

Excerpts from Secretary of Defense McNamara's speech of March 2, 1966:

.... how was it possible to carry through such a major military operation without invoking the usual emergency measures.

The answer is that during the last five years we have greatly strengthened our military establishment for precisely this kind of a contingency. ...

.....

And, at the same time we were increasing our non-nuclear forces, we also increased our nuclear forces. For example, the number of nuclear warheads in our strategic alert forces will have been increased from 836 in June 1961 to about 2600 in June 1966 and the total megatonnage of these weapons more than tripled. Moreover, by June 30, 1966, we will have doubled the number of tactical nuclear warheads on the soil of Western Europe, and large numbers of tactical nuclear weapons are available for use in other areas of the world, if required.

Mailed to me 3/4/66
Rec'd 3/5/66

Carefully edited - as
he got worried because after
getting started in
major admissions
& statements are not
included or have been
seriously altered compared
to the written program
first in the Wash Post 3/2/66

NEWS CONFERENCE
OF
HONORABLE ROBERT S. McNAMARA
SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

THE PENTAGON

Wednesday, March 2, 1966

3:00 P. M.

MR. SYLVESTER: Ladies and gentlemen, as we made the announcement when the press conference was announced, the Secretary and the Deputy Secretary are going to devote their time here to the readiness of our armed forces. At the end of the meeting, we will also have material for you, factual material, and a fact sheet, which consists of a good deal of the material and conversations and questions and answers that will go here. That will be ready when you go out. Mr. Secretary.

SECRETARY McNAMARA: Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. Recently questions have been raised which give the erroneous impression that the United States is now militarily over-extended because of the deployment of major combat forces to Southeast Asia. It has been said that we are not now able to meet contingencies which might arise elsewhere in the world.

Such an impression has absolutely no basis in fact. Even though we have deployed a military force of approximately 300,000 men to Southeast Asia, we are fully capable of meeting our treaty commitments elsewhere in the world.

We have today a total active military force of about three million men. U. S. Forces in Southeast Asia approximate only about 10 percent of that total. To fully appreciate our military situation at this time, one must understand the basic ground rules under which our program is proceeding. In the current military buildup, no mobilization has been decreed, either partial or otherwise; no reserve forces have been ordered to active duty; and, with the exception of small numbers of men in the Navy and Marine Corps, no involuntary extensions of active duty tours have been imposed.

(MORE)

In this respect, the Southeast Asia effort is unique in our military history. Never before has this nation or any other nation been able to deploy so large a force within so short a period of time, some 10,000 miles from the shores, without calling up reserves, without extending active duty tours, and without invoking the kinds of strict economic controls normally associated with military emergencies.

It was this performance, a performance made possible by the vast increases in our military strength in the past five years, which led Charles Burke in the current issue of Fortune Magazine to conclude that probably no comparable war has ever been mounted as swiftly and as efficiently.

I want to emphasize that that is not to say that every one of the tens of thousands of defense supply outlets is without a single inventory shortage. Anyone who has had any experience with large supply systems knows that somewhere, sometime, someplace, something will be lacking. This has nothing to do with the amount of funds requested and appropriated.

It simply reflects the fact that no system involving hundreds of thousands of people and millions and millions of items and operating around the globe can be considered 100 percent perfect.

I think the entire question of shortages must be viewed in perspective. The acid test of any logistics system and certainly of ours, is its ability to take the field and engage in combat. That ability has been demonstrated in full measure during the past six months.

I want to state categorically that no shortage has impeded our combat operations in Southeast Asia, and no shortage has adversely affected the morale or welfare of our men.

This fact has been attested to by General Westmoreland, our Commander in South Vietnam; by Admiral Sharp, the Commander-in-Chief in the Pacific; by General McConnell, the Chief of Staff of the Air Force; and by General Wheeler, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs; General Greene, the Commandant of the Marine Corps, and General Johnson, the Chief of Staff of the Army, all of whom within the past three months have visited South Vietnam and discussed the situation there with all of our commanders down through the battalion level.

