

I plan to make a talk on the floor of the Senate this morning, and will read it. It is not long, two sentences.

On the first page of a 14-page statement made yesterday to the Joint Economic Committee by Assistant Secretary of Defense (Comptroller) Robert N. Anthony, Mr. Anthony makes the following observation:

At first glance Defense expenditures may not seem to constitute a major factor in our economy.

As our late colleague, Senator Robert S. Kerr of Oklahoma, used to say:

I thought I had seen and heard everything and I have been to the Dallas fair twice.

I didn't fully realize how incredible that statement was, until I heard the distinguished chairman of the Preparedness Subcommittee detail again what he had detailed so ably before in the Armed Services Committee and the Appropriations Committee, in past years.

I have a letter this morning which the able counsel of the Preparedness Subcommittee, Mr. Kendall, sent me. It is written to Senator Stennis by the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and says:

DEAR SENATOR STENNIS: I understand that during the course of his testimony before your committee this morning, General Bruce Holloway, Vice Chief of Staff of the Air Force, was asked why Kep and Hau Loc were authorized for strikes in North Vietnam. These two airfields were recommended for strikes by the Joint Chiefs of Staff and were approved in accordance with normal procedures. These strikes were in consonance with the concept of gradual increase in military pressure against the enemy.

I plan to write him:

With the requested recent air attacks on the airfields of Kep and Hau Loc, in your letter of April 24 to Senator Stennis, you state and I quote "these strikes were in consonance with the concept of gradual increase in military pressure against the enemy." We know the enemy is building up steadily his defenses around the meaningful military targets, defenses such as SAM sites and anti-aircraft and the hundreds of thousands of small arms. Therefore, the longer we wait to hit these military targets, the greater loss in American lives. The day before yesterday we lost heavily in planes and pilots.

Therefore, tomorrow we will lose more if we carry on with this concept of gradual increase of military pressure. Could I ask you, as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, why you apparently plan major and rapid increases in ground forces in South Vietnam, but only these gradual increases in naval air and navy forces engaging the enemy in South Vietnam?

That is the end of the letter.

I notice, Mr. Chairman, that there are an increasing number of public officials who say we should get out of the air and concentrate on the ground. To those who have studied this war, that means we should delay any possible successful outcome in the future of the war, and increase the number of American casualties.

That is my conviction. I would be interested if the able Senator or the chairman of the Preparedness Subcommittee would have comment.

Senator STENNIS. I would comment briefly in this way. I agree with you wholeheartedly. I wish that I could see some other way out, but