

nam as time goes on. It is very hard for me to accept the notion that Secretary McNamara, one of the ablest men we have ever had in Government, a man with great emphasis on precision, and a meticulous estimator and forecaster, and so forth, missed it by this much in January. The notion that he would miss it this much again, if he had reestimated in April, and again in July is something else.

Furthermore, Mr. Secretary, on another aspect of it—

Secretary FOWLER. May I just say in behalf of my colleague that I think you are being unfair to him.

Chairman PROXMIRE. I am not being unfair at all. I am trying to understand why he did. I am saying he is a man of particular precision and great intellectual capacity and integrity, but I am just saying he was wrong and I want to find out why.

Until we find out why, it is going to be hard for this committee to recommend economic policy with any assurance to the Congress of the United States.

Now, to get back to your own responsibilities—

Secretary FOWLER. Could I at this point, Mr. Chairman, say that there has been submitted to another body a statement of Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara before the Senate Armed Services Committee, and the Senate Committee on Department of Defense Appropriations, on January 23, and this part of it has been declassified, and it is available. It contains Secretary McNamara's own explanation of this particular question, and the detailed record of his detailed explanations to the Congress, to the Senate Armed Services Committee, beginning on February 25, 1966, as to both the planning assumptions that he used and the reasons he used those planning assumptions, and, therefore, the qualifications everyone should have reasonably carried into their minds about the nature of the so-called expenditure estimates for Vietnam.

I would like to make this available to the committee, if it has not been given to the members. It is Secretary McNamara's own explanation on this particular point.¹

Chairman PROXMIRE. Yes. My time is up. I am well aware that Secretary McNamara said again and again, as did you and many others, that these estimates were subject to great qualifications and great uncertainty, which once again emphasizes the necessity and certainly desirability, and I think the necessity of getting more frequent estimates, because the latest estimates are just bound to be in the long run more accurate, based on greater intelligence.

Secretary FOWLER. And no matter how—

Chairman PROXMIRE. Until we have those later estimates, we are in a position where it is extremely difficult for us to act with any sense on appropriations policy.

Secretary FOWLER. You will never have accurate estimates of how much it takes to fight a war until you can read the mind of the enemy, and no one here has yet devised a means whereby we can determine what Ho Chi Minh or the men in Hanoi are going to do, how much force they are going to throw in, in what proportions, of what nature.

The question of military requirements and military estimates has always been the most variable of calculations, and it doesn't seem

¹ Copy of the material referred to is in the files of the Joint Economic Committee.