The buildup of ammunition stocks and production over the past five years has placed us in a position where, in the past month, we had planned annual rates of expenditure in Southeast Asia, of munitions, as follows: Over 1,700,000 bombs; over 4,800,000 2.75 inch rockets; 88 million rounds of air-to-ground fire; one billion rounds of small arms fire, including 30 caliber machine guns; over 16 million 40 mm grenades, and over 11 million rounds of mortar and artillery fire.

NAPALM 1M BOMBS?

(MORE)

Our consumption in February, this past month, of air-delivered munitions alone in South Vietnam, was two and a half times the average monthly rate in the three years of the Korean War, and we are prepared to support even higher rates in the months ahead.

I recognize that the decision not to call up reserve forces, the decision not to extend active duty tours, does demand some special effort, some greater ingenuity on the part of our military leaders to build up our forces as rapidly as they are required. But this task can be accomplished, and it can be accomplished while at the same time we preserve our ability to meet contingencies elsewhere in the world.

As a matter of fact, today we have a very substantial central reserve of ground forces which we could draw upon to meet contingencies, should they arise. Simply by calling up the reserves and extending active duty tours, we could make ready for deployment within 90 days, nine additional combat-ready division forces.

We now have a total of about 4,700 tactical aircraft in the active force and reserves. Only a fraction of these are deployed to Southeast Asia at this time. In an emergency, we could deploy into combat an additional 2,300 tactical aircraft within 90 days. And we could do this without drawing on those presently assigned to Southeast Asia, Korea or Europe.

It is clear, therefore, that far from overextending ourselves we have actually strengthened our military position. Our active duty forces are being expanded. Our reserve forces are being strengthened and made more combat-ready. Our production and logistics base is being vastly increased.

And all of this is being done without calling up the reserves, without generally extending tours of duty, without imposing the economic controls over wages and prices, profits, materials, which is typical of emergency conditions.

The very fact that we haven't taken these steps means that we still have great untapped resources upon which we could call quickly to meet any other major contingencies which may confront us in the future.

I think it is essential that this point be clearly understood by friend and foe alike so that there may be no miscalculation as to our capabilities to meet our treaty commitments anywhere in the world.

Now, I would be happy to take your questions.

(MORE)

QUESTION: Mr. Secretary, some of these stories that you talk about here are based in part on an assumption that General Westmoreland has stated a requirement for this calendar year which will add in the neighborhood of 200,000 men to our forces in South Vietnam. Has he stated any such requirements?

SECRETARY McNAMARA: The President stated last July, I think July 28th, that we would meet Westmoreland's requirements when they were made. We have done so to date. We expect to do so in the future. We have about 215,000 men in South Vietnam at the present time.

Within the lead time necessary to meet Westmoreland's request we have authorized deployment of an additional 20,000. There are no requirements stated by him beyond that level for the lead time required.

We expect to be able to meet additional requests as they may come to us this year. As a matter of fact, we have a capability today to deploy forces in Southeast Asia larger in number than those deployed in the Korean area during the Korean War, and do so without calling up the reserves.

For example, we can deploy to Southeast Asia above the level presently deployed there an additional 21 combat-ready battalions by July 1st, should that become necessary.

QUESTION: Mr. Secretary, why is it that you nearly always add the phrase, "without calling up the reserves"? What have you got against these men, and why do you want to fight the war with draftees?

SECRETARY McNAMARA: Obviously, we will be fighting the war with draftees whether we call up the reserves or not. We don't have anything against the reserves, as a matter of fact, we value them highly, we are increasing their combat readiness, and we are holding them in reserve in the event they become necessary to face any contingency. But, I think it is quite apparent to all of you that the way to build up our strength to the maximum is to hold this reserve. It is a reserve. The very name connotes that. Our reserve, if you will, is greater if we don't call it up than if we do call it up.

QUESTION: Mr. Secretary, there has been considerable curiosity invoked by the fact that you have refused the Stennis Subcommittee permission to print the final report of the investigation which their men conducted into the Army, and which, according to the interim report, alleged that the readiness of the Army had been compromised by the impact of Vietnam.

