

the Korean conflict," and forecasts that the war will have a big effect on the economy. For he sees as many as 300,000 topflight U.S. soldiers in South Vietnam, and is sure that Congress will vote the money even if the conflict costs upwards of \$10 billion a year more than it is expected to cost.

Whether and how much the action in Vietnam will be accelerated is a question that makes anything properly describable as calculation next to impossible. Some believe the conflict can be kept within limits. The failure of the Vietcong to take advantage of their big chance in the last monsoon season suggests that the United States can secure its bases and help enlarge the South Vietnamese area of control without enlarging its effort beyond present plans. But the war, as everyone is well aware, is being stepped up; and there are strong reasons for thinking the U.S. commitment will have to be increased further. If only as a matter of military economics, many argue, a combatant with the potential of the United States is bound to throw more and more power into the conflict, hoping to achieve its ends less expensively by achieving them sooner rather than later.

What is more to the point, both the strength and the resolution of the enemy are formidable. Some 250,000 Americans, as already noted, may well be sent to South Vietnam. But this may not be enough. Now the old notion that it takes 10 men to counteract one guerrilla, based on past wars including that of the British in Malaya, is no longer taken very seriously in an army whose firepower can be substituted for manpower. As McNamara himself has said again and again, a ratio of 3 to 1 may be too low, but a ratio of 10 to 1 is excessive. How do the figures stand?

It appears that the Vietcong number at least 65,000 hard-core guerrillas and anywhere from 85,000 to 135,000 part-timers, plus two regular North Vietnamese divisions: total 170,000 to 220,000. The South Vietnamese forces, everybody hopes, come to 600,000; add 250,000 Americans, and you have 850,000. This might amount to a ratio of 4 or 5 to 1.

This is only part of the story. The North Vietnamese "people's army" consists of 200,000 regulars and more than 250,000 semiregulars, reinforced by large reserves, a well-armed border police force, and hundreds of thousands of volunteers "ready to go." Bernard B. Fall, professor of international relations at Howard University and an old Vietnam hand from the days of the French defeat, holds that this force is one of the toughest, largest, most courageous, politically educated, and fanatically devoted armies in the world. He suggests it may move south to support the Vietcong, and also suggests that it might be supported, as it was against the French, by Chinese "volunteers" or Russian "technicians." A mass movement of North Vietnamese troops, of course, would make this a new war, and one made to order for U.S. airpower. Still, it would surely take more manpower. The possibility that another 250,000 U.S. troops may yet be moved to Vietnam, at a cost of \$5 billion or more a year, is manifestly not sheer speculative fantasy. "If we stay in, we must stay in with a hell of a lot of power," says Robert Lovett, Truman's Secretary of Defense. "You cannot skimp on power, and you cannot half fight a war. And no quartermaster was ever hanged for ordering too much of what's needed."