

In my opinion, it is already clear just a few months later—and a full 2 months before we get into fiscal year 1968—that we are going to be forced to exceed the level of troop commitments which was approved when the fiscal year 1968 budget was finalized. Our responsible military commanders have already asked for substantially more troops than have been approved.

That is particularly pronounced in the I Corps in the northern part of South Vietnam which is the responsibility of the Marine Corps, and in the IV Corps in the Mekong Delta area. As you have read, we have already been forced to transfer several thousand Army troops from other areas of Vietnam to the I Corps to assist the Marines in meeting the threat posed by the large-scale infiltration of North Vietnamese forces in and near the demilitarized zone. Thus, we have been compelled to weaken our forces elsewhere.

Of course, as we know, General Westmoreland is in the country. He spoke in New York yesterday. He will speak, as I understand it, to a joint session later this week. I don't know how far he will go in these matters. I don't know how far the President will see fit to announce anything new. But these are the figures that I get, based upon past experience.

Therefore, in the face of hard realities and clear military requirements, I am convinced that unless the unexpected occurs, it will be absolutely essential to commit many thousands of military men to South Vietnam above the presently approved number. It is almost inevitable that the cost of the war will go up in men, machines, materiel and money.

It may be that it will be difficult for us to find major ground combat units to deploy to Vietnam without calling up Reserves or drawing down on forces deployed elsewhere, such as Europe or Korea. With this reservation, however, I feel that the end of calendar year 1967 will find at least 500,000 American troops in South Vietnam. This is some 60,000 more than are in the country at this time and is substantially more than are called for under the presently approved program. Even this number would be less than our military commanders have requested.

For all of these reasons, I do not believe that we can keep within the fiscal year 1968 military budget request if the war continues and I feel that next January we will again be faced with a request for a significant supplemental defense appropriation.

I think the amount is so highly uncertain at this time that I should not try to make an estimate now. It would be a guess, at that.

Mr. Chairman, that covers the points that I have in mind, sir, and I thank you very much.

Chairman PROXMIRE. Senator Stennis, I want to thank you for a most enlightening presentation. It was hard hitting but it was extremely well documented and it gives us information that we haven't been able to get before.

It also conflicts explicitly with the position taken by Assistant Secretary Anthony yesterday before us, and I would like to ask you about some of the conflicts involved.

First, I want to make sure I understand. You estimated in 1965, as I understood you to say, that the 1966 budget was inadequate, and needed a substantial supplemental. Is that correct?

Senator STENNIS. Yes; that is correct.

Chairman PROXMIRE. You said between \$12 and \$14 billion, and