Will you now, in view of this very optimistic report which you have presented us today -- will you agree to permit publication of the Stennis report?

(MORE)

SECRETARY McNAMARA: I haven't refused permission to the Committee to print the report. As a matter of fact, I haven't seen the staff report. I understand they passed it through our security review which is normal and then decided not to publish it.

If they choose to publish it in an unclassified form, we would have no objection.

QUESTION: Sir, they say it is the Pentagon that refused permission.

SECRETARY McNAMARA: All I can tell you is that no one has asked me for permission to publish it. We have no authority to refuse them permission to publish an unclassified report, and haven't done so.

QUESTION: Mr. Secretary, is it not true that despite the buildup of large reserves, the best trained, best equipped and most mobile American units have been now absorbed by the Vietnam crisis so that the strategic mobility of the United States forces has diminished?

SECRETARY McNAMARA: Let me answer your question. Where are you from?

QUESTION: From Germany.

SECRETARY McNAMARA: It is absolutely not true and you are the first that ought to know it. I am sick and tired of having implications made that we have drawn down the forces in Western Europe when we haven't. The Seventh Army has been, is today, and in the future will be, the most combat ready Army in the world. It will not be affected in that respect by our operations in Southeast Asia. The first people that ought to know that are the Germans.

QUESTION: In a few minor items you have issued defense rated orders for certain minor items. Do you expect an increase in these orders?

SECRETARY McNAMARA: I can't answer your question except generally. I see no serious restriction on the civilian economy as a result of defense production and the very substantial changes that will occur in it, the very substantial increases that will occur in it, as our buildup continues. I think to put this in perspective it is important to think of our total defense budget as a percentage of Gross National Product.

Many of you are familiar with these figures. I will just summarize them for you briefly. In Fiscal '66, the current fiscal year, we expect to expend about \$54 billion, or a few hundred million above that level. In fiscal

(MORE)

'67, the next fiscal year, our budget calls for \$58.2 billion, I believe.

These are respectively 7.7 and 7.8 percent of Gross National Product. Those figures, that is to say, the Defense Budgets for '66 and '67, in relation to our income, are lower than in any one of the five years, 1960, '61, '62, '63, '64. This is very hard to believe, particularly when one recognizes the substantial increases in our defense expenditures in '66 and '67. But it is a reflection of the tremendous foundation which we have had in combat readiness, in inventories, in equipment, to move and supply the 300,000 men now deployed to Southeast Asia, and it is an indication, in answer to your question, that the demand on our civilian economy will not be great.

In this respect, the situation is quite different from that at the time of Korea. You may remember that the Defense Budget increased threefold in relation to the national income, running from roughly 4 percent of Gross National Product to something on the order of 14 percent in about 24 months.

In the same 24 months period here, say from 1964 to '66, the Defense Budget actually went down as a percentage of Gross National Product, from something on the order of 8.1 percent to 7.7 or 7.8. This is a reflection, as I say, both of the readiness of our military department and also of the very rapid expansion in our total economy.

QUESTION: Mr. Secretary, it is alleged that you have a certain doctrine relating to Communist China, and this doctrine is not necessarily in agreement with the view of many of our closest allies. Can you tell us what you believe China's intentions to be?

SECRETARY McNAMARA: Let me say I think this is a very important question that I would like to answer but not today. If you will hold that, we will meet shortly and get into that.

QUESTION: Mr. Secretary, a two-part question on the shipping backlog which you referred to in your statement:

As I remember correctly from earlier Congressional testimony, they mentioned the acceptable backlog as something in the neighborhood of 59 ships and you have lowered it to 41. Secondly, I assume the 41 is only military ships.

SECRETARY McNAMARA: Yes, first, let me say this: We had about 122 ships being unloaded, awaiting unloading, or being held in holding ports, say in the Philippines, relating to the Southeast Asia operations in November.

(MORE)

That 122 dropped to something on the order of 41 or 44 at the end of February. It is actually a little lower today. At the level of tonnage that we were moving there in January and early February, we thought somewhere around 59 was normal.

