

**Show Transcript  
Deconstructing Dinner  
Kootenay Co-op Radio CJLY  
Nelson, B.C. Canada**

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**Title: President Bush on Food Security / Cross-Canada DD Trike Tour 1**

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**Transcript: Zsuzsanna Regoczi / Paula Bailly**

*Excerpt of interview with Anuradha Mittal:* When we think about food, we think about it in a fairly narrow way. If we take apart and analyze our food, we might then start to recognize the value of food in our lives.

*Jon Steinman:* Welcome to Deconstructing Dinner, a syndicated weekly one-hour radio show and podcast produced at Kootenay Co-op Radio CJLY in Nelson, British Columbia and currently making its way across the country by tricycle, and you'll learn more about that in just a moment. I'm Jon Steinman, and I'll be your host for the next hour.

On today's broadcast we'll continue to examine the recent global food crisis that is receiving widespread media attention. In particular, we'll listen in on a speech delivered by President George W. Bush on May 1<sup>st</sup> when he addressed how the United States would respond to the crisis, and of further interest, we'll listen in on his and the US foreign policy definition of food security.

While global efforts to respond to the food crisis may indeed be providing much-needed aid to large populations of people, it is this very aid and its accompanying policies that is suggesting will only further push this food crisis to even more damaging proportions. In the end, the food aid effort is the very same one that has persisted for decades, and let's face it, it hasn't worked.

Lending her voice to help critically examine Bush's speech, will be a familiar voice on the show, Anuradha Mittal – the Executive Director of the Oakland Institute based in Oakland California.

And also on the show today, we meet Darrick Hahn and Sinisa Grgic, two cyclists who, on May 7<sup>th</sup>, departed Victoria BC to embark on a cross-Canada tour. Both are currently making their way across British Columbia on recumbent tricycles. And you may be asking, how has this anything to do with food? Well, Darrick and Sinisa are using their trip as an opportunity to promote this radio program: Deconstructing Dinner. The pair will be meeting local farmers, eating local food, and on today's show we'll learn more about why they've chosen such a cause, and how their trip is going thus far.

**increase music and fade out**

*JS:* It was needless to say a unique offer that we received back in January of this year, when two cyclists, who were planning to cycle across the country approached us with the interest to

use their trip as a means to help raise awareness of this very show, Deconstructing Dinner. Well as this show goes to air, Darrick Hahn and Sinisa Grgic, are enroute between Grand Forks and Nelson, B.C, following days of gruelling mountain passes, tasty food, and generous down-home Canadian hospitality. Over the next few months we'll be airing updates on how their trip is progressing, the interesting foods that are being consumed, and we'll learn of the many faces of Canadian agriculture, that can be found from coast to coast. Linked to from the Deconstructing Dinner website is a blog where Darrick and Sinisa are keeping a journal and collection of photos. And that can be linked to from our website at either of our new website addresses, [deconstructingdinner.com](http://deconstructingdinner.com) or [deconstructingdinner.ca](http://deconstructingdinner.ca). You can expect a more in-depth interview with Darrick and Sinisa once they arrive here in Nelson and get pulled into our studios. But meeting up with them in Victoria on May 7<sup>th</sup>, was correspondent Andrea Langlois, who interviewed both of them at the zero mile mark of the Trans-Canada highway just prior to their departure across the country. After this short segment we'll listen in on some more clips from a phone conversation I had with Darrick early this morning on the day this broadcast first goes to air; and he spoke to me from an organic dairy in the agricultural community of Grand Forks. But before we get to that, here's Andrea Langlois.

*Andrea Langlois:* This is Andrea Langlois, I'm at mile zero here in Victoria, I'm the Deconstructing Dinner correspondent for Vancouver Island and I am sitting here with Sinisa Grgic and Darrick Hahn, who are about to cycle across the country and while they do it, raise awareness for Deconstructing Dinner. So, you just did your first leg of the journey today, how did it feel?

*Darrick Hahn:* Felt pretty good. We did approximately 70k and with a couple of breaks here and the weather certainly helped us along as things turned quite sunny and warm once we got on the island. We feel really good about what are we are going to be doing when we take off for the rest of the country.

*AL:* All right, so I'm sure the question everyone's mind is why would you want to bike across the country, what's the motivation?

*DH:* Well, Sinisa and I have known each other for many years and we have always been talking about seeing Canada one way or another. We'd entertained different ways. We thought about hiking, but hiking just plain takes too long. Driving, the novelty, it just didn't feel right, you wouldn't really soak things in. While I was commuting to and from work in Vancouver, I thought this would be the perfect mode of transportation. It wouldn't be too fast but it definitely wouldn't be too slow. When I presented the idea to Sinisa he was pretty excited about it.

*AL:* So maybe Sinisa you can tell us about how you feel about setting out on this journey?

