent in its virtue as a good with such evident humane consequences. Considered from the supply side though, food does not seem particular special, since there are many export commodities generated by powerful economic sectors (automobiles, oil, etc.). The leverage employed by export-oriented agricultural interests then rested on food's special status as an import good, one that did not have overtones of potential use for military purposes and as an item (at least superficially) that could attest to the humanity and generosity of the supplying companies and nation. If this is indeed the case (and I'd be curious to hear the authors' opinions) then these essays suggest that the international politics of agricultural

exports could be a bubble within which Cold War relationships could be altered, while those alterations/emendations would not extend to other goods, eg machinery or raw materials such as iron, coal, etc.

Conversely, with its special status, food seems an unusually effective trade good to link the politics of exporting and importing countries. With human needs as an unblemished rationale for trade policies that were more liberal than for all other commodities, food did not seem to be as burdened by the ideological baggage carried by other goods shipped between the Western alliance and the Soviet and Chinese blocs. Food exports, though, did earn bragging rights for the nation that had surpluses to share, and implicitly conveyed messages of inadequacy for countries with shortages. And as exports consisted not only of food, but also seeds, fertilizer, equipment, and agricultural methods, food's special characteristics could serve to transmit profound political messages and obligations under the cover of humanitarian assistance – and in a manner quite dissimilar from other commodities.

These ruminations all have left me wondering at the relative quiet in the essays about what perhaps we can still whisper about – imperialism. As a food historian, we read a lot about how food permitted and encouraged dissimilar power relations among nations, especially exporting and importing countries. In the Sidney Mintz formulation of “Sweetness and Power,” the sugar complex of the 1700s-1800s meant that the importers (principally the United Kingdom) fashioned colonial exporting economies to their end.¹ Similar we know from many recent works on bananas how the U.S. firms functioned in a similar way in Central America, turning these nations into “banana republics” based around export agriculture.² Given the concerns of this group of essays, it would seem pertinent to inquire into the converse --- how the power of western exporting nations could affect the politics and economic structures of the importers, and in so doing serve as a conduit for their foreign policy objectives.

These concerns seem particularly pertinent for Jackie McGlade's essay that argues exports of food and agricultural knowledge were a benign “plowshare” for receiving nations. I wonder what a Latin American historian would make of her argument, as the period she considers coincides with military coups in Brazil, Argentina, and eight other nations in that region. If the U.S. government was concerned about the politics of the Polish countryside in the late 1940s and early 1950s, then it seems reasonable to expect they also considered the impact on the politics of Latin American nations of their food policies in the 1960s and 1970s.

Considering commodities such as food as constituent elements of international relations would give diplomatic history connections with other areas of scholarship that could be very valuable. I applaud these essays for posing trade issues as political issues, and hope they receive a favorable reception from the H-Diplo listserv.

¹ Sidney Mintz, *Sweetness and Power: The Place of Sugar in Modern History* (New York: 1985).

² See for example, John Soluri, *Banana Cultures: Agriculture, Consumption, and Environmental Change in Honduras and the United States* (Austin, TX: 2005).

You gotta eat. It's not just the slogan of a fast food burger chain: it's a fundamental truth of the human condition, a truth that increasing numbers of historians are exploring. Whether it's how the search for food spurred exploration; the connection between foodways and identity; or the implications of how we produce it, prepare it, buy it, sell it, or give it away to those in need, food has captured the attention of academic and popular historians alike.²

The link between food and power – who has it and who needs it – makes it a natural subject for diplomatic historians. Recently, *Agricultural History* devoted an issue to agriculture and the Cold War, a topic that has received scant attention in its pages heretofore. The editor's excitement about striking out in a new direction is apparent in her introduction, in which she recounts how *Agricultural History* scooped *Diplomatic History* in securing the issue's four articles for publication, the first three of which were originally presented at the 2007 American Historical Association meeting, while the fourth was written specifically for this issue.

In the first article, "Agricultural Statecraft' in the Cold War: A Case Study of Poland and the West from 1945 to 1957," Robert Mark Spaulding, an associate professor at the University of North Carolina-Wilmington, explores the geopolitics of the Polish harvest. The United States, for example, wanted to impede the advent of collectivization in Poland by fortifying its farmers. Before 1950, when their harvests were bountiful, this meant U.S. technical assistance to, and approval of British and German imports from, Poland. By the mid-1950s, as collectivization decimated their harvest, Washington was sending Poland food aid to stave off even more radical agricultural initiatives, a decision that soured U.S. relations with Canada, whose wheat sales to Poland were undercut thereby. Where the United States was driven by ideology in its approach to Poland, the United Kingdom was driven by hunger. In Polish feast years, Britain's need for food, especially from soft currency sources, led to a dependence on Polish imports that enabled Warsaw to resolve commercial and financial issues with London in its favor; frustrated allies like Australia, Canada, and Denmark, traditional suppliers of the eggs and bacon in Britain's daily fry up; and compromised the U.S.-led strategic export embargo of the East. Such tensions eased only when the Polish feast turned to famine and the U.K. found other sources of supply. Now Poland was hungry,

¹ The views expressed in this review by me are my own and are not necessarily those of the Department of State or the U.S. Government. All information I present here is based on publicly available declassified sources.