I think now that we have gotten below the level, we would have to say that we can operate with a lesser number. So whether you call it 59 or 45, the point is we are, for all practical purposes, at normal today.

~~These figures are for military cargo ships only.~~ In addition to that, there are ships carrying AID cargo, economic aid cargo, and commercial cargo.

Cy, do you remember how many there are?

SECRETARY VANCE: No, I do not.

SECRETARY McNAMARA: I will check this later, but I think the total is on the order of 80-odd for all types of ships being unloaded or awaiting unloading in South Vietnamese ports, of which 80-some, 41 are military. For all practical purposes we have no shipping problem.

QUESTION: Mr. Secretary, I thought the earlier question was about the nation's strategic flexibility rather than the forces in Europe, but in any event mine is. How many combat ready divisions do we have inside the United States today?

SECRETARY McNAMARA: I simply want to tell you that we can move 21 battalions to Southeast Asia by July 1 if required to do so, and I don't know that we will be required to do so, and we can move or deploy 9 additional division forces on 90 days' notice.

QUESTION: Those are reserves?

SECRETARY McNAMARA: They are not all reserves. Let me go back and say that the 21 battalions can be moved from the active force without call of reserve, and the 9 divisions moved in 90 days would include -- what, 5 divisions from reserve and guard forces?

SECRETARY VANCE: Five from guard and reserve.

QUESTION: Mr. Secretary, you say in your statement there should be no miscalculation of our capabilities to meet our commitments anywhere in the world. Yet the newspaper articles and criticism you get on the Hill seems to show a certain miscalculation here in this country. The first question --

(MORE)

SECRETARY McNAMARA: If there is, I think we are at fault and that is what I am trying to clear up today.

QUESTION: Why, is it the fault of the Pentagon in not releasing this information, or is it a personal feud against you?

SECRETARY McNAMARA: No, certainly not the latter. I think it is a fault in our method of explaining it. We have not made clear why we are doing what we are doing, which is quite different than what has ever been done before in any major war carried on by any major power in history.

We haven't made clear why we are doing what we are doing, and we haven't made clear what the effect of it is. Why we are doing what we are doing, which is not to call up reserves, is to preserve this untapped power available to meet further contingencies, and the effect of what we are doing is to give us a much greater capability for meeting contingencies, for fulfilling our treaty commitments, than anyone has heretofore realized.

And, in particular, we want to minimize the load on our nation, on our economy, while maximizing our response to General Westmoreland and the requirements of the situation in Southeast Asia.

We think we can do that by this device. I have told you before that calling reserves not only reduces, if you will, the untapped contingency allowance that we have to meet other commitments as they may arise, because it shifts reserves into the active force, but it also is, in a sense, a perishable asset.

The law under which we called the reserves to active duty in 1961 required that we return them to civilian life at the end of a year. Even if that law were to be changed -- and I think perhaps if we were to call reserves in the future we could obtain a law that would give us a longer period of time of such reserves on active duty -- even if it were to be changed, they are still a perishable asset.

As Mr. Vance pointed out yesterday when we were discussing this, if reserves are called up and later returned, after their return their combat readiness is far less than if they had never been called.

So for both reasons, assuming we can meet the requirements, and that is our basic assumption and plan, of Westmoreland, without calling reserves, we are well advised not to do so.

That is why we are not doing it. The result of not doing it is, as I suggest, to give us a greater capability to meet commitments elsewhere in the world.

(MORE)

QUESTION: Why in this general discussion of conventional forces have you included a paragraph restating our nuclear capability?

SECRETARY McNAMARA: I didn't want you or others to overlook the fact that we were continuing to increase our nuclear inventories at the same time that we had put this emphasis on conventional forces.

Sometimes we, ourselves, fail to emphasize that these forces are not in competition, one with the other. One compliments the other. Both are required. We are taking steps to insure that the strength of both is increased.