*Sinisa Grgic:* I always kind of wanted to run away (*for*) a little bit. Just enjoy the nature for few months and not have the worries of everyday life and just put everything in the background and enjoy the scenery basically.

*AL:* What's the link between your road trip and Deconstructing Dinner and food security?

*DH:* I came across Jon Steinman and his show at a music festival last summer where he was doing a little presentation promoting the show and I'd known him several years ago back at

the University of Guelph. I came across him and he filled me in on his show; from there I tuned in, listened to his show and after a couple, I found that a lot of my values were aligned with what he was talking about and discussing on a weekly basis.

From there as we were developing our plans for the bike trip it just seemed like a natural progression to include this opportunity to present a whole new way of looking at food and food production to our fellow Canadians as we cross the country. And also being as that I grew up on a farm I was born and raised, the plight of the farmer and the state of our agricultural system is always something that I keep in mind on a regular basis and hearing Jon's approach and essentially being a voice for the farmers has been a real positive thing in my sense.

*AL:* We know there is people across the county getting more and more interested in food security issues. How will it look to connect with people across the country? What are you hoping will happen?

*DH:* I am hoping a lot of people will actually stop and really listen to what we have to say and ultimately what the show presents. It's something we've - Sinisa and I - both kind of understand, the issues with our health problems in society and then also issues with food.

People should want to know what is going into their food. I think there are a lot of people that do. Unfortunately the mainstream media doesn't do a good enough job doing that. If they had an opportunity to gain knowledge on what Jon presents I think a lot of people would really go for it.

*AL:* All right, so where are you heading first?

*DH:* Well, after we take off from mile zero we're going to be heading to Vancouver and we'll be resting there and then from there we're heading East.

*AL:* Heading east (*background laughter*). Heading to the home of Deconstruction Dinner in the Kootenays, I hear.

*DH:* Essentially, yes. We are going to be ultimately in Nelson and if anybody listening has been there, it is a stunning beautiful town and we can't wait to soak up some of the sites and the culture.

*AL:* So, I'm assuming that the listeners will be able to follow you through the show, but you're also going to have a blog. How are you going to do that while you are on the road?

*DH:* I have chosen to bring a computer that I'll be updating on a daily basis and whenever I get an access to the internet I will be uploading the site and sharing stories and experiences along the way. And hopefully people will be able to tune in.

*AL:* What is the web address for your blog?

*DH:* Our blog address is: [www.fresh-entertainment.ca](http://www.fresh-entertainment.ca).

*AL:* I guess two going across the country gives the 100 Mile diet a whole different spin. Are

you hoping to eat lot of local food while you make your way across the country?

*DH:* It certainly is our goal to eat as much local food. We are also entertaining the idea of trying to live off the land essentially or find local plants that are edible as we go along.

Well, we'll see how it works out, this is a really big country and especially with the current food system we'll learn pretty quickly how accessible local food is.

*AL:* That's great. Darrick and Sinisa do you have anything else to add for our listeners as you head off on your journey?

*DH:* I think everybody should check out our site and see how we're making out and more importantly, listen to Deconstructing Dinner.

*AL:* I have a feeling that as these guys go up those big hills they're going to need listeners to be writing them encouragement, so I encourage everyone to get on there and give a little push and listen to Deconstructing Dinner to see how Derrick and Sinisa are doing.

*Jon Steinman:* And that was Andrea Langlois, correspondent for Deconstructing Dinner based in Victoria BC. And since that interview was recorded on May 7<sup>th</sup>, Darrick and Sinisa are as of May 15<sup>th</sup> cycling between Grand Forks and the home of this show in Nelson, B.C.

Along the way the pair have stopped in Vancouver, Agassiz, Hope, Manning Park, Hedley and Osoyoos. A detailed journey of their trip can again be found on the Deconstructing Dinner website. But I did catch up with Darrick over the phone following his breakfast of boiled eggs that he gathered just two days prior from a farmer in the Similkameen Valley.

Darrick spoke to me from inside the cheese making facility of Jerseyland Organics, a business that was featured here on the program back in 2007 as part of our *Deceivable* Dairies series. Jerseyland produces cheese, butter, sour cream and yogurt products.

*DH:* Currently I am in the Jerseyland Organics cheese making facility and specifically their packaging area, but in the next room there is a big vat, where the mixers are going to make cheese. And then we just got a tour of the whole facility where there is a huge area where they're ageing their cheese and there is their cold storage for their yogurt; this is all raw milk products. It has been a real treat to see it in development. They'd just undergone a bit of a renovation, making the capacity a little bit bigger.

*Jon Steinman:* Jumping back to where that last interview with Andrea Langlois ended, Darrick recounts how the first leg of the trip between Victoria and Vancouver turned out.