² The 2009 American Historical Association meeting in New York, for example, featured five sessions on food, prompting Program Committee Chair Felice Lifshitz to note that food "appears to be establishing itself as a major new subfield of historiography." (<http://www.historians.org/annual/2009/09AMSupplement/2009amsup9.cfm>) Food was also popular at the 2007 AHA meeting in Atlanta, where seven sessions contained at least one paper on the subject (including the session whose revised papers are reviewed herein). In the popular realm, see, for example, the success of Mark Kurlansky's *Cod: A Biography of the Fish that Changed the World* (New York: Penguin Group (USA) Inc., 1998).

vulnerable, and in search of food. Warsaw soon discovered that the price of West German grain was pressure from Bonn to allow the repatriation of Germans residing in Poland.

By examining a single phenomenon – the vicissitudes of the Polish harvest – from a variety of angles, Spaulding is able to tease out some fascinating themes. The different motivations driving the United States and the United Kingdom throw into sharp relief the different politico-economic positions of the two leaders of the Western alliance. As Spaulding observes, unlike Washington, London did not enjoy the luxury of ideology; for the U.K., Polish food imports were about survival. (p. 15.) The willingness of policymakers on both sides of the Iron Curtain to exploit hunger abroad for domestic gain is also clear. Finally, Spaulding's piece highlights the fact that the Western alliance was often rent by economic conflict, a phenomenon noted by other scholars.³

The bulk of Spaulding's primary research is in American and British sources, which is reflected in a focus on the view from Washington and London. Polish and West German perspectives are not neglected: Spaulding was able to consult Polish oral histories and rely on his earlier work on German commercial policy.⁴ In an ideal world, Spaulding could have made greater use of Polish primary sources; a good dig into Canadian sources would also have turned up useful material. In the real world, however, this is an article, not a book, and Spaulding is to be commended for his thought-provoking exercise in international history.

In "The Limits of Alliance: Cold War Solidarity and Canadian Wheat Exports to China, 1950-1963," Greg Donaghy and Michael Stevenson pick up where Spaulding leaves off, advancing the story of U.S.-Canadian discord over agricultural exports. Donaghy, who heads the Historical Section of Canada's Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, and Stevenson, a lecturer at York University, explore how the lure of the China market affected Canada's relations with its allies. During the 1962 Sino-Indian border conflict, for example, Canada and India fell out over Ottawa's rebuff of New Delhi's requests that it ease or cease wheat sales to China. A year later, Ottawa acceded to Beijing's requests that it admit Chinese imports on the same terms as Japanese imports, for fear that Beijing would buy its wheat elsewhere if Ottawa did not comply.

The authors devote the bulk of their attention to U.S.-Canadian relations, focusing in particular on efforts by the Conservative government of John George Diefenbaker to sell more wheat to China. Diefenbaker worked tirelessly to satisfy the Saskatchewan voters who kept him in Parliament for almost four decades; among their more pressing needs were markets for their staple crop, wheat. Ottawa's desire to expand Canada's commercial presence in China, however, clashed with Washington's embargo of the PRC, which, after 1954, extended to trade involving U.S.-owned corporations operating abroad. Canada was home to many subsidiaries of American corporations and its exporters soon encountered

³ A recent example of such scholarship is Francis Gavin's *Gold, Dollars, and Power: The Politics of International Monetary Relations, 1958-1971* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2004).

⁴ Robert Mark Spaulding, *Osthandel and Ostpolitik; German Foreign Trade Policies in Eastern Europe from Bismark to Adenaur* (Providence, RI: Berghahn, 1997).

difficulties in selling and shipping wheat to China. Washington and Ottawa cobbled together various compromises to resolve these conflicts; sometimes, the Canadians simply went ahead with their sales while the Americans pretended not to notice.

Donaghy and Stevenson show how a single special interest group – in this case, Canadian wheat farmers – can shape foreign policy. One might ask whether selling wheat to China was worth antagonizing allies – and customers – such as India, Japan, and the United States. That the Diefenbaker government pushed these sales speaks to the hold that wheat farmers exercised over its imagination – and its political fortunes. It also reflects, one suspects, Ottawa’s confidence that Washington would ultimately give way on an issue to which it attached so much importance. In this respect, the article highlights not simply the limits of alliance, but its strength. As Donaghy has argued in another context elsewhere,⁵ the bonds of alliance may have bowed, but they did not break.

While Donaghy and Stevenson base their article on solid research in Canadian and American sources, they might have explored the U.S. perspective a little more fully. For example, one wonders whether Washington stood “powerlessly” by as Ottawa undertook a grain shipment that contravened U.S. laws (p. 41) or simply accepted the reality of its ally’s needs, as it did in the case of British purchases of Polish foodstuffs, as shown by Spaulding. More discussion of India and Japan would also have been welcome: while relations with New Delhi and Tokyo may not have been as important as relations with Washington, the inclusion of this material adds depth and texture to the article, making it a more fully integrated story of Canadian international, rather than bilateral, relations.

