UNICEF: Aid for World's Children

By VICTOR LASKY

Our government has been trying to make up its collective mind about supporting the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund. The answer has got to be yes.

I have many basic objections to the United Nations, its role in Korea, and its use by Kremmlin agents as a cover for skulduggery. And, I deplore wasteful U. S. spending.

But, I have concluded we can't afford not to support UNICEF. Here is one phase of international aid, almost universally recognized as thrifty, effective, non-political and strictly humanitarian. Aiding children is pro-humanity, nothing else; whether they be Germans, French, Arabs, Jews, Turks or Ethiopians.

UNICEF has probably built up more good will for the U. S. than any other U. N. activity. We were the first to support it, and up to now we were the largest contributor. What has it cost us? Less than 10 cents each a year.

Today almost all the other countries outside the Kremlin circuit—many of them operating on shoe-string budgets at home—are contributing more than ever before to UNICEF. Approval of its achievements and current operations is more widespread than ever.

Yet now, our government is dragging its feet, appearing not to care about youngsters on whom the future of the world really depends. Recently our delegate alone abstained from a U. N. resolution urging continuation of UNICEF.

Here, briefly, is what UNICEF is trying to remedy. In our relatively well-fed, healthy land we need to reflect occasionally on the grimmess of living for two-thirds of the world's people. For example:

- the thatched hut, without any kind of sanitary facilities or pure water, is the only home most of them will ever know.
- 300 million of them are weakened by malaria every year.
- 5 million die yearly of tuberculosis, while millions more have virulent, infectious cases.
- 100 million are affected by a grotesque tropical crippled that most Americans have never even heard of—yaws.
- half a billion children are hunger-sick, though there is plenty of land to grow the food they need.

But perhaps the single most exciting development of our times is that man now knows how to stop this pattern of human and economic waste. We have the tools in the world-wide mechanism of UNICEF and other U. N. agencies—the World Health Organization and the Food and Agriculture Organization.

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UNLIKE other aid schemes, this is no give-away program. Aided countries are required to match UNICEF's assistance with local goods and services. Last year for example, UNICEF's allocations of over $15 million were matched by more than $23 million in local government spending.

The Indonesian rice farmer whose son is saved from the ravages of yaws; the Brazilian mother whose infant is given new life with UNICEF milk; the African whose palmetto hut village is ridden of malaria—these are the people to whom UNICEF is a friend.

They are friends we can't afford to lose. They make up two-thirds of the world's population. We can keep them by supporting UNICEF. We can lose them by failing to champion the cause of the world's children.

With UNICEF, we have a bird-in-the-hand. We can talk our way into the bush, and talk for years before we find as sound and non-controversial an opportunity to win friends and give new hope to much of the world.

For Information on the
United Nations International
Children's Emergency Fund

Write
U. S. Committee for UNICEF
United Nations 16, New York