

In March the decline in Army uniformed personnel came to a halt, though the downtrend continued for a while in the other services. In April the U.S. buildup in Vietnam accelerated. In May the administration asked for, and Congress quickly voted, a supplemental fiscal 1965 appropriation of \$700 million. In June the decline in total uniformed military personnel turned into a steep rise.

The Vietnam war is now well along in act III of the budgetary-economic scenario. Since that \$700 million request in May 1965, the administration has asked for \$14 billion in supplemental war appropriations. Soaring orders for ammunition and uniforms have contributed to shortages of copper and textiles for civilian use. So far, however, the costs of the war have been largely channeled into reduced readiness. The war reserve of "combat consumables" has been drawn down. New equipment and spare parts that otherwise would have gone to units elsewhere have been diverted to Vietnam—Iroquois helicopters, for example, that would have gone to the 7th Army in Germany. Fixed-wing aircraft to replace losses in Vietnam have been ordered, but not yet fully delivered and paid for. The war has required only moderate incremental expenditures (that must be understood, however, to mean "moderate" as war expenditures go—a few billion dollars). But as deliveries roll in and the Armed Forces expand, expenditures will begin to catch up with the war's far from moderate costs.

In numbers of U.S. servicemen deployed, the Vietnam war is not as big as the Korean war at its peak. But costs per man run much higher than they did in the Korean war. The pay that servicemen get has gone up more than 40 percent since then. Some materiel costs have risen very steeply since Korea. The F-86D fighters in Korea cost about \$340,000 each; the F-4C's in South Vietnam cost nearly six times as much. Ammunition use per combat soldier is very much higher than in the Korean war. The M-14 rifle fires up to 150 rounds per minute, and 10 rounds per minute at a sustained rate. The M-16, carried by some Special Forces troops, can use up ammunition at a full-automatic rate of 750 rounds per minute. The M-79 grenade launcher fires grenades as if they were bullets.

The nature of the war contributes to making it peculiarly expensive for its size. Technologically sophisticated military forces, magnificently equipped to kill and destroy, are inefficiently employed against meager or elusive targets. In Korea, there were visible masses of enemy forces to shoot at, and the U.S. superiority in weapons could be exerted efficiently; in Vietnam the enemy hits and runs, moves under cover of darkness or foliage. With their abundant firepower, the superb U.S. fighting men in South Vietnam clobber the Vietcong in shooting encounters, but the U.S. forces run up huge costs—in troop supplies, fuel, helicopter maintenance—just trying to find some guerrillas that they can shoot at.