In the third article, “Cold War Competition and Food Production in China, 1957-1962,” Yixin Chen, an associate professor at the University of North Carolina-Wilmington, shows why China wanted Canadian wheat in the first place, exploring the agricultural implications of the Great Leap Forward, the industrialization program initiated by Mao Zedong in 1958. Chen argues that the Great Leap was driven by Mao’s desire to strengthen China’s strategic position in the Cold War. Just as the Soviet Union wanted to surpass the United States in industrial production, Chen contends, Mao wanted China, the Soviets’ deputy in the worldwide communist struggle, to surpass the United Kingdom, the Americans’ deputy. But the Great Leap Forward was about more than competition with the West: it was also motivated by competition within the East. By 1957, Mao had concluded that Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev’s brand of communism was insufficiently rigorous and ill-suited to China’s needs. If the Great Leap Forward succeeded, Mao believed, China could assume the leadership of international communism and regain its great power status.⁶ Moving from the corridors of power in Beijing to the fields of Anhui province, Chen shows how the Great Leap resulted in a great famine, as excessive in-kind taxes levied on grain farmers, used to fund industrialization and feed industrial workers, paired with

⁵ Greg Donaghy, *Tolerant Allies: Canada and the United States, 1963-1968* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2002).

⁶ In placing ideology at the center of his argument about Mao’s motivations behind the Great Leap Forward, Chen echoes themes developed by Chen Jian in *Mao’s China and the Cold War* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2001), even though that work does not systematically analyze the Great Leap Forward, as Chen notes on p. 52.

collectivization to leave millions dead through starvation and survivors too weak with hunger to work their fields. Local mortality rates in Anhui lead Chen to conclude that where the political leadership was dominated by locals, inherently more sympathetic to the suffering of family and friends and thus less likely to yield to Beijing's demands, mortality was lower than where the leadership was dominated by politically driven outsiders.

Chen's article, which is grounded in substantial research in published primary sources, provides an interesting contrast to the previous two. Where Spaulding and Donaghy and Stevenson concentrate on the West, Chen gives us a view from the East; where Donaghy and Stevenson and, to some extent, Spaulding, examine how domestic politics affected Cold War grand strategy, Chen explores how Cold War grand strategy affected domestic politics. For Chen, there is no disconnect between diplomacy and everyday life, as great power politics can profoundly affect the lives of millions. Chen's piece also highlights the importance of the individual in history. At the local level, the decisions of individual leaders determined mortality rates; at the national level, the decisions of a single man resulted in the Great Leap debacle. It was Mao who conceived of the program, established unrealistic targets and deadlines, instituted disastrous farming practices and collectivization, and continued the Great Leap even when its consequences became clear. While Chen's knitting together of top-down and bottom-up history produces a narrative that feels somewhat disjointed – the shift from Beijing to Anhui is a little jarring – he succeeds in demonstrating that the global and the local are not as far apart as we might sometimes think.

In the final article, "More a Plowshare than a Sword: The Legacy of U.S. Cold War Agricultural Diplomacy," Jacqueline McGlade, an associate professor at the College of Saint Elizabeth, argues that the encouragement of global agricultural development, rather than the pursuit of export markets or economic advantage vis-à-vis the East, characterized U.S. foreign agricultural policies after the Second World War. In particular, she focuses on three initiatives, the Marshall Plan, CoCom, and PL 480. The Marshall Plan, McGlade observes, was prompted by the need to address the problem of postwar European hunger; as such, it sought to restore not only Western Europe's industry, but its agriculture. In her discussion of CoCom, McGlade expands upon Spaulding's conclusion that Western Europe's need for food and primary products compelled Washington to accept fissures in the strategic export embargo of the East. Finally, McGlade examines the evolution of PL 480, determining that it served as a vehicle for the enhancement of the world's productive capabilities. Throughout the Cold War, McGlade concludes, U.S. agricultural policies were constructive rather than destructive, a way to build countries up rather than tear them down.

While McGlade's discussion of the importance of development in U.S. agricultural diplomacy is persuasive, the way in which she positions this theme within its Cold War context is debatable. McGlade suggests that because they were so constructive, American agricultural and aid policies hold a unique place in Cold War foreign policy, asserting that they "made special contributions by elevating world development over geopolitical containment during the Cold War." (p. 81) Development aid and containment were not mutually exclusive; indeed, development aid was an important means of containment, which involved not just weakening the East, but strengthening the West. Both the Marshall

Plan and CoCom exceptions strengthened Western Europe, making them critical components of the policy of containment. Similarly, PL 480's developmental aspects can be understood as a way of bolstering potential allies in the developing world. While McGlade does not ignore the utility of such policies as Cold War weapons,⁷ her article would have benefitted from a fuller exploration of how plowshares can sometimes be the most effective swords of all.