*DH:* Now, that day we actually biked from Vancouver to Victoria and then back to Vancouver. That has been our longest day so far, it was about 166 kilometres of biking and it could have been a little bit shorter but we didn't make it back to take the shuttle under the Massey tunnel in time. We actually had to take the long way around and go across the Alex Fraser Bridge. And it was a pretty gruelling day. I was carrying about half of my weight that I was going to be riding for the trip. By the end of it we were ready for a rest and in fact we rested the next day. It was a good taste of what we're going to be encountering and I decided to change some of my gear. Sinisa wanted to do some changes and improvements to his bike, as his rear view

mirror fell off.

*Jon Steinman:* Following a rest stop in Vancouver, Darrick and Sinisa headed out through the congestion of the city and into the agricultural lands of the Fraser Valley. Their destination was the community of Agassiz and a hazelnut farm called Canadian Hazelnuts.

*DH:* Just inside Agassiz was where we stopped. There is a little (*park*) - Kilby Provincial Park was where we stopped. We wanted to try to make it to the Canadian Hazelnut Farm that night. But we were pretty tired, we'd put in a long day and we were about 10 km away from the farm and we found out that we had another hill to climb and it is fairly significant. We decided we would rather get some rest and tackle it in the morning, and then just set up camp.

*Jon Steinman:* The community of Agassiz is surrounded by agricultural land and a significant number of farms there cultivate hazelnuts, not the most common type of farm here in Canada. Needless to say the two cyclists had not expected to encounter a hazelnut farm on their cross-Canada journey.

*DH:* Never even imagined that we'd be coming across a hazelnut farm. We saw the opportunity and decided to check it out. It was really interesting, coming from a farming prospective where I grew up on a farm, to see how a hazelnut farm was operated was interesting. I think he is doing all right on his farm there. He's got a good market picked out, where there's not so many hazelnuts being able to be produced in Canada. The Agassiz-area is known as a hazelnut growing area and I think he's fortunate to have the right climate to successfully grow them on a large scale.

*Jon Steinman:* After loading up on hazelnuts Darrick and Sinisa stopped over in the town of Hope and then headed out of the Fraser Valley and into the mountains. It was then that the real test of Darrick and Sinisa's tricycles began.

*DH:* You know what? It was climbing the Allison Pass and then making it to the top of the Sunday Summit - those were memorable in their own right. The Allison Pass, memorable strictly because of it was snowing when we got to the top. This was our first pass and I think after we were done that our confidence level as a cyclist increased significantly. We didn't know how our bikes would perform in the mountains, we didn't know how we'd perform in the mountains. Things were feeling pretty good.

And then the downhill slope into Princeton was a whole lot of fun. And then on top of that, just that day was an action-packed day, cause just before we got into Princeton we met our first newspaper journalist who stopped us on the road. And we just came up to someone pulled over and snapping pictures at us and then Carla Clark of the Similkameen Spotlight stopped and gave us a little interview. And she has since called and touched base to find out how we're doing, I haven't had a chance to contact her yet. But, that was real nice and real interesting as she was talking about the Princeton area actually recently having a meeting on food security so the topic of food security is something that's on a lot of peoples' minds in the area.

*Jon Steinman:* One of the more amusing conversations I had with Darrick and Sinisa before they embarked on their journey was with respect to what they should do if they run out of food

and only have access to highly processed fast food, which - let's face it - on the Trans-Canadian highway is the standard fare. We agreed that two cyclists walking out of a Tim Horton's or Burger King and hopping on their trikes adorned with Deconstructing Dinner signs would look rather out of place. Well, Derrick and Sinisa faced this dilemma once they arrived in the community of Princeton, because staring them down there was a Dairy Queen.

*DH:* At the Manning Park Resort we stayed for the night, the night before, and we met a wonderful Aussie couple, who were also cycling. They're cycling from Vancouver Island to Toronto. We told them we'd contact them when we got into Princeton. When we got there we called them, and they were at the Dairy Queen. It was a gorgeous day, it was hot and we were visiting outside for a while there, and we actually met a couple of other people and they were all enjoying Dairy Queen treats and everything. And I'm sitting in the sun and its like oh, it's hot and that stuff looks really good and my biking partner Sinisa just started heading in and he said, "Do you want anything?"

I said, "I can't, I've got to hold off." The main reason being, because we are promoting Deconstructing Dinner and the concept of fast food is pretty much a blatant hypocrisy, if we're going to be carrying Deconstructing Dinner signs on our bikes. So I just said, "I can't really do that." And he is like "Yeah, you're right, we can't do that." So instead we held off and just went to one of the local variety stores. Although it's not much of a better choice we did grab an ice cream treat there, but I guess trying to support a local venue owner rather than a market chain was the lesser of the two evils.

