

is provided by military equipment and machines largely of mineral origin.

We are the world's largest consumer of minerals. During the past 30 years we have consumed more minerals than the entire world for all time prior to that. It is a fact that must be faced that we consume more than we produce. And our own national demands are growing in what seems to be geometrical progression.

The value of mineral imports in 1966 was \$2.9 billion and exceeded the value of exports by a ratio of more than 3 to 1. In addition, quantities of semiprocessed and manufactured minerals, fuels, and other mineral-related products are imported. Department of Commerce statistics indicate that the total dollar value of these imports was \$6.7 billion, with exports of \$3.3 billion in the same categories. Actually, today, imports supply more than 75 percent of our needs for 20 different mineral commodities. Unless this particular trend is somehow reversed, there appears no alternative to a steady growth in our reliance on imports.

Yet, at the very time our reliance on foreign, ocean-borne supplies of minerals is increasing, we know we have vast reserves of many of the same minerals within the borders of our own country, or within the North American Continent. Much of these vast reserves are, unfortunately, of low grade, compared to some foreign sources. This fact, plus high production costs in the United States, plus the attractiveness of the growing foreign market, have resulted in what is perhaps a disproportionate emphasis by Americans on the development of foreign mineral resources.

My long interest in the development of the mineral resources of my own State of Alaska, and my service as chairman of the Subcommittee on Mineral, Materials, and Fuels, have impressed me with the great potentials for further discovery of new mineral resources and the further development of these resources now known.

Mineralogically speaking, the United States—and especially my own State of Alaska—may still be an underdeveloped or emerging country.

Over the years, from time to time, various units of the Congress, as well as various commissions appointed by the executive branch, have held hearings and conducted investigations as to the validity of the controversial theory or concept that the United States now is a "have not" nation.

I hope that these hearings will throw additional light on this vital subject and point to what if anything we should and can do about it.

And now, if no member of the subcommittee wishes to make a statement, I will call as our first witness, Dr. Hibbard.

Dr. Hibbard, we are very happy to have you here.

I want to express my regret at the news that you are leaving the Government and going into private industry. Private industry will be the gainer, the Government will be the loser. But we know that your service wherever it is will be of great value to our Nation.