

were on Vietnam until after we had gone home. It was in November of 1966 that we were finally told.

Senator PERCY. I am very happy to yield the balance of my 10 minutes for that eloquent statement on your part.

Chairman PROXMIRE. I am sorry.

Senator PERCY. I would like to ask, coming back to the Commission's report, the Commission recommended that a private—

Chairman PROXMIRE. I yield that time back.

Senator PERCY. I appreciate such generosity on your part. The Commission did suggest that a private research organization be engaged to make these 5-year forecasts.

Would it be as valuable, and what are the pros and cons of having a private organization do that, as against having the discipline again of the Budget Bureau, who ultimately has to assume the responsibility and who could say, "Oh, well, these other estimates were just by this private organization," having them engage in a 3-year or 5-year forecast so we can get a sense of vision as to where we are going and what the planning is of the administration?

Mr. CAPRON. Well, I will take one try at this.

I think we should be clear what kind of longer term, say, 5-year forecasts we are talking about. As part of the major push that is now going on within the executive branch to implement the so-called programming-planning-budgeting system, there will in the next few years be available in all program areas 5-year forecasts of the expected program development in each of these areas, including financial expenditure data and the like. These will be revised annually so that they will always be 5 years ahead.

I think it is a very hard question which the Commission explicitly recognizes—and I believe that Mr. Kennedy discussed this briefly when he was here the other day—as to whether or not those forecasts in any official kind of form can realistically be transmitted to the Congress because of the very real problem that this presents to a President. Even though you write all over these forecasts that except for the next year they do not represent a Presidential decision or recommendation to the Congress, that they are just the best guess as of the time of preparation, I think that in many program areas these will be taken as commitments, as political commitments to follow through. This will make it very difficult—particularly in some areas where important private interests have a stake in the outcome—for the President to "back away" from a forecast for, say, 2 years in the future if he has put his imprimatur on it, no matter what qualifications he enters with it.

It seems to me that there is the possibility of kind of a compromise here, and I would suggest that Secretary McNamara has perhaps found one viable compromise.

It is my understanding that each year when he meets with the Armed Services Committees he does brief them on the 5-year program force structure planning and discusses this in considerable detail. It is quite different when a secretary or agency head does this than when the President does it. And I think maybe in particular program areas Congress can receive and should receive the best estimates of the particular agency or department involved as to what these decisions they are recommending now imply or what is going to be required to support that program 2, 3, 4 years in the future.