I think I mentioned here that in the past five years we have increased the total inventory of nuclear warheads about 50 percent. We have increased the number of warheads in our strategic alert forces to a total of 300 percent of what it was in 1961. We have increased the number of tactical warheads, nuclear warheads on the side of Western Europe about 100 percent during that period of time.

QUESTION: You mentioned in the answer before last that this is different than any major war in history. Does that mean that the Administration now views Vietnam as a major war?

SECRETARY McNAMARA: Well, you can make your own definition of it. We have 300,000 men deployed out there at the present time in South-east Asia.

QUESTION: Mr. McNamara, after the nine divisions that you can deploy, as you say, what do you have left available for other commitments around the world?

SECRETARY McNAMARA: We have other divisions that are coming along, that will be deployable after the nine are deployed. It would be extremely difficult for us, if we had 19 divisions, to deploy them in 90 days.

Just the movement of that tremendous number of men and equipment, recognizing each one of these divisions has a division size of 40,000 men or so, so we are talking about moving 350,000 men in 90 days. We would have difficulty in moving more than that.

So the others are coming along on a schedule beyond that. I simply chose a particular point in time. I have given you more information today of a classified character than I have ever disclosed before, and I do it simply to insure that none of us, friend or foe alike, miscalculates this nation's

(MORE)

capability to fulfill its treaty commitments.

I can't imagine anything more dangerous than for either we ourselves or our potential foes to misunderstand the force we have available and the will we have to apply it.

QUESTION: Mr. Secretary, on the question of readiness, some of this hasn't been casual comment. Senator Stennis has conducted rather an extensive investigation, I am told, and he has constantly said that we are taking it out of the hide of the divisions here and in Europe to take care of Vietnam. I wouldn't think that would be casual.

Apparently there are some other people in the Senate Preparedness Subcommittee who have a similar viewpoint.

Do you think they are wrong? Are these people just pipedreaming?

SECRETARY McNAMARA: I don't know what it means to say we have been taking it out of the hide. All I can tell you is (A) - we have met Westmoreland's request. (B) - We are operating at a very high rate today in Vietnam. I mentioned to you that in the month of February, the month just completed, we delivered in airborne ordnance alone two and a half times the level of expenditure of airborne ordnance in terms of tonnage that we did in the average month of the Korean War. (C) - That we have a capability to do far more than we have, that we can, should the need arise, and I don't know that it will arise, send 21 additional combat battalions from the active force without calling up the reserve to Vietnam by the end of June. (D) - That we have a capability to meet our treaty commitments elsewhere in the world, demonstrated by an ability to deploy 9 combat ready divisions, a force of perhaps 350,000 men in 90 days, and an additional 2300 aircraft, tactical aircraft, should that be required.

QUESTION: Mr. Secretary, those are very interesting figures, but you --

SECRETARY McNAMARA: They are not only interesting.

QUESTION: This doesn't get to the point at all.

SECRETARY McNAMARA: It does get to the point. The only responsibility I have is combat readiness. We have got it, and I don't want anybody to misunderstand that. These figures demonstrate it. Next question.

(MORE)

QUESTION: Do you feel --

SECRETARY McNAMARA: I'm not getting into an argument here.

Next question.

QUESTION: Mr. Secretary, in comparison to the 700,000 tons which you say you are now shipping into Vietnam, what do you estimate are the monthly logistical requirements of the Viet Cong forces?

SECRETARY McNAMARA: Presumably, first in terms of tonnage from outside the country?

QUESTION: Yes.

SECRETARY McNAMARA: I can't give you a very accurate figure. They are very small indeed. It has been said that during 1965 they may have run between 12 and 30 tons a day. Surely they are much more than that now.

The forces have increased. They presumably are planning on increasing the rate of activity of those forces, so it is higher than that. But how much it is, I can't really estimate accurately, but it is relatively small compared to our requirements. These figures I have given you are for external tonnage.

In addition, of course, they require food, other supplies, which they obtain from local sources in South Vietnam.

QUESTION: Mr. Secretary, can you tell us in round numbers how many of the 215,000 men in Vietnam are front line combat troops?

