

THE PRICE OF FREEDOM

The March 20 issue of The Commonwealth carries an article, "Imperatives of Foreign Aid," by A. William Loos, Executive Director of The Church Peace Union. Excerpts from the article follow.

The free world in general and the United States in particular must yet demonstrate that it can induce reasonably rapid development in nations within the non-Communist orbit. Two factors are involved in laying the groundwork of such a demonstration: first of all, we must change the emphasis in our foreign aid program, meeting here the issue of allocation of resources, and then we must answer the question of whether America is willing to pay the price.

The emphasis in our foreign aid program must be shifted to give primary attention to over-all economic development in uncommitted nations. Neglect of military strength will bring us immediate defeat, it is true. But preoccupation with military strength alone is a cardinal danger today. The frame of reference of our foreign aid program is too often military: How can we shore up our defense perimeter? How can we create military bastions that can withstand overt aggression? How can we help the underdeveloped nations to contribute to our policy of deterrence?

More and more people are now convinced that it is on the economic front that the real issues of the Cold War will be fought out, and it is to that front that our foreign aid emphasis should be shifted. The establishment of the Development Loan Fund, to cite one specific example, is a step in the right direction; but allocations to it have been much too meager to make it nearly as effective as it might be.

If such a general shift in allocations can be made without jeopardizing our security, there is a way in which at least a sizable proportion of the increased funds for non-military assistance should be used. That is to give special attention to one large country for a full-scale demonstration of over-all development. Increasingly it is becoming obvious that this country should be India.

But suppose that the technical strategist on our over-all foreign policy tells us we cannot, without jeopardizing our security, change the present allocations pattern in that part of our Mutual Security Program administered by the International Cooperation Administration—the \$1.4 billion lumped under

"economic assistance"? We then come to the most critical question. Are the American people willing to pay the price for a more effective foreign aid program? Would the American people support even modestly increased expenditures in order to underwrite the program for India as outlined above, designed to make that country a demonstration of free world goals?

A candid look at recent history hardly suggests an affirmative reply to these questions. For several years the foreign aid program has had tough sledding in Congress, and administration requests have been regularly trimmed. Each spring a concentrated campaign by concerned citizens and non-governmental organizations appears necessary to insure the continuance of a program even at its present level.

Yet we should not sell the American people short. They responded to the expensive Marshall Plan almost with fervor. The Point Four concept they accepted with enthusiasm. Perhaps the real reason that the foreign aid program has been allowed to lag is that it has not been presented to the American people with conviction. Perhaps their latent sense of responsibility has not been stirred, but whose fault is this? Has lack of resourceful national leadership on the profound necessity of increased foreign aid on long-range terms resulted in the lackadaisical response by the people?

It is doubtless true that Americans are addicted to the private enjoyment of consumer goods at the expense of the public standard of living. Education, science and even adequate defense have consequently suffered. Yet only one who has utterly lost faith in the American people and indeed in the future of America would maintain that a more adequate foreign aid program would be rejected by our citizens—granting they were given half a chance to grasp fully its pivotal importance for an authentically free world at peace.

Increased expenditures for foreign aid directed toward the over-all development of uncommitted nations in today's world is "true economy." For if it is indeed true that the economic front is the crucial place where the Cold War is now being fought, the foreign aid program can no longer be considered ancillary. It can contribute decisively to our struggle for two supreme ends: that a society of coercion shall not prevail and that a society of consent—a genuinely free world—shall not perish from the earth.