One of the most impressive things about this issue of *Agricultural History* is how well its articles hang together. Despite differences in substance and scope, the articles offer complementary perspectives on agriculture and the Cold War and point to common themes. One such theme is the multi-polarity of the Cold War, which pitted not just Washington against Moscow, but London and Ottawa against Washington, Bonn and London against Warsaw, and Beijing against London and Moscow. The permeability of the Iron Curtain and the elasticity of alliance are also clear, as hunger created interests among enemies and conflicts among allies. In this respect, the articles highlight the irony that the Cold War blocs, whose members adhered to a common politico-economic ideology, sometimes fractured along fault lines of politico-economic reality. Fractured, but did not break: ultimately, economic disputes among allies and commercial interactions among enemies did not result in fundamental shifts in Cold War ideological allegiances. In sum, whether one reads it from cover to cover or focuses on but a single article, this issue of *Agricultural History* enriches our understanding of the Cold War by presenting a nuanced picture of the conflict in which ideology clashes with, and does not always trump, that most basic of human needs – the need to eat.

⁷ For example, McGlade observes that “In addition to concerns over European recovery and decolonization, new fears over communist expansion propelled American policymakers to embrace the facilitation of agricultural parity as a solution to help resolve world economic problems and social want.” (p. 95) On the whole, however, the sense of McGlade's piece is that U.S. agricultural policies rose above Cold War concerns.

Food is so basic that it can easily be taken for granted, not noticed in the study of histories diplomatic or international. It might be considered the ultimate form of “low politics,” far removed from the flow of high diplomacy. Perhaps in the past it has been consigned by diplomatic historians to other sub-fields, whether the specific one of agricultural history or the broader one of world history, with its interest in commodity flows over borders.

The 2009 American Historical Association meeting featured five panels on food, ranging from “American Food Abroad” to “Cultures of Food History: Food Historiography from Early Modern Europe to Contemporary Japan.” From global histories of food through the ages, to histories of the Canadian love affair with the doughnut, food history is big on our profession’s most current menus.

Much of that is not only transnational history, in the sense that it crosses borders, but also diplomatic history in the sense of state-centered and policy-centered “high politics.” Diplomacy has affected the flow of food between countries, and food has affected diplomacy. That is the key link drawn by the contributors to this special issue of *Agricultural History*, itself based on papers presented at one of the food panels at the AHA in 2007. The special issue, editor Claire Strong writes, breaks ground in weaving together three threads – agriculture as a “diplomatic weapon” that has been wielded by states in pursuit of their policy goals; the way that weapon was used in the cold war; and the ways it was wielded by governments other than the United States (p. 2).

Perhaps inevitably, however, U.S. policy is the topic of one article and informs the others. The American presence is smallest in Yixin Chen’s analysis of the agricultural disaster of Mao’s Great Leap Forward in China, but it is there nevertheless. Chen notes that Mao’s government was driven by a desire to restore China to the ranks of the great powers, and thus unrealistic goals were set for industrialization – a process itself simplistically measured by total steel production. China’s announced goal was to over-take Britain in a race between the “number two sons” of capitalism and communism (p. 55). Behind that lay Mao’s quieter dreams of displacing the Soviet Union as leader of the communist camp and ultimately overtaking the United States. The drive to industrialize, rooted in cold war competition, meant famine in some areas and relative food security in others where local leaders were able to avoid directives from the centre. The regime was able, meanwhile, to direct resentment from food shortages outwards towards China’s international rivals. Local and international came together. This integration of global and domestic politics is one of the major contributions of both Chen’s article and this entire issue.

The same marriage of local and international factors is evident in other articles by Mark Spaulding on “agricultural statecraft” between Poland and the West, and by Greg Donaghy and Michael Stevenson on Canadian wheat sales to China. Each of these articles also shows U.S. allies willing to defy the leader of the Western alliance over food-related issues, whether to ensure food supplies flowed, or to please farmers by selling their crops.

Spaulding's analysis of food in Polish-Western relations is the most catholic in its sources, looking at four countries (Poland, the U.S., Britain and West Germany). In 1947-50, Western Europe was in many realms entirely dependent on U.S. assistance. This vulnerability led several governments to seek or welcome the creation of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. Yet even while seeking a U.S. security umbrella, Western Europe also needed food for its people, and could ill afford the dollars needed to buy it from the United States or Canada. Poland, producing an agricultural surplus, beckoned as an alternative. U.S. policymakers were willing to accept and even encourage their allies to buy food from Poland in the hopes that this might aid the survival of a class of Polish independent farmers and hold back collectivization of agriculture across Eastern Europe. On the other hand Washington tried to block its allies from exporting to Poland, part of the broader economic strategy of isolating the Soviet bloc economically. Needing food, Britain defied U.S. wishes and signed a trade pact with Poland in 1949. The defiance ended only as Polish food production fell after 1950 and Poland shifted to becoming a food importer.

A similar willingness to defy U.S. cold war policy is evident in Donaghy and Stevenson's study of Canada's efforts to sell wheat to "Red China." As the U.S. passed the 1957 Trading with the Enemy Act stepping up the embargo on China, Canadian farmers were feeling the sting of lower overseas sales. With PL480 wheat aid from the United States driving them out of the market, unsold surpluses stacked up in the Canadian prairies. Farmer resentment at this situation helped bring Saskatchewan Conservative John Diefenbaker to power. Donaghy and Stevenson put the battle to sell wheat not only as the foundational moment for Canada's 1970 recognition of the People's Republic, but also as a key event in the deterioration of relations between Diefenbaker's Canada and John F. Kennedy's administration.

