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## Should Recipients Have More Say in Our Foreign-Aid Programs?

EXTENSION OF REMARKS  
OF

HON. JOHN E. FOGARTY

OF RHODE ISLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 9, 1956

Mr. FOGARTY. Mr. Speaker, as a member of the Appropriations Committee, I have an abiding and continued interest in the success achieved by our foreign-aid programs, particularly as they relate to the vital area of the Far East.

Recently my attention has been invited to a thought-provoking article appearing in the Washington Sunday Star on May 6, entitled "Should Recipients Have More Say in Our Foreign-Aid Programs?" Its author, J. A. Villamor, is a native of the Philippines but a naturalized American citizen and a lieutenant colonel in our Air Force Reserve. Colonel Villamor knows whereof he speaks. His record is an illustrious one, beginning with the days in 1936 when he was the first Philippine cadet to graduate from Randolph Field and continuing through the battles of the Philippines down to the present day.

As commander of the Philippine Pursuit Squadron, he was one of the few Philippine field officers evacuated with General MacArthur to Australia. Later by direction of General MacArthur, he was sent back to the island of Negros by submarine where he led the first small American party through Japanese lines to set up an allied counterintelligence network which coordinated all guerrilla activities in that area. His military missions in the South Pacific continued throughout the war and, after the liberation of the Philippines, he served in several important roles, both in the United Nations and as head of the Civil Aeronautics Bureau of the Philippine Government. Colonel Villamor found himself in the United States at the outbreak of the Korean conflict and volunteered his services to the American Government which accepted him as a lieutenant colonel, in which capacity he was sent to Saigon in 1951. Colonel Villamor spent more than a few years in Indochina and other vital areas in the Asiatic world where he viewed firsthand the incessant struggle between the forces of communism and democracy, which are seeking to win the bodies and souls of these unfortunate people.

Colonel Villamor is in a unique position to appraise our efforts, to properly

influence peoples with whom he has a common bond of heritage and a deep understanding of their aspirations and desires. As a good American and one who loves this country, I believe his views are both timely and worthy of deep consideration:

SHOULD RECIPIENTS HAVE MORE SAY IN OUR FOREIGN-AID PROGRAMS?

(By J. A. Villamor)

Something has gone wrong with our foreign aid policy. I think many Government officials would agree with this appraisal.

But too many of the critics tend to blame our failures—whether they are large or small needs yet to be determined—on the recipients of our aid. "They are inexperienced and emotionally unstable," some will say, "and this naturally makes them gullible for Communist appeals." Others will claim: "They are just stupid, that is all."

The more kindhearted may say: "The Communists are only taking advantage of Asians' childish sentiments, something we cannot do."

But how many will say, simply, "it's our fault"? I, for one, believe the fault is primarily ours. Here is why:

A substantial portion of American efforts in Asia can be compared with the efforts of a brave, noble fellow who, with a brick in one hand and a pistol in the other, is determined to save a man who is dying of hunger and malaria and who lies prostrate in a room that is full of mosquitoes.

### WRONG TOOLS FOR THE JOB

We are using the wrong tools for the job at hand.

It has become almost trite to say that the American emphasizes military aid too much. This, nonetheless, is the major problem.

Before we make our proposals we neglect getting answers to these vital questions:

Do the peoples we are trying to help want to have such a large military force as we think they should have?

To what extent must the national economics be adjusted to pay for these military forces?

Will these soldiers—usually the cream of the youth of these lands—be more valuable as soldiers or will it be better all around for them to be students, farmers and laborers?

Will these people have something to fight for besides having something to fight against when the time comes?

These questions ought to be explored in great detail before aid programs are decided upon. This should be obvious. But it is my experience that the answers are usually taken for granted by American administrators. Usually it has already been concluded by someone that "for their own good, they must have an army."

### DO THE PEOPLE BENEFIT?

Economic aid programs are also charted with the wrong aims in view. Often the improvements we insist on do not truly raise the standards of living of the people—although they may make a great show of industrial improvement.

It happens even with strictly philanthropic programs, where the intentions of

the donors are not open to question. There was a time last year when CARE packages arrived in Saigon with butter and cheese for people who did not have even rice—let alone bread—to eat with such delicacies. The cheese and the butter ended up in the black markets.

Many times the failures of our foreign aid have been due to our own unrestrained, let's-go spirit; our we-know-what's-good-for-you-better-than-you-do approach; our heavy dependence on material things to answer needs that are often largely spiritual; and, worst of all, perhaps, our tendency to forget the human problems—of peoples with hearts, minds, and souls, as well as stomachs, just like the peoples of the West.

In my opinion, our foreign aid ought to be directed more to the needs of the underdeveloped peoples as they see their needs, not as we see them.

True, we often do know what is best for these people more than they know themselves. But unless they can be convinced—and we do a very poor job of convincing them—our forcing on them what is good for them achieves us less than nothing.

### THE NEED FOR DIGNITY

Secretary of State John Foster Dulles found on his last trip to the Orient that "there is throughout the Asian peoples a desire for Western recognition of their dignity." Others have mentioned the need for recognizing the Asian's dignity, but too few have stopped to think what this really means.

Another point which our foreign-aid administrators often miss: Asia is sick and tired of soldiers, diplomats, and merchants who, in spite of their good intentions, approach the problems of the poor from a special point of view. Asians respond, however, to the nonprofessional like President Ramon Magsaysay of the Philippines, an amateur (guerrilla) soldier, an amateur diplomat, and an amateur politician fresh from the Filipino villages.

### AMERICAN UMBRELLA?

Secretary Dulles reported, on his return from the Far East recently, that "the clearest single impression I received" was that "uniformly \* \* \* the Asian leaders \* \* \* desire the United States to be strong and that that strength should continue to be a sort of protective umbrella over other free nations."

I venture to suggest, however, that many have misjudged the Asians' desires. What they were probably saying was that they wanted the United States to be strong militarily, but not they themselves.

Asians, in other words, think the United States should be willing to play big brother, respecting a very delicate set of international Marquis of Queensberry rules. This Asian attitude is admittedly selfish. But we ought to be clear that this is their attitude, and that they are not ashamed to ask us to protect them, no questions asked.

The importance of paying attention to the attitudes of the people of Asia cannot be overemphasized. To ignore their attitudes, to interpret them only by western standards, to base policies and programs on one-way precepts—this is just about the fastest and surest way to bankrupt American policy in Asia.