

# To Gain Respect

*Spruille Braden*

Our government aid to other nations may put them in the almshouse along with us.

**WE MUST** both merit and demand respect if we are to successfully conduct our diplomatic and other foreign relations.

A distinguished and experienced diplomat used to say: "It is all to the good if the American Ambassador is liked; but it is much more important that he be respected."

While respect, according to the circumstances, may sometimes have a connotation of fear, it far oftener evidences friendship. Also, as respect engenders friendship, so its absence will, in the end, destroy both confidence and friendship.

Before going any further, I should make my meaning clear by quoting Noah Webster's definition of respect: "to consider worthy of esteem, to regard or treat with honor, deference or the like; value . . . ; to refrain from intruding upon or interfering with, as to respect a person's privacy."

Of one thing we may be sure; respect never can be bought. The mere attempt to do so can only breed disdain and irritation. Yet, that is precisely what we have been trying to do for many years.

Since 1946, after the end of World War II, we have given away upwards of \$41 billion in outright grants to foreign nations, and disbursed almost \$14 billion in credits. (Their eventual repayment is, to say the least, questionable.) The total of our handouts abroad is \$55.5 billion. By this lavish generosity, we have gained neither respect nor friends. On the contrary, I believe it is apparent to anyone that we have lost both.

In order to approach this matter intelligently, we must first be able to comprehend what are \$55 billion. When I add the assessed valuation of all of the property, real and otherwise, in the 13 biggest cities of this country — New

York, Chicago, Philadelphia, Los Angeles, Detroit, Baltimore, Cleveland, St. Louis, Washington, San Francisco, Boston, Houston, and Pittsburgh — I arrive at a grand total of just over \$55 billion.

We would be appalled by the mere suggestion that these 13 cities, if it were possible, be shipped overseas as gifts to foreign nations. Yet, we have done precisely that. We have ourselves given away — in effect, destroyed, as if by nuclear bombing — the equivalent of our 13 biggest cities!

**T**HE DOLLAR LOSS and the consequent drain on us as taxpayers, at that, may not be so serious as the harm done to the morals and morale of both the recipient countries and ourselves, as donors.

Almost anywhere we look, our foreign aid programs have been extravagant, wasteful, and inefficient. Permit me to give an example: We induced Afghanistan to accept a 40-million-dollar loan from the Export-Import Bank, and to spend a very considerable sum themselves, to put in a hydroelectric power, flood control, and irrigation project for about 500,000 acres. In Afghanistan there were neither engineers to operate the project, nor agricultural experts to teach the nomads how to farm. The salt content of the lands was raised by the water from the dam to the point of ruination. The result is an economic and political crisis; and the Afghans, having lost respect for us, are turning their eyes towards their big neighbor to the north, the USSR.

The exponents of government aid say that, unless we finance dams and other public works like these, far-off peoples will continue to live in misery. At present, that is as sad as it is true. But let me

tell you what may happen even as the result of a well-planned and executed project, purporting to improve living conditions. Incidentally, this was not one of our government's programs. In, I believe, the 1920's, the Sukkar barrage in Pakistan was erected to irrigate a vast area of fertile but desert land in the Province of Sind, Pakistan, with waters from the Indus River. This was to make possible the feeding of a people living on the verge of starvation. What happened? The project did everything claimed for it. But, after a few years, the population so increased that the only effect was to have a much larger number of people on the verge of starvation, instead of a small number. Does this constitute progress? Does this elicit respect?

The answer is "NO!"

I suggest that the authorities in Washington have no right to continue these "give-away" programs, when there is no assurance that even the well-planned and executed ones will not increase rather than decrease human misery.

Another aspect of this problem is that we gain neither Tito's nor anyone else's respect by giving his regime hundreds of millions of dollars. We entrench communism in Yugoslavia, thus antagonizing many of its people, and give the Soviet a greatly strengthened ally, now that Tito is again back, hand in glove with the Kremlin.

Our grants and loans inevitably constitute an intervention by us on behalf of the government in power and against the "outs" in a foreign country. This is not the best way to make friends of the latter. But our prestige suffers much more when we distribute our largesse to dictators and corrupt governments. Then we lose the respect of, and antagonize all the decent elements in the recipient countries.

IT HAS BEEN ALLEGED that in addition to the billions of dollars we have squandered so far, we must now enlarge and make permanent these so-called "foreign aid" programs; that we must "sustain our position by helping *everybody else* to realize their own aspirations and legitimate ambitions . . ." It is said we must do so as a defense against the Soviet and the spread of communism. It is proclaimed that poverty and illiteracy breed communism and open the way to Kremlin domination, whereas industrialization and higher living standards defeat both of these evils.

These theories simply are not true. In southern Italy, where the greatest poverty and illiteracy exist, there is the least communism. In the industrialized north, with higher living standards, communism flourishes. This same condition prevails in many other countries and places.

Since the distribution of \$55 billion failed so utterly to produce really worth-while benefits, why must we continue, like a drug addict, to use more of the same hashish in ever greater quantities?

The simplest answer is that an enormous bureaucracy has been set up in Washington to plan for and run foreign aid. Bureaucratic growth is an intangible but living thing. No one seems to be responsible for its malignant expansion. Yet it always acts the same, as it grows and grows like a cancer. Also, like a cancer, it is almost impossible to rid the body politic of it — and, in the end, it can kill constitutional representative government.

Through oversized and centralized government, the Washington bureaucrats are able to allot bil-

lions of dollars of contracts, which bring handsome profits to a myriad of industries, commercial and shipping firms, and to labor. Thus, possible critics are lured into compliance and state interventionism is spread.

Heaven knows there is no virtue in bankrupting ourselves as we pour huge revenues into supporting other nations, even allowing them to reduce their own taxes at our expense. They will value this "charity of friends" at precisely nothing. Worse still, it will break their will to earn their own way and undermine their dignity. In the end, our government's dole to them will put them in the almshouse along with us.

By hard work and thrift, integrity and intelligence under the free, private, competitive enterprise system, the United States grew from a small, poor republic to its present power and economic potential. As a result, our private capital, during the last century, and especially from 1900 on, has gone abroad, bringing with it managerial and technical resources and skills. It has brought to underdeveloped areas all over the earth enormous advantages and such a development as no bureaucrats or governmental agencies ever have or ever could approach.

By returning to this system which has proven successful, we will furnish mankind with such a school that they "will learn at no other." That is the only way to recapture the respect of the world.

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