The historiography of Diefenbaker's fall puts bad relations with the Kennedy administration at the centre.¹ It has paid less attention to the important clash between domestic interests – selling the wheat of Canadian farmers who made up Diefenbaker's key constituency – and foreign policy goals. Canada proved willing to defy the U.S., and this was not simply a Diefenbaker-Kennedy personality clash. The personality clash was present, certainly. The authors cite Diefenbaker mimicking Kennedy's accent after one meeting: "When I tell Canader to do something, I expect Canader to do it" (p. 42). Kennedy similarly ranked Diefenbaker as one of the two foreign leaders he most disliked, along with Indonesia's Sukarno.² However, Canada-U.S. conflict was driven by domestic politics, which saw rising nationalism and a new incentive in domestic politics to oppose U.S. cold war goals, more than it was by the genuine dislike between the two countries' leaders. Thus "the politics of agriculture encouraged Canadian policymakers to redefine the

¹ For instance Knowlton Nash, *Kennedy and Diefenbaker: The feud that helped topple a government* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1990). The Kennedy administration's role in Diefenbaker's fall is examined in J.L. Granatstein, "When Push Came to Shove: Canada and the United States," in *Kennedy's Quest for Victory: American Foreign Policy, 1961-1963*, ed. Thomas G. Paterson (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989).

² A point made among others by Walter W. Rostow (interviewee), recorded interview by Richard Neustadt (interviewer), April 11, 1964, John F. Kennedy Library.

parameters of the Cold War in Asia and Canada's place in it" (p. 46). The desire to sell wheat saw Diefenbaker's government also ignore pleas from Japan and India to link wheat sales with policy goals of backing non-communist Asian governments. Visions of the vast untapped China market "easily trumped" Cold War ties to Japan and visions of a Canadian "special relationship" with Jawaharlal Nehru's India (p. 47). The article may over-state the case for a Canadian "tilt" towards China, but certainly the Canadian vision of engaging China versus the U.S. vision of isolating it was on stark display. Canada broke ranks, however, not because of this vision but because of the domestic imperative to sell wheat and thus win prairie votes.

Jacqueline McGlade's overview of U.S. cold war agricultural diplomacy underlines the point made by other articles, that U.S. allies were willing to oppose U.S. policy on agricultural diplomacy. She highlights the Coordinating Committee on Multilateral Export Controls (CoCom), where American allies facing "food gaps" (p. 87) were able to shift U.S. policy away from economic containment. McGlade offers a fascinating depiction of American cold diplomacy as an evolutionary process in which the "sword" of containment was gradually transformed into the "plowshare" of development. In this sense, food was *not* the "diplomatic weapon" of the editor's introduction, but rather a tool that changed U.S. policies.

All the articles would agree that the motivations underlying policy were not altruistic. From British needs for non-dollar food imports, to Canadian government desires to sell prairie farmers' wheat, to the similar surplus dumping motivates underlying the American PL 480 "food aid" program, domestic politics and not a selfless desire to "feed the world" spurred food aid and exports. The Marshall Plan aimed – successfully – to increase European production, McGlade notes. This was not just industrial – agricultural production was also 10% above pre-war levels by 1951 (p. 84). Here it might be useful to draw a comparison with Asia. Mao's China was not the only country struggling to simply restore pre-war production levels – the goal was common in the first wave of development plans from non-communist Asian countries. It was European reconstruction that served the perceived U.S. interest in the late 1940s. No project for Asia on anything like the same scale was attempted, notwithstanding the rhetoric of the Colombo Plan. Asian states were left to rely on their commodity exports.

U.S. farm interests "trumped" containment goals by the mid-1950s, McGlade writes (p. 86), as much as they did in Canada. The result was PL 480, an ambitious program to unload agricultural surpluses in the global South under the guise of "food aid." McGlade allows altruism to creep back into her argument when she writes that PL 480 became "a sophisticated global development program that fostered greater agricultural parity between developing and developed countries" (p. 88). The containment imperative gave way to development desires. Her evidence is the altruistic rhetoric embodied in the speeches and work of Senator Hubert Humphrey, and the identification of third world agricultural development as the goal of the 1977 International Development and Food Assistance Act. And certainly the rhetoric was there, as it was in all development aid donors. Yet shifts in rhetoric do not always mean shifts in the underlying policies – in this case, a continued commitment to containment. It could just as easily be argued that the

policy goal of food aid – indeed, all aid – was to bolster vulnerable non-communist states. In other words, food aid remained a “diplomatic weapon” used to wage cold war by other, more effective, means. McGlade acknowledges some use of PL 480 to influence India and Pakistan, but treats it as aberration rather than viewing PL 480 as an ongoing diplomatic weapon.