*Jon Steinman:* Luckily for Darrick and Sinisa it was only 30 km later that they were to meet their hosts for the evening in the community of Hedley, located in the Similkameen Valley. Now because I had only few contacts in the area I decided to get in touch with the organizer of a recent food security event that took place in neighbouring Princeton to see if any unique farms were willing to host the two cyclists. Sure enough my contact there was a fan of the show and so was a friend of hers in Hedley. Their hosts had already been planning a local meal of indigenous foods for that same evening Darrick and Sinisa were arriving. As Darrick described it, the meal amounted to the one of the most local meals they'll likely have on their trip.

*DH:* Definitely! And on top of that, probably one of the most amazing experiences we'll have. Sinisa and I both are still stunned at the level of hospitality we received in Hedley. Our host, Angelic Wood, and unfortunately I didn't catch any of the last names of everybody else but a couple of neighbours in the community, their names being Terry. He is a hunter in the area and big advocate of local food and encouraging people to be reconnected with the Earth. Then we ate dinner with a lady by the name of Shirley, at her place, and she made some homemade bannock for us. And then one of the neighbours as well, Stu, who is a retired teacher, came in and pitched in with a Saskatoon berry pie. On top of that those two items we were able to enjoy some wild rice that was grown in Ontario but made with a recipe based in Manitoba. We also had some quail à l'orange, which was delicious. The quail had been hunted by Terry, as well as a bit of a duck medley. We had also some local asparagus and there is one other thing, the Jerusalem artichokes which I believe were grown in one of the people's - maybe in Angelic's - garden, but I'm not sure. It was grown there and it was harvested last fall, and they kept amazingly over the winter. They were delicious.

*Jon Steinman:* Darrick added that the meal was also enjoyed with many locally produced

wines which the Similkameen and Okanagan valleys are well known for. Darrick has also added that Hedley is definitely worth a visit, because as he says, "They're just great people." Also personally I would like to extend a big thanks to the hosts for helping support their journey across the country and helping in the effort to raise awareness of this show.

Now next on the journey following Hedley was a cycle through the Similkameen Valley which is likely the most organically-minded agricultural area in the country. It is said that at least 50 percent all of the farms in the valley grow organically, with much of the production being fruit and wine grapes. After descending into the Okanagan Valley, Darrick and Sinisa fielded yet some more media attention with the Osoyoos Times and an Okanagan commercial radio station, both eager to learn more about their trip and about the show. Darrick described some of his observations while taking on that leg of the trip.

*DH:* Other than the stunning views and watching the differences in say, climate, say the lower mainland where you know you have a lot of farming and you could even say a little bit more industrialized farming, to coming in to a lot of the valleys that had been on our trip where you come across a lot of irrigation that is taking place. Like when we were travelling from Hedley to Osoyoos it was raining that day and yet people were still irrigating the soil which told me that they need a lot of water. Even speaking to Jeremy, who's our host here at Jerseyland Organics, he said they really needed the rain so it was much welcomed. In fact they irrigate here as well, which coming from where I grew up, like we take for granted how much timely rain we get and rarely if ever need to irrigate our land. As well as like all the vineyards, obviously we got a little bit into the Okanagan Valley. And it's definitely a lot to soak in.

*Jon Steinman:* Along with taking in the sights and interacting with local foodies and farmers the trip is of course in part being used to raise awareness of this nationally syndicated radio show. Darrick shared with me some of the responses received from onlookers.

*DH:* A lot of people are really intrigued by our trikes, our recumbent trikes. So the common questions are "How are those to ride?" and "What are they?" And we'll take a minute to explain that. And then it usually moves on to Deconstructing Dinner, "What's that?"

And then we'll explain a little bit about Deconstructing Dinner and encourage them to check out the site or I give them a flier that I have. Most of the time we get a pretty warm response from people, cars driving by, we get countless honks. People waving at us and a lot of bikers give us a little wave as well, so it's been really fun just being on the road that way. We've been asked, how fast can we get them up to or what are they like on the hill.

*JS:* And again Darrick spoke to me over the phone from inside the cheese-making facility of Jerseyland Organics, an organic dairy located in Grand Forks BC. It was an inspiring stop for the two cyclists as the business is a rare but important example of how there are indeed opportunities for farmers to earn a living doing what they do, a promising sign in a country where farming is heading the completely opposite direction.

*DH:* When we stopped at the place like where we are in Jerseyland Organics, it's a chance to see in this case a rather successful organic dairy farm in operation. Like I was talking with Jeremy last night, he made a good point, it's important that people can see this because there's a lot of farmers that may not know that this option is available and that seeing the success of it, they know they could make a go of it themselves.

