

Global Starvation Ignored by American Policy Elites

By [Peter Phillips](#)

Theme: [Poverty & Social Inequality](#)

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A new report (9/2/08) from The World Bank admits that in 2005 three billion one hundred and forty million people live on less than \$2.50 a day and about 44% of these people survive on less than \$1.25. Complete and total wretchedness can be the only description for the circumstances faced by so many, especially those in urban areas. Simple items like phone calls, nutritious food, vacations, television, dental care, and inoculations are beyond the possible for billions of people.

[Starvation.net](#) logs the increasing impacts of world hunger and starvation. Over 30,000 people a day (85% children under 5) die of malnutrition, curable diseases, and starvation. The numbers of unnecessary deaths has exceeded three hundred million people over the past forty years.

These are the people who David Rothkopf in his book *Superclass* calls the unlucky. "If you happen to be born in the wrong place, like sub-Saharan Africa, ...that is bad luck," Rothkopf writes. Rothkopf goes on to describe how the top 10% of the adults worldwide own 84% of the wealth and the bottom half owns barely 1%. Included in the top 10% of wealth holders are the one thousand global billionaires. But is such a contrast of wealth inequality really the result of luck, or are there policies, supported by political elites, that protect the few at the expense of the many?

Farmers around the world grow more than enough food to feed the entire world adequately. Global grain production yielded a record 2.3 billion tons in 2007, up 4% from the year before, yet, billions of people go hungry every day. [Grain.org](#) describes the core reasons for continuing hunger in a recent article "Making a Killing from Hunger." It turns out that while farmers grow enough food to feed the world, commodity speculators and huge grain traders like Cargill control the global food prices and distribution. Starvation is profitable for corporations when demands for food push the prices up. Cargill announced that profits for commodity trading for the first quarter of 2008 were 86% above 2007. World food prices grew 22% from June 2007 to June 2008 and a significant portion of the increase was propelled by the \$175 billion invested in commodity futures that speculate on price instead of seeking to feed the hungry. The result is wild food price spirals, both up and down, with food insecurity remaining widespread.

For a family on the bottom rung of poverty a small price increase is the difference between life and death, yet neither US presidential candidate has declared a war on starvation. Instead both candidates talk about national security and the continuation of the war on terror as if this were the primary election issue. Where is the Manhattan project for global hunger? Where is the commitment to national security though unilateral starvation relief? Where is the outrage in the corporate media with pictures of dying children and an analysis

of who benefits from hunger?

American people cringe at the thought of starving children, often thinking that there is little they can do about it, save sending in a donation to their favorite charity for a little guilt relief. Yet giving is not enough, we must demand hunger relief as a national policy inside the next presidency. It is a moral imperative for us as the richest nation in the world nation to prioritize a political movement of human betterment and starvation relief for the billions in need. Global hunger and massive wealth inequality is based on political policies that can be changed. There will be no national security in the US without the basic food needs of the world being realized.

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