Two major influences of the shift towards a “plowshare” agricultural diplomacy are worth underlining. PL 480 did begin the move towards the formation of the World Food Program in 1963. That was helped along, additionally, by a widening global consent to re-designate farm surpluses as food aid. With their commercial food export markets threatened, states from Australia to Burma to Canada initially lobbied for the removal or modification of PL 480. Canada then reversed itself and embraced food aid under Diefenbaker, even refusing entreaties from Australia to curb its own food-aid threats to Australia’s commercial markets. Dumping of surplus wheat continued even as development officials pointed out that it was not always desired by the recipient and did nothing to help the poorest in Asia – the main Indonesian use for wheat flour gifts from Canada, for instance, was to manufacture instant noodles for the urban middle classes, where it tended to undercut markets even for domestic rice production.

McGlade also points to the U.S. inspiration for the “green revolution,” pushed at first by U.S.-based private foundations. It might have been worth considering criticism directed at green revolution policies – that it has undermined food security by degrading farmland, reduced biodiversity and food quality by imposing high-yield monocultures, tied Asian and African countries more tightly to the global economy by making them more dependent on export production, marginalized women and the poor in favour of larger farmers and global agribusiness, and so on.³ The diplomatic weapon of agricultural diplomacy in its green revolution guise was intended to ward off red revolutions,⁴ depriving communism of its appeal to the poor majorities by providing a quick boost in food production. In this sense, containment was not overturned, but reinforced, by U.S. agricultural statecraft. U.S. food diplomacy was more effective than that of Mao’s China, but perhaps no more altruistic.

Quibbles aside, this special issue integrates high and low politics, domestic and diplomatic, food and policy, in valuable ways, indicating a useful broadening of international history to include food policy and showing the limits to U.S. influence even over close allies.

³ Vandana Shiva is one of the sharpest critics. See for instance her “World in a Grain of Rice,” *The Ecologist* 30 no. 8 (Dec. 2000/Jan. 2001), 51; “The Rest of Reality,” *Ms.* 1 no. 3 (Nov. 1990), 72-73.

⁴ Vijay Prashad, *The Darker Nations: A People’s History of the Third World* (New York: The New Press, 2007), 201.

Please allow me first to thank Dr. Thomas Maddux for organizing this H-Diplo roundtable and all the other reviewers who have carefully and constructively read our articles in *Agricultural History*. While I sincerely appreciate the reviewers' favorable comments on my piece of work, I understand, and as the reviewers have been aware, that in my article I have only been able to cite one province as a case to explain the disastrous consequences of the Maoist Great Leap. For readers who are interested in knowing a bit more as to why the degree of the Great Leap Famine's severity varied dramatically across provinces, I would like to mention another piece of work I have written, "Under the same Maoist sky: accounting for death rate discrepancies in Anhui and Jiangxi." This article will appear in the volume *New Perspectives of the Great Leap Forward Famine*, edited by Kimberley Manning and Felix Wemheuer (University of British Columbia Press, forthcoming 2009). Please forgive me if I have kind of promoted my research work.

The reviewers have correctly pointed out that my article is more about how Cold War grand strategy affected domestic politics and less about international affairs. I believe that two factors led my article in this direction. One is that during the heated days of the international competition between the two super powers, international affairs indeed had primary influence on China's domestic agenda, not the other way around. The other reason was China's lack of foreign relations between 1958 and 1963. While China had no formal channel of communication with the U.S., its ideological conflict with the Soviet Communist Party in the late 1950s to early 1960s and final breakup with the latter in 1963 resulted in China's diplomatic isolation. I believe that my article has addressed the former factor and that the scholars of foreign affairs have generally understood the latter.

Let me provide some information to enrich our understanding of two issues Dr. Roger Horowitz has raised. One is that "food did not seem to be as burdened by the ideological baggage carried by other goods shipped between the Western alliance and the Soviet and Chinese blocs." I perceive the American efforts to intervene in the Canadian grain trade with China, which Greg Donaghy and Michael Stevenson have excellently documented in their article, as being somehow ideological.

Yet, trade on the Chinese side was highly ideological. In May 1960, Chen Yun, China's chief economic leader and a deputy prime minister, first suggested to the Minister of Food to look into the possibilities of importing grain. In next several months the officials at the Ministry of Food and the Ministry of Foreign Trade discussed the suggestion and worried about the political risks that appeared involved in purchasing grain abroad. A deputy minister of food viewed importation of food as a taboo; quite a few officials in those ministries believed that to "eat imported grain" was a form of "revisionism," the term Mao had employed to define the Soviets with implications worse than "imperialism." Two reasons legitimized their worries. First, China had been a great, self-sufficient agricultural country and it would be a humiliation for China to import grain. Second, China had announced its remarkable accomplishments by its Great Leap agriculture, and any importation of grain, particularly from capitalist countries, would indicate China's

admission to the world of a Communist failure in economic reconstruction. By November, when the two ministries finally agreed that China needed to import grain and reported their decision to Premier Zhou Enlai, even Zhou could not give a green light. It was Mao who ultimately decided to import grain from Canada and Australia, despite the proposed amount being only one and half million tons.

