

meter recoilless rifles and large stocks of machine guns and ammunition of Chinese manufacture.<sup>8</sup>

By the end of 1964, the number of U.S. troops in South Vietnam had risen to 23,300. Even so, the U.S. involvement was still only that of support. The military budget presented in January 1965 actually projected a small decline in total U.S. defense spending for the fiscal year ahead. However, the Tonkin Gulf Resolution approved by Congress in August 1964 authorized all necessary measures "to repel any armed attack against U.S. forces and . . . to prevent further aggression in Vietnam."

3. *The North Vietnamese Infiltration in 1965.*—A significant change in the nature of the conflict occurred in 1965—the intensification of infiltration of arms and personnel into South Vietnam. The increase in infiltration gave the Vietcong increased capability, enabling them both to operate in larger units and to increase the number and intensity of attacks.<sup>9</sup>

The resulting expansion in the U.S. role in Vietnam is explained by the following dialogue between a member of the House Appropriations Committee and Secretary McNamara in April 1965:

*Question:* "Is our stepped-up effort there, our direct intervention and air strikes, motivated to some extent by the feeling that time is of the essence?"

*Answer:* "Our increased effort is motivated by the fact that the North Vietnamese were greatly increasing their infiltration of men and equipment into South Vietnam. We recognized if they continued that they will just overwhelm the nation."<sup>10</sup>

In February 1965, the United States Air Force began bombing targets in North Vietnam. The decline in total uniformed personnel of the U.S. Army halted in March. In April, the U.S. buildup of troops in South Vietnam rapidly accelerated. In May, the Administration asked for and Congress quickly approved a \$700 million military supplemental appropriations bill for the fiscal year 1965.

The estimated ratio of 4 Vietnamese military forces to 1 Vietcong was considered highly unfavorable for successful South Vietnam prosecution of guerrilla warfare, particularly in view of the ratio of at least 10 to 1 found necessary for successful anti-guerrilla operations in Malaya, the Philippines, and elsewhere. Accordingly, a major expansion of U.S. armed strength in South Vietnam was underway in 1965, reaching a total of 184,314 by the end of the year. This represented an expansion of sevenfold over the previous year.

During the monsoon season of 1965 the Vietcong attempted to cut South Vietnam in half and thus bring about a signal victory. The sharply-increased U.S. capability was instrumental in blunting this drive. This led the Secretary of Defense to state in November 1965, that ". . . we have stopped losing the war."<sup>11</sup>

4. *The Reliance on U.S. Combat Forces in 1966.*—By early 1966, the U.S. forces were conducting the bulk of the offensive military actions against the Vietcong. This can be inferred from Secretary McNamara's analysis of the four major types of military operations against the Vietcong during that period.<sup>12</sup> A schematic presentation based on his Congressional testimony follows:

| Type of military operation     | Purpose                                                                                                               | Primary responsibility                                                                         |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Search and destroy-----        | Destroy known or suspected Communist forces and their base areas. Excludes seizing and holding territory permanently. | United States and other free world forces and strike elements of South Vietnamese Armed Forces |
| Clear and secure-----          | Permanently eliminate Communist forces from specified areas. Includes conducting pacification measures.               | South Vietnamese forces. <sup>1</sup>                                                          |
| Reserve reaction-----          | Relieve Provincial capitals and district towns under Communist attack and reinforce friendly forces when needed.      | Do. <sup>1</sup>                                                                               |
| Defense of Government centers. | Protect Provincial capitals, district towns, and key Government installations.                                        | Do.                                                                                            |

<sup>1</sup> With assistance from U.S. forces and other free world forces.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 14-20.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Interview with Secretary McNamara, *U.S. News and World Report*, April 12, 1965.

<sup>10</sup> Testimony by Secretary McNamara before the Appropriations Committee of the House of Representatives, published in *Senate Armed Services Hearings*, p. 77.

<sup>11</sup> Statement by Secretary McNamara at a planeside interview upon departure from Saigon, published in *Senate Armed Services Hearings*, p. 91.

<sup>12</sup> Testimony by Secretary McNamara, House of Representatives, Committee on Appropriations, *Department of Defense Appropriations for 1967*, Part 1, 1966, pp. 134-135.