*JS:* That was Darrick Hahn speaking from Grand Forks, BC. And over the next few months you can expect to hear much more about Darrick and Sinisa Grgic's cross-Canada bike-tour that is being used to raise awareness of Deconstructing Dinner. Their arrival into Nelson will come in the latter half of Thursday May 15<sup>th</sup> if all goes as planned. So for anyone in the Nelson area, you can keep your eyes peeled for them coming into town from Castlegar and you can't miss them as they're riding on three-wheeled recumbent cycles. Once they get into town, the All Seasons Cafe has generously invited them for a Friday night dinner as a kind gesture of support for their efforts and for the show and on Saturday you can catch them at the Cottonwood Falls market in the morning before they head towards Balfour, and again that's Saturday May 17<sup>th</sup>. I'd also like to thank the Kootenay Country Store Cooperative here in town, who are too helping support Darrick and Sinisa's cross-Canada adventure by donating 1% of sales on June 17<sup>th</sup> to their trip. So Nelson-area residents, be sure to plan your shopping on that date. And again you can check out their periodically updated journal and photos by linking to them from our website at [deconstructingdinner.ca](http://deconstructingdinner.ca). For our listeners all across the country if you are listening from a location that may be on their route, send us your suggestions as to what Darrick and Sinisa should check out as they maybe cycle through your town. Those ideas can be sent to [deconstructingdinner@cjly.net](mailto:deconstructingdinner@cjly.net).

Taking a brief musical intermission before we hear from President George W. Bush and the Oakland Institute's Anuradha Mittal, here is a piece in honour of Darrick and Sinisa's trans-Canada journey. This track is created by the Scottish duo known as Boards of Canada, and is off their album "Trans-Canada Highway."

### **soundbite**

*JS:* This is Deconstructing Dinner, a syndicated weekly one-hour radio program and podcast produced at Kootenay Co-op Radio, CGLY in Nelson, British Columbia. I'm Jon Steinman. That musical intermission was courtesy of the Scottish duo Boards of Canada and is taken off their album "Trans-Canada Highway."

A quick update on what to expect on our next episode of the show, we'll be revisiting with Bill C-517, which was introduced in the House of Commons last February and was calling for the mandatory labelling of foods containing genetically engineered ingredients. That show will conclude our coverage of the bill as it was on May 7<sup>th</sup> that the bill was voted on. And lending their voice to that show will be Liberal Member of Parliament and agricultural critic Wayne Easter, Conservative MP Rob Merrifield and Greenpeace agriculture campaigner Josh Brandon among others. I'd call that upcoming broadcast one of the most important ones that we will have aired to date as it takes much of the critical coverage that we've aired here in the GMO or GE topic and places this topic directly into the hands of politicians, something we haven't done very much of here on the show, and understandably as it's a topic that has not been debated in Parliament on many occasions. You'll be shocked to hear the sheer lack of knowledge that was exhibited in the House during the May 5<sup>th</sup> debate on the bill.

But on to the next segment of today's broadcast, we'll be taking a listen to President George W. Bush speaking on May 1<sup>st</sup>. This segment takes off from my recent commentary that was shared a few episodes ago on the role of the media in covering the latest global food crisis. However, today, we'll examine the role of governments who are responding to this crisis, and in particular, the United States. As has been raised here on the program before, the standard

response to global hunger and food shortages has long been the same – and that is to provide food aid. Now while such aid is indeed needed in the short term, it is far from what's required in the long term, and in the end, U.S. Food Aid is a boon to the U.S. economy and U.S. foreign interests. The role of USAid is no secret, and stated right on their website is the following – “Foreign assistance is a valuable foreign policy tool in terms of promoting U.S. security interests and its economic interests.” The motives of food aid are quite clear.

Lending their voice to the show following this segment from May 1<sup>st</sup> will be Anuradha Mittal of the Oakland Institute based in Oakland California. Anuradha will be commenting on Bush's statements.

So, here's President Bush speaking on May 1<sup>st</sup> from Washington D.C.

*President Bush:* In recent weeks, many have expressed concern about the significant increase in global food prices. And I share that concern. In some of the world's poorest nations, rising prices can mean the difference between getting a daily meal or going without food.

To address this problem, two weeks ago my administration announced that about \$200 million in emergency food aid would be available through a program at the Agriculture Department called the Emerson Trust. But that's just the beginning of our efforts. I think more needs to be done, and so today I'm asking Congress to provide an additional \$770 million to support food aid and development programs. Together, this amounts to nearly \$1 billion in new funds to bolster global food security. And with other security assistance programs already in place, we're now projecting to spend nearly \$5 billion in 2008 and 2009 to fight global hunger.

This funding will keep our existing emergency food aid programs robust. We have been the leader for providing food to those who are going without in the past, and we will continue to be the leader around the world. It will also allow us to fund agricultural development programs that help farmers in developing countries increase their productivity. And of course this will help reduce the number of people who need emergency food aid in the first place.

