

Criticisms Answered

But without presenting any better, the critics blandly assert that the foreign aid program's administration is the "wrong way" to do it.

(1) They say it may make Nasser angry and get his back up. But we have tried kindness and generosity, even increased our aid to him, and the World Bank has given him a whopping loan of \$56 million. Yet his restrictions on shipping get worse. Clearly friendly aid has been no more successful than appeasement of dictators has proved to be in the past. It is time for some friendly firmness.

(2) They say foreign aid should not have strings tied to it; it will wreck the program. But these are not the kind of "political" strings usually condemned in this connection. We do not by this policy try to compel Nasser to "line up on our side." We merely try to persuade him to end his violations of international law and his economic warfare which counteracts our efforts to aid others. Surely we have no duty partially to subsidize boycotts, blockades and piracy.

(3) They say the U.S. should not "take sides" in what is just an Arab-Israel conflict. But we did not hesitate to condemn the Israeli invasion of Sinai as a breach of the U.N. truce. And the current blockades and restrictions on shipping by the U.A.R. (which many consider to be just as much aggressions as are invasions of land area) are not just a private fight with Israel. These violate international law. These damage other nations, including our own. These threaten the moral authority of the U.N. and the peace of the Middle East and the world. We supinely ignore them at our peril. We surely should take sides against admitted violations of international law.

(4) In the light of these much broader considerations, it is patently absurd and demeaning to contend as some critics do, that Congress' action was prompted solely by a concern for Israel and questionable political motives.

(5) Or they say that threatening to withhold our foreign aid is an unprecedented and gratuitous intrusion in a very delicate area. Let us admit the situation is delicate. But our country did not hesitate to withhold aid to Israel at the time of its invasion of Sinai, in 1956, and for a briefer time in 1953, in order to persuade Israel to stop a water project in the demilitarized zone. We also held up economic assistance to Egypt when it nationalized the Suez Canal in 1956 until it agreed to compensate the stockholders.

Moreover, the existing law with respect to aid to Yugoslavia (Sec. 143) gives the President policy directives (to assure himself of that country's independence and its non-participation in any Communist world conquest plan) even stronger than those in our amendment. And the new bill expressly conditions our future aid to Cuba on the President's determination that it is in the interest of our country. (Sec. 552)

Admittedly the President should use the policy guidance with discretion. He is not compelled to act. But having the authority to act, and a Congressional mandate to try to attain free navigation and economic cooperation, his persuasive power to resolve the delicate situation should be greatly increased. There is precedent, and there is urgent need.