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REPORT TO THE PEOPLE



CONGRESSWOMAN

FLORENCE P. DWYER



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Once again this week for the eleventh annual time - Congress has taken the first of four major steps in its continuous examination of our foreign aid - mutual security program.

It is difficult to imagine any other Government program which has received such intensive investigation and so much critical study. Yet, since there is no other Government activity more important to our national security, it is well that this is so.

Any program administered on a world-wide scale and involving several billions of dollars will be subject to mistakes, inefficiency, and some abuse. Admittedly, there have been a number of examples of this maladministration. Constant critical attention to the details of the program, by Congress, the Executive Branch, and private groups and individuals, will locate the weak spots and plug up the loopholes.

Likewise, a mammoth operation which is so fundamental a part of our global foreign and defense policies requires the kind of flexibility which regular review and careful supervision will provide.

In fact, foreign aid or mutual security - call it what you will - seems never to be long out of public view. And this perpetual check, as it were, may account for the largely unnoticed increase in public and Congressional support for the program.

Public opinion polls taken by several of our colleagues, for example, have shown over the past several years a steadily increasing margin of support - in some cases, including our own 6th District of New Jersey, above the 80 percent mark with the opposition registering less than 10 percent.

These impressive figures should not, perhaps, be seen as indicating public enthusiasm for foreign aid. Support for the program is often reluctant and grudging.

What it really means, I believe, is that more and more people are coming to understand the truth of what President Eisenhower, Vice President Nixon, leaders of both parties, and independent authorities have been telling us: that the United States will spare itself the holocaust of all-out nuclear war only if we strengthen the political, military and economic resistance of free nations everywhere against the spread of communism and Soviet aggression.

Foreign aid, so far, has been remarkably successful. All the free countries of Western Europe have come back strongly from the depths of their post-World War II weakness, and all are firm and reliable bulwarks against Russian expansionism. In the rest of the world, too, we have halted communist military success.

But the cold war struggle has found new battlefields - the shops and factories and steel mills of the world. Krushchev's confident boast that

Russia would win the most important war of all, superiority in the field of industrial and agricultural production, represents the free world's greatest threat.

To meet this threat in fiscal year 1959, the Administration requested a mutual security program authorization of \$3.3 billion. The House Foreign Affairs Committee recommended a reduction of \$340 million. By the time you read this, the House will probably have acted. And my own votes will have been cast in favor of the full program and against any further reductions.

I take very seriously the warning posed by the Committee in its report last week: "The termination or drastic curtailment of the mutual security program would inevitably mean that we would lose the cold war."

The flood-light of attention directed at the mutual security program lately has also shown up the speciousness of such charges as "giveaway program", and "we're trying to buy friends" - charges which have in the past lured some people away from the central purpose of mutual security.

Nothing about the program is of a "giveaway" nature, since virtually all our assistance is sent in the form of military weapons, agricultural and industrial equipment, food, loans, and technical assistance. About 80 percent of all our aid money is spent directly in the United States and, incidentally, provides jobs for an estimated 600,000 people - including more than 17,000 in New Jersey.

All of it eventually comes back to aid our economy as well as our national security.

As for "buying friends", obviously such an attempt would be pre-doomed to failure. And I don't believe we're trying it. The purpose of our help is to increase the chances of weaker nations to resist the appeals of communism by strengthening their genuine independence, economically, politically, and militarily - even if it means, too, independence of us.

But I think the real test of our mutual security program is a look at the alternatives. For instance, not one among the 91 witnesses who testified this year before the Foreign Affairs Committee recommended abandonment of the program. The price of such foolhardiness would be unthinkable.

In a letter he sent to a reluctant Congressman last year, President Eisenhower spelled out those alternatives simply and starkly:

"They are," he wrote, "in this order, a fortress America, then a regimented America - finally a defeated America."

This is why, for the eleventh straight year, Americans will go ahead doing what we have to do.