As America increases its food assistance, it's really important that we transform the way that food aid is delivered. In my State of the Union address this year, I called on Congress to support a proposal to purchase up to nearly 25 percent of food assistance directly from farmers in the developing world. And the reason you do that, is in order to break the cycle of famine that we're having to deal with too often in a modern era, it's important to help build up local agriculture. I ask Congress to approve this measure as soon as possible. It's a common sense way to help to deal with food emergencies around the world.

Now other countries have a role to play as well. America is in the lead, we'll stay in the lead, and we expect others to participate along with us. We're working with our G8 partners and other developed nations to secure commitments from their governments for additional food aid.

We're also working toward the conclusion of a successful Doha agreement that will reduce and eliminate tariffs and other barriers, as well as market-distorting subsidies for agricultural goods. And the reason why getting a Doha Round done is important is, it'll end up reducing the cost of food, importing food; it will make it cheaper for consumers all around the world. In

other words, we want to change the system to make it easier for people to get less expensive food.

We're also urging countries that have instituted restrictions on agricultural exports to lift those restrictions. Some countries are preventing needed food from getting to market in the first place, and we call upon them to end those restrictions to help ease suffering for those who aren't getting food.

We're also urging countries to remove barriers to advanced crops developed through biotechnology. These crops are safe, they're resistant to drought and disease, and they hold the promise of producing more food for more people.

Here at home, we're working to ensure that our poorest citizens get the food they need. Since 2001, the administration, working with Congress has increased funding for nutrition assistance programs by 76 percent. We've adjusted food stamp benefits annually to cover price increases at the checkout counter. And last month the Agriculture Department made available an additional \$150 million to respond to the food needs of those who depend on WIC -- the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children. With this new funding, we will have increased our support for WIC by 18.6 percent this year.

The American people are generous people and they're compassionate people. We believe in the timeless truth "To whom much is given, much is expected." And so therefore at home we will work to ensure that the neediest among us can cope with the rising food prices. And with the new international funding I'm announcing today, we're sending a clear message to the world, that America will lead the fight against hunger for years to come. Thank you very much for your interest. God bless.

*JS:* And that was President Bush speaking on May 1<sup>st</sup> from the Diplomatic Reception Room in Washington D.C.

In August of 2006, The Oakland Institute's Anuradha Mittal lent her voice to Deconstructing Dinner as part of our episode titled "The Solidarity of Others is Our Own Defence." After working as the co-director of Food First, or otherwise known as the Institute for Food and Development Policy, Anuradha established the Oakland Institute in 2004 in Oakland, California. The Institute is a policy think tank whose mission is to increase public participation and promote fair debate on critical social, economic and environmental issues in both national and international forums. Anuradha is currently the Institute's Executive Director.

In helping unearth the flaws in Bush's speech and his model of addressing hunger, we can narrow in on his use of the term "food security." Clearly this is a term used often here on the program and one, which in the case of its use on our shows is far different from the version espoused by Bush. Instead, it appears that Bush's definition of food security is one of food dependence.

Anuradha spoke to me over the phone while in London, England.

*Anuradha Mittal:* Well, it is very interesting that we find terms such as food security being used by the White House and of course President Bush. But I think we have to take it with a pinch of salt. The way food security is defined by the US Government and the current

administration is very different (*from*) the way social movements, you know, NGOs, will describe this terminology, because they see food security just being implemented through aid programs. But we are talking relabelled food sovereignty, about ensuring countries' and peoples' rights to be able to grow food and conduct agriculture in ways that are ecologically, socially and economically appropriate for them. We are talking about small farmers being the stewards of the land, we are talking about small farmers' access and control over food producing resources such as seed, water, land, and we cannot see that we are on the same agenda here.

*JS:* Yet another reference made by Bush was with respect to that of local agriculture – certainly a term not often uttered by the President of the United States. In this case in particular, Bush's use of the word was following his calling upon Congress to support a proposal to purchase up to nearly 25% of food assistance directly from farmers in the developing world. Bush insists that such a measure will help “break the cycle of famine.” Anuradha Mittal points out that 25% is not very high at all.

*AM:* Well it is good to see President Bush talk about a demand that many of us have been campaigning and advocating for at the Oakland Institute. We have called for 25% of US food aid to be used to buy food locally from the local food producers in the recipient countries. It's actually not asking for very much if you look at the other industrialized nations, EU for example, is procuring nearly 96% of its food aid locally. Canada has moved to nearly to 50%. And US remains one of the few industrialized countries that refuses to support agriculture, to support small farmers in recipient countries by buying food aid locally. So in that context, the local agriculture, one would hope is really about procuring food aid from the local farmers. It is not really about procuring food aid locally from the international agribusiness corporations, such as Cargill, ADM and the others.

*JS:* Coming back to the statement made on the US Aid website that reads “foreign assistance is a valuable foreign policy tool in terms of promoting U.S. economic interests,” the refusal to purchase food aid from so-called developing countries allows for some companies to earn a pretty decent living from hunger.

