

# I. Food Security, Instability, and and the Domestic-International Nexus

by Mariano-Florentino Cuellar



- **Food as a security issue**
- **(I)logic of the global food system**
- **U.S. role in the global food system**
- **(Possible) pressures for change**

- [L]arge and **powerful states**, whose actions have the **greatest impact on others**, can be **constrained only by their own people**, working through their domestic institutions.”
- “Many players are competing for influence, from rising powers to **corporations to criminal cartels...**”



December 11, 2006



July 15, 2009


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Global food system + SECURITY

# Food access ==> *insecurity*?

## *How exactly?*



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- **Direct *human security* impact** (Gillespie et al. 2008)
    - Hunger, migration pressures
    - Malnutrition and infectious disease (HIV, tuberculosis)
  - **Conflict disrupts access to food** (Jenkins et al. 2007)
  - **Militarization associated with food insecurity** (Jenkins et al. 2007)
  - **Disruptions in food (access & prices) can create instability** (Arekazi & Brückner 2010)

# Human security impact of hunger: Context

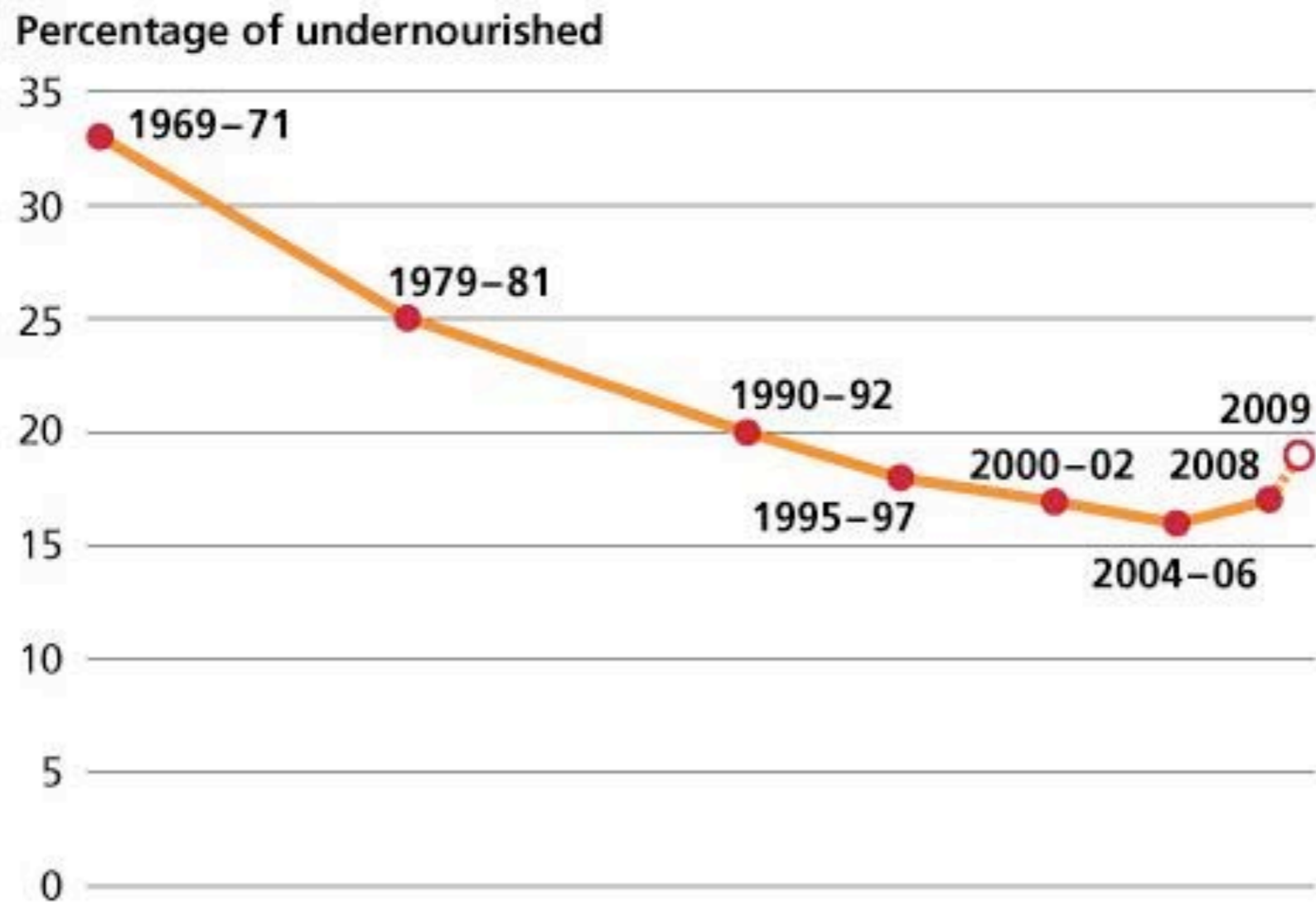


| <u>What Kills People? Estimated annual totals, decadal avg ~ year 2000</u> |                  |
|--|------------------|
| Terrorism (intl + domestic)  | 3,000            |
| Direct battle deaths (combatants)  | 20,000           |
| Direct civilian deaths from conflict (e.g. genocide)                       | 50,000 - 100,000 |
| Indirect civilian deaths from conflict                                     | 500,000 - 1 mil  |
| Hunger and malnutrition  | 6 mil - 8.5 mil  |

Sources: Human Security Report (2005); FAO State of Food Insecurity (2004); Lopez, Mathers et al. (2006)

# Food security: Worsening trend

The declining trend in the proportion of undernourished in developing countries has been reversed



Source: FAO.

# (I)logic of the global food “system”



**Developing countries:** Food instability (reliance on volatile int'l markets); Arezaki and Bruckner 2011)



**Emerging powers facing food insecurity:** Gaining influence.

**Problems:** Misallocation of ag. resources; subsidies & trade barriers hurt domestic production & encourage reliance on volatile int'l market; governance problems in dev. countries; inefficient aid