SECRETARY McNAMARA: There are maneuver battalions, which is only one category of front line troops, of 43 at the present time, as I recall. There are 700 tactical aircraft, I believe, deployed, including the Naval forces off the shore.

In addition to that, there are artillery battalions, I have forgotten the number, I think on the order of 20 at the present time, and additional combat forces. I really can't give you an actual statement in terms of numbers.

QUESTION: Mr. Secretary, do the annual consumption rate and inventory figures for the 2.75 inch helicopter rocket mean that in June we will have only a one month supply?

SECRETARY McNAMARA: I can't answer the question. I will be happy to check for you afterwards.

(MORE)

QUESTION: It is in this sheet right here.

SECRETARY McNAMARA: No. The answer is no. Because that sheet doesn't show the rate of production. I will be happy to get for you the rate of production and give it to you.

The fact is -- maybe. I have it here. Well, it is rising to 800,000 a month. I don't know exactly what it is in June, but it is very high. You take the production plus the inventory and compare that with the consumption.

QUESTION: Mr. Secretary --

SECRETARY McNAMARA: Let some other people have a question.

QUESTION: I only had one and you don't seem to want to answer.

SECRETARY McNAMARA: I have answered three of yours. Let Mr. Roberts have a question.

QUESTION: Mr. Secretary, against this backdrop of power, would you tell us how you think the war is going right now?

SECRETARY McNAMARA: I want to stay on the combat readiness of our forces, if I may. I will simply say on that one subject that it appears that the Viet Cong forces were planning offensive attacks in the last six to eight weeks in several different areas of the country.

All of the intelligence information indicates that. And which offensive attacks were spoiled by the offenses carried out by the South Vietnamese forces and Westmoreland's forces.

QUESTION: Mr. Secretary, last Friday night, Senator Stennis --

SECRETARY McNAMARA: Let me simply say --

QUESTION: -- said --

SECRETARY McNAMARA: Look, if you are not going to maintain order, will you please leave?

QUESTION: No.

SECRETARY McNAMARA: There are others who want to ask questions.

(MORE)

QUESTION: I want to ask you a question.

SECRETARY McNAMARA: You have asked three.

QUESTION: You dodged it three times.

SECRETARY McNAMARA: I will take other questions.

QUESTION: You seem to dodge everything, Mr. Secretary.

SECRETARY McNAMARA: I unfortunately haven't been able to dodge all the rocks you have thrown at me for five years.

Go ahead.

QUESTION: Sir, is the air field construction program in Vietnam such that we could deploy 2,300 aircraft by 1 July?

SECRETARY McNAMARA: No, we couldn't put 2,300 in Vietnam, certainly not, nor is there any requirement for it. But should contingencies arise elsewhere in the world we could deploy 2,300 in those contingencies.

There is no possible requirement for that number in Vietnam.

QUESTION: Mr. Secretary, these battalions that you say you can now deploy, are these battalions that now have a training assignment?

SECRETARY McNAMARA: No.

QUESTION: These are battalions that don't have any training assignment and you can just send them off?

SECRETARY McNAMARA: That is correct. These are battalions that do not have a training assignment, that can be moved to South Vietnam should that be necessary. I don't want to over-emphasize this 21 in relation to South Vietnam, because it is not likely in my opinion that that number would be required there by that date.

QUESTION: And the other question: It is very difficult for some of us to rationalize the stories we get on national security affairs because so much of it is classified and only on occasion do you come out and declassify some of that material.

(MORE)

SECRETARY McNAMARA: I know that.

QUESTION: Could you explain why, if you have read Mr. Stennis' speech, why it is possible for him to suggest that there are serious shortages or possible shortages and at the same time for you to come out with this material which flatly states there aren't, and yet he sees classified material, he has been a Senator dealing with this material for a long, long time. The rest of us are sort of in a box on this.

SECRETARY McNAMARA: I think the answer is that we are meeting these requirements differently than they have ever been met before. I pointed out to you earlier the comparison between today and the Korean War.