*AM:* Well, because United States has not changed the way it conducts its food aid program, it still insists on buying food aid from the US agribusiness corporations, which is then packaged and shipped by the US shipping vessels as enshrined in the 1985 Farm Bill, which requires most of the food aid to be shipped by the US shipping vessels. The money that we are talking about would basically be pocketed by the same corporations and shipping vessels. As we know, as a government accountability office report pointed out last year, this results in making US food aid first of all be late by almost six months, but at the same time it increases the cost of food aid by almost 100%. So, we are talking about, with increasing food prices, very little actually getting to the communities that we think it is supposed to help.

*JS:* What stands out as one of the more chilling statements presented by Bush was his reference to the long-term sustainability of food aid, instead of the long-term sustainability of food sovereignty and food security, the one that we normally use here in this show. Here's that clip again.

*President Bush:* And with other security assistance programs already in place, we're now projecting to spend nearly - that we will spend nearly \$5 billion in 2008 and 2009 to fight

global hunger. This funding will keep our existing emergency food aid programs robust. We have been the leader for providing food to those who are going without in the past, and we will continue to be the leader.

*JS:* I asked Anuradha Mittal if the promise of long-term food aid is instead succumbing to the battle with hunger instead of continuing to fight it.

*AM:* Well, when the administration talks about continuing food aid programs, it is indeed unfortunate that, you know, on one hand it is good to see that we acknowledge that there is hunger, that the hunger is increasing and we need to do something about it immediately. But at the same time, there's a lack of will – and I would say, political will - to change policies which in the long term would end hunger, which would make a dent in hunger. We all know that hunger is a result of decisions – human decisions – which is good news because these are not natural disasters, these are not something supernatural that cannot be changed by us. And in that context it's very important to be questioning and challenging our policy makers in countries such as the United States, that how do we have a long term prospective and how do we ensure those policies that would guarantee the human right to food for all in Third World countries.

*JS:* Yet another common statement made when foreign policy steps in to deal with hunger, is the promise of increasing the productivity of farmers in the so-called developing world. This too was made in Bush's speech and as expected, the term productivity often means dollars signs for US economic interests.

*AM:* Well, that's a real problematic area, because when we start hearing about increasing productivity in Third World nations, next we hear technological solutions, such as we're hearing right now -- the Green Revolution for Africa, revolutions based on chemical input, such as fertilizers, herbicides and the new green revolution being based on biotechnology and genetic engineering. And it really diverts attention from true causes behind hunger, assuming that merely increasing production will result in enough food for all human beings. I mean, even when we have had enough food to be able to provide enough kilo-calories per person we have seen increasing hunger. And if it was just a matter of production we would not have hunger in a rich country, such as the United States, where according to USDA nearly 29 million people are food insecure. So right now the debate, it should not have to be about how do we increase production and especially again, use world food price crisis as an opportunity to promote technological solutions, which in the end benefit agribusiness corporations such as Monsanto and the others, who are already projecting huge profits from this world price crisis. So I think it is very important to not deviate our attention from the true causes behind hunger and at the same time not take up all the space in terms of alternatives that exist to promote small scale sustainable agriculture.

## **soundbite**

*JS:* And this is Deconstructing Dinner where we're listening to clips from my conversation with the Oakland Institute's Anuradha Mittal as she comments on President Bush's May 1<sup>st</sup> speech on the role of the United States in dealing with the latest spike in global food shortages, price increases and hunger. Also standing out in Bush's speech was his encouragement for countries to remove "market-distorting tariffs and subsidies." Bush's calling on countries to remove tariffs is of great concern, in that by doing so, countries will increasingly become

dumping grounds for cheap commodities, which would only further increase the destruction of local agriculture and further increase food dependence.

*AM:* Well, I would first of all contest that again, the world food price crisis has become an opportunity for the US administration to not just promote corporate interest through the green revolution technologies, but also an opportunity to promote the Doha negotiations of the World Trade Organization as a way to solve the current food price crisis and to make a dent to hunger. It is a bit of a joke, because even the World Bank estimates show that the complete conclusion of the Doha negotiations would actually increase food prices of rice, wheat and basic staples. It is exactly those kinds of policies of trade liberalizations that had removed tariffs in Third World countries which have turned them into dumping grounds for cheap subsidized commodities coming from rich nations such as the US, which has destroyed the ability to feed themselves, which has destroyed livelihoods of small family farmers, which is a cause of this widespread hunger. So suggesting that the Doha negotiations would make an impact is a false assumption to make, in fact it would aggravate and further increase hunger in Third World nations among the poor and lead to further displacement of poor farmers.

*JS:* Bush's comments on subsidies and tariffs also raises an eyebrow upon recognizing that the United States subsidizes their agriculture more than any other country in the world, and to suggest that those subsidies would disappear seems rather Utopian.

