

# AID

## What Types of Government Should Be Refused What Types of Aid?

### Revisited

by Dudley Seers

I do not want to take up at length here the many interesting points made by Terry Byres, Georges Gorse and John White on my article on aid policy in the last *Bulletin*. However, Terry Byres makes the valid criticism that I should have looked more closely at the "motives" for aid; the same point is made implicitly by M. Gorse. In the original version, I did examine this issue in a passage which was subsequently edited out, reasonably enough, so as to reduce its length. The editors have now provided me with enough space to repair earlier omissions.

This passage reads as follows:

"For the purposes of this paper, I shall assume that we are concerned only with the developmental interests of the people of the countries which are (actually or potentially) receiving aid. The military, political or economic objectives of "donor" governments provide of course far more powerful motives for aid. To wish for governments to behave altruistically is to wish for the world to be other than it is. On the other hand, to consider bureaucracies, including aid agencies, as if they were homogeneous cliques would be politically infantile. For various reasons, some Ministers and some officials are genuinely concerned about the consequences of aid on the recipient. In any case the fact that "aid" is provided to further the interests of the "donor" government as it conceives these does not necessarily imply that it is incompatible with the recipient's development. So it may be worthwhile to investigate how aid programmes affect development."

A passage in the original version which is relevant to a point made by John White was:

"To believe we can sort out "good" governments from the "baddies" is therefore fairly presumptuous, especially if we have not studied the history of the country concerned, or analysed at all comprehensively its social and political problems. Still the politics of any recipient government is in fact a major determinant of how much aid it receives, especially bilateral aid. And those who ignore politics, or pretend to do so, are in effect assuming that to strengthen the government is helpful to development - itself a political judgement: one cannot avoid "taking sides"."

Finally, another of the points cut out in editing, and one which might help clarify the analytical framework I suggested, was that the short-term economic effect was defined as that which occurred while a loan was being spent; the long-term when the resultant asset was being put to use.