In Korea, 700,000 men were called from the reserves to support a deployment less than we can support from the active force today without any call up of the reserves. The defense budget as percentage of Gross National Product was trebled. War time controls were put into effect, wage controls, price controls, profit controls, material controls. A limited mobilization took place.

None of that has developed here. The fact that it hasn't puts the burden of proof on us to show that it isn't required. To carry on as we have does put strain on the Department. There is no question about this. We have to develop new methods to meet problems for which we had old answers. Old answers were not applying. These new methods do require changes in procedures, changes in policies, changes in habits and thought.

But they do leave us with more strength than would otherwise be the case. They place less burden on the nation, less burden on our economy, less burden in a very real sense on the military department.

But it is this difference of approach that has led to some of these differences of opinions and differences of conclusions, actually, as to where we stand today.

But I want to emphasize that these statements I have made today are supported by the Services, they are supported by the senior military and civilian leaders of this Department. And I don't want to leave any misconception in the minds of anyone as to our military capabilities.

We are not militarily over-extended, we are prepared to fulfill our treaty commitments. We have treaty commitments with some 40 nations throughout the world. We are prepared to fulfill them.

(MORE)

Two more questions and I think we go over our time.

QUESTION: Mr. Secretary, if you sent all the 21 battalions to Vietnam, how many men would you be sending?

SECRETARY McNAMARA: About -- that is a battalion force.

QUESTION: Is that equivalent to two divisions?

SECRETARY McNAMARA: No, it is more than that. Many of these are reinforced Marine battalions. Let me give you a figure afterwards. I don't want to give it offhand.

QUESTION: A short question. You do not mention Admiral McDonald among the people who have indicated there is no impairment, and the omission is significant.

SECRETARY McNAMARA: Let me ask Cy. He talked to the Chiefs.

SECRETARY VANCE: As it states in the statement, itself, it is a list of those who have attested to this fact publicly.

QUESTION: The fact that he hasn't attested means what?

SECRETARY VANCE: You draw no conclusions from that.

SECRETARY McNAMARA: I don't think there is any conclusion from it.

QUESTION: Mr. Secretary?

SECRETARY McNAMARA: This is the last question. Go ahead.

QUESTION: I hate to waste the last question this way, but I do need to get this figure. If you deployed more than you had in Korea, how many would that be? I am unable to find out how many we had in Korea.

SECRETARY McNAMARA: How many we had in Korea?

QUESTION: At the peak, I suppose.

SECRETARY McNAMARA: The peak in Korea that I used in comparison with this was over 31,000. I've forgotten what it was. Cy says 305,000.

(MORE)

SECRETARY VANCE: Total ground forces. Total ground force was 305,000 and total air force 46,000.

SECRETARY McNAMARA: The total of all Services was 350,000 or something like that. Anyhow, the figure I used was about 350. Over that. Without calling from the reserves.

QUESTION: And you are now authorizing an increase to 235,000 is that correct?

SECRETARY McNAMARA: We have 215,000 there. We have authorized an additional 20,000 for movements.

QUESTION: Thank you, sir.

SECRETARY McNAMARA: Let me just say one further word, fellows. We are a peculiar people. We should be proud of fulfilling our commitments. We should be proud of the support we are providing to a brave people who are fighting for their freedom. We should be proud of a unique military accomplishment.

As I said, no nation in history has accomplished what we have, deploying 300,000 people, 10,000 miles away, without a call of reserves, without controlling our economy. We put over 100,000 men there in 120 days. We should be proud of that. We should be proud of the leadership that our military commanders are giving to our forces.

I don't think any army in history has been more magnificently led than that commanded by Westmoreland. And I mean not only Westmoreland himself, but all of the leaders, right down into the battalion levels, right down through the noncommissioned officer ranks.

We should be proud of the gallantry of our men. We should be proud of the restraint that our Commander-in-Chief is using in applying what is an almost unlimited military power.

Instead, we seem to take a masochistic pleasure in flailing ourselves with imaginary weaknesses. I have tried to destroy some of those today.

Thanks very much.