*AM:* In terms of the US subsidies I think we have to look at the US Farm Bill, which should have been approved last year, but it has been in a stalemate in the US Congress and Senate. And the proposals set under consideration do not show any political will to let go of the huge big subsidies that go to, you know, agribusiness corporations. So, business would stay as usual. What we are hearing is a lot of lies, I would say, from the US administration in terms of wanting to conclude the Doha negotiations, because there is no such thing as creating a level playing field well, in this administration.

*JS:* So what is the answer to the ongoing global food crisis, how else could this \$5 billion dollars, for example announced by Bush for 2008-2009, be used to combat global hunger? Anuradha shares her thoughts on this.

*AM:* Definitely in terms of resources, I mean yes there is one immediate need which is of providing aid to communities who are in need, but also this money could be used for promoting true agrarian reform in Third World countries, and by that I mean things such as land reform, by insuring support for small farmers - all the programs which have been removed in Third World countries. It could be used for building up and boosting grain reserves in Third World countries, especially in the current crisis. There's a real need to talk about maintaining and building national stocks in Third World countries which have been decimated, again thanks to the policies of the international financial institutions which have been backed by rich nations, such as the United States. So there're many creative ways of using this money which could really ensure food sovereignty of nations in the long term.

*JS:* One of the responses by many countries to the latest global food crisis has been the enacting of restrictions on agricultural exports with the hope that those countries can better satisfy the food needs of their population. Well this of course upsets US foreign interests, and in closing out my conversation with Anuradha Mittal of the Oakland Institute, she commented on such protective measures.

*AM:* It would require real political will; more important, it will require ensuring political and policies based in Third World nations to take measures, whether it is ensuring grain reserves, whether it is providing support to their local farmers, ensuring local markets, promoting consumption of local crops, promoting sustainable agriculture. Whatever it takes, that policy space has to be provided to Third World nations so they can move ahead with their agenda of fulfilling human rights to food, within their national boundaries. We are beginning to see some of those measures being taken now, for example in India, Vietnam, other countries who are placing export bans to ensure that they can first, you know, fulfil domestic needs and needs of the poor and hungry in their own countries. Those kinds of measures have to be respected, have to be supported instead of criticisms that we have seen coming their way.

*JS:* And here again is George W. Bush, whining about the way in which countries are trying to protect their own people.

*President Bush:* We're also urging countries that have instituted restrictions on agricultural exports to lift those restrictions. Some countries are preventing needed food from getting to market in the first place, and we call upon them to end those restrictions to help ease suffering for those who aren't getting food.

*JS:* And that was President George W. Bush speaking on May 1<sup>st</sup> 2008 from the White House. And also lending their voice was Anuradha Mittal – the Executive Director of the Oakland Institute and you can learn more about the Institute and access a wealth of important resources by visiting their website at: [www.oaklandinstitute.org](http://www.oaklandinstitute.org).

And in closing out today's broadcast, it seems fitting to end it with a short clip from a recently released film by well-known investigative journalist John Pilger. The US response to the latest global food crisis is a clear picture of where the real motives lie in the USAid program. While it's become commonplace to accuse countries like the United States and Canada as only acting with selfish economic interests, it's not often that politicians or bureaucrats come out and directly admit this to indeed be true.

Released this year was an eye-opening film titled "The War on Democracy," created by John Pilger. It was during that film that Pilger poses a question to Duane Clarridge, who was with the CIA between 1955 and 1987 when he retired from the CIA, after being formally reprimanded for his role in the Iran-Contra affair.

Clarridge was questioned in the film, on his role in the US-led coup on Chilean President Salvador Allende, and his chilling response paints the clear picture of the role of the United States around the world.

*John Pilger:* What right have you - when I mean you, the CIA, the United States Government or any foreign power - what right do you have, to do what you do in other countries? What right?

*Duane Clarridge:* National security interest.

*John Pilger:* But that's a divine right, isn't it? Because . . .

*Duane Clarridge:* I don't know.

*John Pilger:* Because the people that you do it to have no say.

*Duane Clarridge:* Yeah, yeah. Well, that's just tough. We are going to protect ourselves and we're going to go on protecting ourselves, cause we end up protecting all of you. And let's not forget that.

*John Pilger:* Right. Now I wanted . . .

*Duane Clarridge:* We intervene whenever we decide it's in our national security interest to intervene. And if you don't like it, lump it. Get used to it, World! We're not going to put up with nonsense and if our interests are threatened, we're going to do it.

### **ending theme**

*Jon Steinman:* That was this week's edition of Deconstructing Dinner, produced and recorded at Nelson, British Columbia's Kootenay Co-op Radio. I've been your host Jon Steinman. I thank my technical assistant Doug Farquharson.

The theme music for Deconstructing Dinner is courtesy of Nelson-area resident Adham Shaikh.

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