

4 ECONOMIC POLICIES TOWARD LESS DEVELOPED COUNTRIES

This study points out that there are two strong opposing forces operating in most of the countries we are seeking to assist: (1) those arising from groups deeply committed to the traditional society and who fear that modernization and change will deprive them of the power, income, or security afforded by their traditional way of life; and (2) those from groups which have felt shackled by traditional society, who are seeking to become the new elites and who welcome rapid change as a means of broadening their own opportunities and enhancing their position. In the face of these forces, the MIT Center study concludes that it is to our interest to follow a middle course.

Put in its briefest form, it is in the American interest to use such influence as we have to maximize the attractiveness and feasibility of the third choice: to help make the evolutionary transition to modernization successful enough so that no major group will opt either for regressive efforts to repress social, political, and economic change or for extremist measures to promote it (p. 62).

Suggested targets for economic development

Specific or quantitative goals for economic and social development can only be determined for individual countries, and their realization will depend very largely on the efforts of the governments and the people of the countries themselves. Nevertheless, it is desirable that the United States in collaboration with other economically advanced countries establish certain specific goals or targets which they are prepared to support by means of external financial and technical assistance, provided the less developed countries take the necessary self-help measures.

The announcement of specific targets would provide a basis for economic planning in the less developed countries, establish standards for evaluating proposals for economic assistance and for estimating probable magnitudes over a period of years, and give to the underprivileged peoples of the world concrete assurances of our willingness to join with them in the realization of their economic and social aspirations. It is suggested that these targets might include the following:

1. The elimination of hunger in all countries of the free world willing to cooperate in a joint program involving the expansion of domestic production and a temporary provision of food supplies from external sources, within a period of 5 to 10 years.

2. The virtual elimination of epidemic diseases and the achievement of minimum standards of medical care by all free world peoples within 10 years.

3. Universal elementary education and a reasonably high proportion of the children of all free world countries enrolled in secondary schools and colleges, to be achieved within a period of 5 to 10 years.

4. A minimum annual rate of increase in output per capita of 2 percent in all cooperating countries, to be achieved within a period of 10 years.

Additional specific goals could be added to these. For example, in many countries a broadening of individual opportunities would need to include land reform. Underlying all of these specific goals would