

NATIONAL FOOD RESERVE

During these past weeks of discussion in Senatorial offices, I stressed two things: a national system of blast and radiation shelter for every American (without evacuation) and a year's supply of food stored within walking distance of every American.

They understand the need for the shelters, but the cost - about \$75 billion - seems politically beyond reach. I think that we can change this. After all, they recently passed an \$88 billion measure to repair the nation's highways. The lobby behind that bill - steel, concrete, and construction - is the same one which would build the shelter system.

We would have been better off with building shelters than with filling chuckholes in the roads, but perhaps both can be done. The high cost, however, makes this political effort for shelters difficult.

The national food reserve, however, is not a costly matter. In fact, it may actually save money and not cost anything. For this reason I found even the more frugal Senators willing to consider the immediate implementation of a food reserve plan.

For example, consider southern Oregon which is a much safer region in case of war than are most American urban areas. The climate and population density here is such that the region could grow all of its own food if necessary. Strategically, it would probably be bombed in an attack, but it would not bear the worst effects of a war. The region raises pears, meat, and a small amount of staple foods (grain and beans), but at present contains only about a one month supply of staple foods for its population.

In the event of war, even if by some miracle southern Oregon suffered no direct bombing effects whatever, most of the 300,000 people here would starve to death. They would be dead from starvation before they could go through a single growing season and raise their own food.

They would die even though the staple food they need is currently in storage in American farming regions - regions that cannot be reached without the modern transportation systems which would not be operating during the first few months after a nuclear attack.