The ideological sensitivity also showed in China's refusal of the friendly Soviet offer of food aid. On February 27, 1961, Nikita Khrushchev wrote to Mao that the Soviet Union was willing to assist China with one million tons of grain and half million tons of Cuban sugar, as a loan. China responded by taking the Cuban sugar but turning down the grain. In the meantime, between February 7 and March 11, China escalated its annual grain importation from the capitalist countries, mainly Canada, from one and half million tons to four million tons.

It was clear that the issue of grain importation reflected China's self-esteem of its civilization, the glory of the Communist Revolution, and the genuineness in Communist ideology. It was never the same case with importing machines and other goods. Mao had long admitted that China, being "a backward agricultural country," needed to learn advanced technologies from the West. In fact, the Great Leap was an effort to catch up with the West in terms of industry.

On Dr. Horowitz' other statement issue that "agriculture exports could be a bubble," I believe that the grain trade with Western nations was an important element in Mao's decision to change China's international strategy and diplomacy. By 1963, Mao reoriented his thoughts on foreign policies. Since the breakup between China and Russia had resulted in the disunity of the Communist camp, Mao no longer sensed the need for China to compete with Russia for the leadership of the international communist movement. In 1962-63, Chiang Kai-shek's attempt to retake the mainland by a small number of armed groups, which China believed was supported by Americans, plus America's increase in its military activities in South Vietnam, moved the U.S. from the backdrop to the front as a foe. Seeing China's security threatened by two superpowers, Mao began to look for new friends from the "middle zone" of international community. This new thought would later become the Chairman's Three Worlds theory: the two superpowers as the First World, the developing nations as the Third World, and the developed nations making up the Second World. In December 1963 Mao sent Premier Zhou to visit thirteen African and Asian nations for over two and half months to make friends with newly independent nations, a major diplomatic action of Mao's China to make China the leader of the Third World.

What is significant in Mao's new thought was his inclusion of capitalist nations other than the U.S. in the list of China's potential friends. As China continued benefiting from grain trade with capitalist Canada and Australia between 1961 and 1964, not a small economic matter at all—annually five million tons at an annual cost of 25% of China's foreign currency reserves, Mao probably saw the development of trade as a way for China to get a ground in the "middle zone" especially by making friends with developed nations. In 1962 and 1964 China established trade relations with Japan, Italy and Austria. In January 1964, Mao told the French delegation that came to Beijing to finalize the formal diplomatic

relationship with China, that China and France should enhance their economic and cultural exchanges, though other kinds of exchange were left out in Mao's speech. The Chinese party historians who have access to the central archives claim that China's strategic change in international affairs in the 1960s laid the foundation for China's diplomatic breakthrough in the 1970s, and the change in the grain trade with Western nations during the "three difficult years" was particularly important. The trade, those historians go on, had an importance in relieving China's difficulties, not to be neglected, and it initiated the bilateral trade relations between China and Western nations.

We do not know for sure that the grain trade had inspired Mao to begin seeing Western nations as important trade partners and cultural friends, despite the fact that it was logically possible. As outsiders who are unable to get access to China's central archives, we can only take the views of Chinese party historians for granted as a reasonable assessment. As my colleague R. Mark Spaulding has pointed out in his remarks, we are still in the early stages of assessing the relations between agricultural aid and larger Cold War political objectives. As China has recently partially opened its foreign ministry's archives to researchers, I certainly look forward to some future researches which will document in a more detailed way the importance of China's grain trade with Western nations during an unusual era.

Let me point out that my above comments are by no means an attempt to criticize Dr. Horowitz's arguments. I deeply appreciate Dr. Horowitz's knowledge of the relationship of food and international diplomacy and his rational inquiry for more evidence to demonstrate the significance of grain trade and food aid in the Cold War era. By bringing additional information I hope my remarks have somehow advanced our understanding of the issues Dr. Horowitz raised and have made some contributions to the roundtable. I also hope that the case of China was not a unique one and can potentially shed light on our comprehension of similar events in other parts of the world, such as the Ethiopian famine of 1984 which Odd Arne Westad has discussed well in his well-known and respected work *The Global Cold War*.

As a final note, I will later provide the reference to the information I have cited in this response if anyone is interested in knowing more about source materials on China's grain trade with Western nations in the 1960s.

I would like to thank the H-Diplo editors for arranging this roundtable review and the individual reviewers for their time and energy in so thoughtfully engaging our examples of the interaction between global agriculture and the Cold War that appeared recently in *Agricultural History*. I am grateful for an opportunity to address some of the points they raised about food and foreign policy in general, about my essay, and about the other articles in the volume.

Roger Horowitz raises the important question of whether “food forms a special case” and whether, therefore, “agricultural exports could be a bubble” that does not necessarily tell us much about larger Cold War relationships. The answers are yes and no. Food exports were always something of a special case for the reasons suggested by Kathleen Rasmussen and Roger Horowitz: their indisputable necessity and their aura of innocence. For these reasons agricultural trade had great utility as a starting point for economic contacts across political barriers. U.S. foreign policy contains several examples, such as when Eisenhower and Dulles offered subsidized wheat sales to Poland in 1956-57, when Kennedy initiated wheat sales to the Soviets in September 1963, and when Nixon and Kissinger included large wheat sales in the bundle of economic agreements negotiated with the Soviets in 1972. Despite obvious material and diplomatic advantages in these deals such as disposing of U.S. agricultural surpluses and demonstrating superior American agricultural productivity, these actions were possible politically because of the widespread public image of food as a uniquely innocent commodity.