*Int'l actors:* UN, civil society

**Advanced industrialized countries:** Solved food insecurity in the mid-to-late 20th century

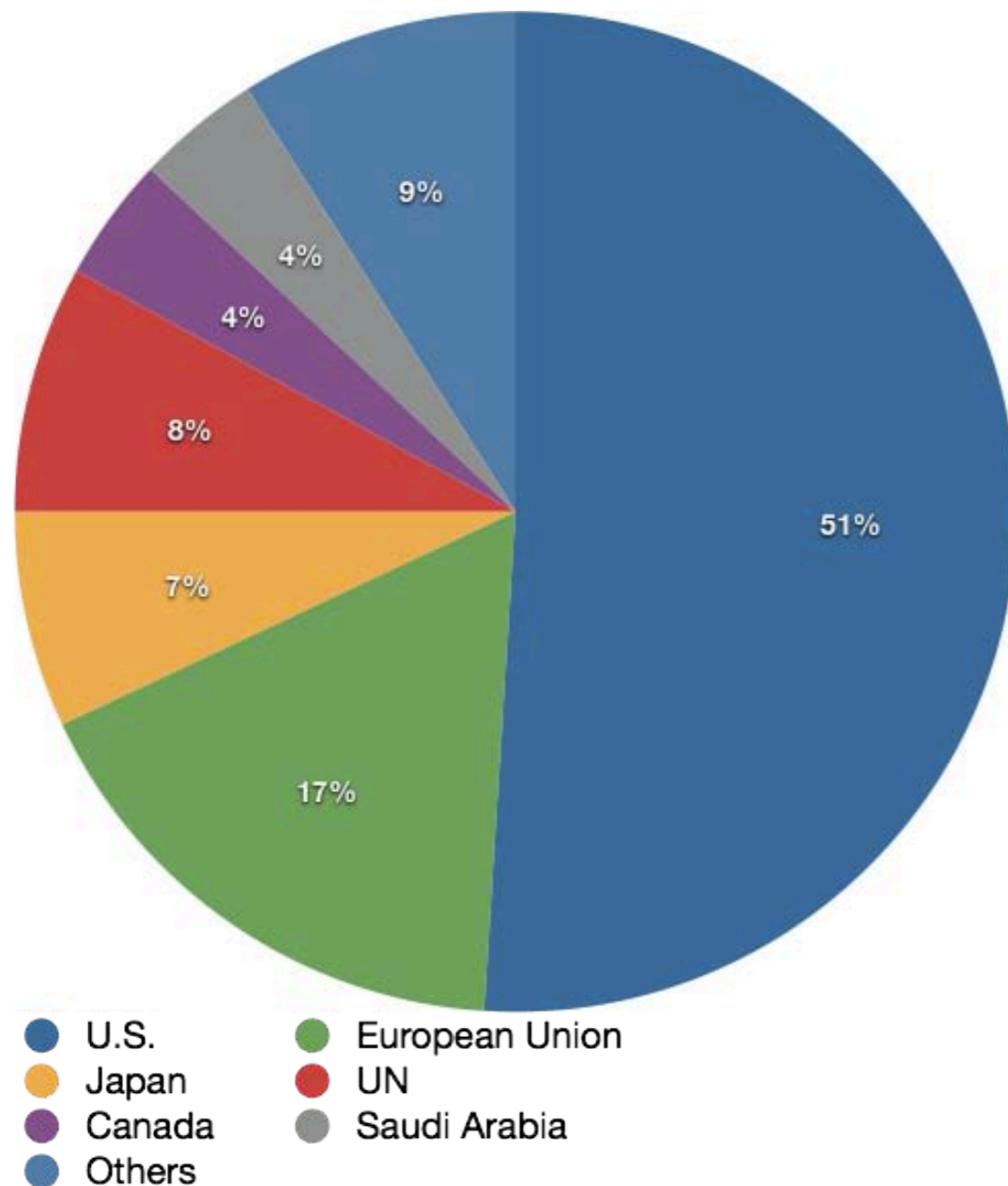




# Global Food System: U.S. Role



Sources of World Food Aid (WFP, 2008)



Largest provider of  
food aid

Shapes global food  
system through  
domestic agricultural  
policy

Major agenda-setter in  
international security



# U.S. Domestic and Institutional Constraints: Consequences

- **Inefficiencies built into food aid:** U.S. flag vessels must carry, large % through Great Lakes ports, and focus is surplus commodities; only 50 cents of every food aid \$ goes to food; rest subsidizes shipping (Barrett & Maxwell 2004)
- **U.S. ag subsidies, energy policy:** U.S. still subsidizes agricultural commodities, supports biofuels that increase price pressures on commodities.
- **Organizational fragmentation:** (1) Executive branch organization (within NSS and agencies) plays down connection between security, domestic agriculture, and energy policy; (2) congressional agriculture committees composed of preference outliers.
- **Irony:** Advanced industrialized countries justify subsidies on the basis of security



# Understanding Food and Security: Next Steps (& Possible Pressures for Change)



- **Understanding domestic precedents and pressures:** Potential precedents (e.g., agricultural policy change in 1996, pressure from NGOs, case-studies involving the historical role of foreign policy concerns in domestic issues such as civil rights).
- **Role of changes in U.S. organizational structure** in affecting security and foreign policy (e.g., Cohen, Cuéllar, and Weingast 2006).
- **Climate change** may reshape migration, border disputes, and access to food.
- **Rising Powers and the Global Food System:** Unlike the U.S. & Europe, Brazil, India, and China all face chronic food insecurity problems that could raise controversy over the politics of food.