

million per month, and we are budgeting for a consumption rate considerably higher. It is important to note that whereas in 1964 we had no artillery in Vietnam, we now have a substantial number of artillery battalions there. In 1964, the U.S. Army and Marine Corps flew an average of 19,000 helicopter sorties per month; by the middle of last year they were flying about 60,000 sorties per month and at the end of the year, about 125,000. This intensive use of helicopters greatly increases our mobility, making it possible to operate with a much smaller central reserve and to conduct offensive operations without prolonged depletion of our forces in areas already under our control. Many of these helicopters are armed and provide a highly mobile source of firepower.

With regard to air munitions, we are now consuming at a rate of about \$110 million per month; and we are preparing to support a much higher rate. For example, in March 1965 we flew 800 attack (ordnance consuming) sorties in order to stem the flow of war materiel and personnel into South Vietnam. By June of last year, the number of these sorties had increased to 2,800 and by December to over 5,000. The number of attack sorties flown by fixed-wing tactical aircraft against targets in South Vietnam has increased from a monthly average of 1,200 in 1964 to 7,200 in June 1965 and almost 13,000 in December 1965. In addition, we have been flying approximately 300 B-52 sorties, consuming about 6,000 tons of bombs per month since July 1965. Overall, we consumed about 25,000 tons of aircraft-delivered munitions in July 1965 and more than 40,000 tons in December of that year, or at an annual rate of 480,000 tons; and this supplemental will support a considerably higher rate.

AIRCRAFT

Although the aircraft loss rate continues low, the rapidly increasing number of sorties is resulting in larger total losses. In 1964, we lost 38 fixed-wing aircraft and 24 helicopters to hostile action. In 1965, with both the very large increase in activity and the attacks against North Vietnam, we lost 275 fixed-wing aircraft and 76 helicopters. We anticipate that 1966 losses will be somewhat higher. A total of about \$1.8 billion for the replacement of aircraft losses is included in the fiscal year 1966 supplemental. Another \$168 million is included for the Army to equip new aviation units.

The considerably higher rates of utilization of many types of aircraft in all the services will also increase the consumption of spares. For example, Air Force tactical aircraft in Vietnam are now flying 60 percent more hours per month than they normally do in peacetime. And you may recall that I mentioned last August, we were increasing the utilization rate of Military Airlift Command aircraft also by about 60 percent. Accordingly, we have included in the fiscal year 1966 supplemental about \$1.2 billion for aircraft spares and other aircraft equipment for all the services.

OTHER MATERIEL

The additional funds requested for vehicles, electronics, and communications, and other procurements are mostly to equip new units, notably the additional Army and Marine Corps divisions, and for