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## **Agriculture News Release - 1993-03-05b**

United States. Congress. House. Committee on Agriculture

E. De la Garza

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# news release

## COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE

(NR93-016)

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Room 1301, Longworth House Office Building

Washington, DC 20515

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### DE LA GARZA OFFERS PROPOSALS ON AGRICULTURAL AID TO FORMER SOVIET UNION

For immediate release, Friday, March 5, 1993

WASHINGTON -- Expressing support for President Clinton's efforts to develop a unified, long-term policy to assist the independent states of the former Soviet Union, House Agriculture Committee Chairman Kika de la Garza, D-Texas, has offered the White House his views on what should be considered in formulating the agriculture portion of this policy.

In a letter to President Bill Clinton sent Friday affirming his support, Rep. de la Garza expressed three major areas of concern. Excerpts from the letter follow:

- Unified, long-term policy needed.

"I strongly believe that the former Soviet Union is desperately in need of support from the United States, and I believe this country has a moral obligation to support the democratic reforms in the FSU. However, like you, I believe that such assistance must not be provided on an ad hoc basis. The Administration and the Congress, working together, must devise a policy that is meaningful and that works in the best long-term interests of the United States and the independent states of the former Soviet Union."

- Prompt but judicious action should be taken.

"In my opinion, food is the key to stability in any nation. While I am advised that people in the FSU are not starving, I am also advised that the need for grain is most acute during the next two months. I would, therefore, strongly urge that the Administration review this need promptly and carefully in considering how this matter can be addressed in an appropriate and judicious manner."

- Integrity of U.S. trade programs must be preserved.

"The Committee on Agriculture included several provisions in the Freedom Support Act (Public Law 102-511) which provides the Secretary of Agriculture maximum flexibility in using the various trade and aid programs already in place within the U. S. Department of Agriculture. While I encourage the Administration to make full use of USDA trade and aid programs, I want to also convey to you my interest in preserving the integrity of the Department's commercial programs which led to significant increases in exports of agricultural commodities in the past and are vital to the continuation of trade with a number of our largest trading partners."

- Technical assistance should be a major component.

"The Food, Agriculture, Conservation and Trade Act of 1990 (PL 101-624) and the amendments to that bill (PL 102-237) contain provisions -- which I sponsored -- that authorize technical assistance and the exchange of agricultural data supporting the establishment of a free market food production and distribution system in the emerging democracies. This type of assistance is vitally needed in the FSU, and I encourage you to include this provision of assistance in whatever package of assistance is developed for the FSU."

Rep. de la Garza offered his assistance and counsel to help the Administration fashion its unified policy toward Russia and the rest of the former Soviet Union. He told the President that he intends to ask Administration officials to appear before the Committee as soon as possible to discuss the agriculture component of the policy.

In addition, Rep. de la Garza offered several other proposals for the Administration's consideration:

- In the absence of a Paris Club agreement or extension of further CCC guarantees, consider Russian participation in the Export-Import Bank's Trade Credit Insurance Program. This program could be used to provide short-term loan guarantees to facilitate the sales of U.S. bulk grains, agricultural equipment and technology, seeds, pesticides and technical assistance.
- Expedite completion of a Congressionally-mandated report by the U.S. Department of Commerce on the feasibility of using barter, countertrade and other self-liquidating finance methods. The 1992 Energy Act requires that the Commerce Department report consider the feasibility of trading U.S. grown food for FSU-produced oil, minerals and energy.
- Authorize the U.S. Department of Agriculture to establish a formal mechanism, without distorting U.S. agricultural ongoing trade, to facilitate barter and countertrade transactions.

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