

we have actually strengthened our military position"). Counting peripheral supporting forces, the United States now has about 300,000 men deployed in the Vietnam war theater, and (in keeping with that 1-to-1 ratio) another 300,000 men are committed to backing them up. That makes 600,000 men unavailable for other contingencies. Since the low point in May 1965, U.S. military manpower has increased by approximately 400,000 (this figure allows for substitution of civilians for uniformed personnel), and a lot of those 400,000 are men still in training. It would be remarkable indeed if all this had somehow "strengthened our military position."

Nor is there much left to draw down in military inventories. As shown in the middle row of charts on pp. 506-8, Defense Department expenditures for procurement declined sharply in fiscal 1965—by \$3.5 billion, in fact. This decline in procurement apparently contributed to the Army shortages (of repair parts, communication equipment, helicopters, and trucks, among other things) discovered early last year by investigators of the U.S. Senate's Preparedness Investigating Subcommittee, headed by Mississippi's Senator John Stennis. Pentagon witnesses tried to explain that the "shortages" were mere routine gaps between reality and ideal tables of equipment. But at one point South Carolina's Senator Strom Thurmond pinned down two Pentagon generals in this exchange:

Senator THURMOND. You have not denied those shortages, have you, General Abrams?

General ABRAMS. No.

Senator THURMOND. And you have not, General?

General CHESAREK. No.

Senator THURMOND. You do admit the shortages?

General CHESAREK. Yes, sir.

The combination of rising Vietnam requirements and thin, declining inventories led last year to surges in military production and orders far beyond what can be inferred from the official estimates of expenditures attributable to the Vietnam war. In the second half of calendar 1965, Defense Department prime contract awards ran \$3.3 billion ahead of the corresponding period of 1964—\$6.6 billion at an annual rate. In contrast, the Defense Department estimates fiscal 1966 expenditures for the Vietnam war at only \$4.6 billion. Anyone trying to catch an intimation of things to come might do well to keep an eye on orders, rather than expenditure estimates. Orders are for real: if you want the stuff delivered in time, you've got to order it in time. But expenditure estimates are not binding upon anybody.

TRYING TO AVOID THE PILE-UP AT THE END

Since they are not for real, budgetary expenditure estimates are an exceedingly unreliable guide to the future. A better guide can be found in requests for appropriations. For the fiscal years 1966 and 1967 combined, the Defense Department has estimated Vietnam war expenditures at \$15 billion, but for the same 2 fiscal years the department has already requested approximately \$23 billion in Vietnam war appropriations.

Big as they look, however, these requests for war appropriations will almost certainly be added to long before the end of fiscal 1967. That probability can be inferred from on-the-record statements by Secretary McNamara and other Defense Department witnesses at congressional hearings.