But even in its early days, East-West agricultural trade did not remain isolated in a bubble, but instead spilled over into trade in other commodities as a few examples from these essays show: British food imports from Poland required a compensatory array of British capital goods exports to pay for them; Canadian wheat sales to China soon led to increased Canadian import quotas for Chinese textiles. Later, larger agricultural deals led to even more economic interaction; the 1972 U.S.-Soviet grain deal was unavoidably connected to allowing U.S. Export-Import Bank credits for Soviet wheat purchases, the resolution of Soviet lend-lease debts, granting MFN status to the USSR, and informal U.S. government support for Soviet energy development projects. In short, agricultural trade did not and could not remain an isolated bubble. The perceived special nature of food sales allowed agricultural trade to serve as a politically acceptable starting point for renewed or expanded East-West trade, and the wider economic and financial ramifications of agricultural deals often spilled over into other economic sectors. Further, none of the leading decision makers seems to have expected agricultural trade to remain isolated; in the 1950s and 1960s expectations from most Western and Soviet bloc governments were that trade in food and agricultural commodities would be a starting point for gradually expanding economic contacts. The Chinese communists may have been a notable exception to this expectation. Returning to the metaphor, the initial agricultural bubble usually bursts relatively quickly and the ripples move out into the larger economy. This dynamic expansion is part of what makes agricultural trade such a fascinating and significant form of interaction.

A second general point concerns terminology. I think we all could benefit from increased precision; for example in distinguishing between regular commercial sales and government subsidized sales, the later being a thinly disguised form of aid, rather than a genuine sale. Similarly, general terms such as “food aid” might better be broken down to distinguish between relief aid (short term deliveries of food), which has an ancient history and developmental aid (longer term provision of agricultural inputs such as seeds, fertilizer, equipment, and know-how), which was essentially a phenomenon created during the Cold War. Careful distinctions in these and other categories might help clarify the relationship U.S. agricultural aid and other Cold War considerations.

Both Alan Dobson and Roger Horowitz indicated they would like to have heard more about the longer-term impact of U.S. policies on the structure of Polish agriculture since this was a point which I only touched on for the period of the early 1950s. I have explored this issue more thoroughly and presented some of that material to the Polish-American Historical Association at the 2009 AHA in a paper “Preserving Polish Peasants: Reexamining U.S. Policy towards Poland in the Cold War.” Summarizing here very briefly, I explicated the structure of U.S. agricultural aid to Poland from its origins in the late 1950s through the early 1970s, which was characterized by periodic emergency sales (some subsidized) of wheat and flour, longer-term sales (with commercial and government-subsidized credits) of selected agricultural inputs such as seeds, feed grain, and fertilizers, and a consistent practice of minimizing U.S. exports of agricultural machinery. I suggested this pattern of aid allowed the Polish communist government, through organizations such as “Peasant Self-Help,” to preserve and control Polish agriculture with a unique (among communist states) structure of peasant-owned dwarf farms. I concluded by posing the ironic question of whether these peasants, having been preserved at least in part by capitalist intervention during the Cold War, will now gradually be squeezed-out and eliminated by capitalist pressures in the post Cold War era. I would be happy to discuss any of these issues at even greater length with any readers who care to contact me.

Allow me two brief comments on the reviews’ responses to some of other papers in the volume. First, I can easily agree with Alan Dobson in his review of Greg Donaghy and Michael Stevenson’s article that historically Canada was not a front-runner in opposing U.S. policies on East-West trade and that Britain, Denmark and others were generally more vocal and active in their opposition to U.S. policies. Yet in my view these facts only highlight the significance and impact of Canadian opposition when it did emerge. Opposition arising from a previously loyal ally, an immediate neighbor, and major U.S. trade partner may well have given Canadian policies an impact at least equal to protests arising from the usual European suspects.

Second, we are still in the early stages of assessing the relationship between agricultural (development) aid and larger Cold War political objectives. This appears to be nearly equally true of governmental, inter-governmental, and non-governmental agricultural aid programs. Indeed, the nature and significance of the relationship between a wide variety of development efforts and other governmental and alliance objectives during the Cold War

remains a major interpretive issue in writing the history of international aid, as many of the contributions in the recent special issue of *Agricultural History* have shown.

Jackie McGlade has performed a valuable service in bringing the long, large, and important issue of U.S. agricultural diplomacy into this debate and offering her views on U.S. agricultural aid and larger U.S. Cold war objectives, even if her conclusions do not find unanimous support among the reviewers here. I suspect Jackie's essay will further stimulate the emerging body of work on the history of U.S. food and agricultural aid and that her article will be an indispensable reference point in that discussion.

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