



# NEWS RELEASE

OFFICE OF ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE (PUBLIC AFFAIRS)

WASHINGTON, D.C. - 20301

PLEASE NOTE DATE

AUTOMATIC RELEASE AT  
3:00 p.m., EST  
Wednesday, March 2, 1966

March 2, 1966

## STATEMENT OF SECRETARY OF DEFENSE ROBERT S. McNAMARA

Recently articles have appeared in the press which give the impression that because of the major deployments of U.S. military forces to Southeast Asia the United States is now militarily overextended and would not be able to meet other contingencies which might arise elsewhere in the world. This allegation, if true, would indeed represent a serious situation. But it is not true. Even though we have deployed a military force of approximately 300,000 men to Southeast Asia, we are fully capable of meeting our commitments elsewhere in the world.

We have today a total active duty military strength approaching three million men. U.S. forces now in Southeast Asia represent only about ten percent of that strength. Moreover, the three million figure does not include the organized reserve of about one million men receiving regular paid drill training in the Reserve Components of the Armed Forces. Nor does it include the other trained reserves and the vast civilian manpower resources of our Nation.

To appreciate fully our present military situation in relation to the potential resources available on the one hand, and our worldwide commitments on the other, one must first understand the basic ground rules under which the current military buildup is proceeding and how they differ from those which guided other military buildups in the past.

During the Korean War, we undertook a "limited" or partial mobilization, increasing our military forces from about 1.5 million men in June 1950 to about 3.7 million men by the spring of 1952. Wartime controls (wage and price controls, material allocations, and excess profit taxes) had to be invoked and the reserve forces had to be called up to meet our military manpower requirements. In the Berlin Crisis of 1961, we had to call up a total of 150,000 reservists and extend the tours of men already on active duty.

In the current military buildup, no mobilization has been decreed, partial or otherwise, no reserve forces have been ordered to active duty and, with the exception of relatively small numbers of men in the Navy and Marine Corps, no involuntary extensions of active duty tours have been imposed. 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 place so large a force in combat in so short a period of time and some 10,000 miles from its shores, without calling up reserves, extending active duty tours on a wide-spread basis and invoking the kinds of strict economic controls normally associated with military emergencies.

Obviously, a military effort of this scope, undertaken without resort to the usual emergency measures, cannot be accomplished without some difficulties. But the more important question in assessing our overall military capabilities is not whether there were difficulties but rather 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. Excluding the extraordinary requirements for the large scale military operations in Southeast Asia, which have been reflected in the FY 1966 Supplemental and the FY 1967 Budget, we had already added some \$50 billion of expenditures to the pre-FY 1961 level. That is, Defense expenditures had been raised from about \$40 billion a year in the FY 1954-60 period to about \$50 billion a year in the FY 1962-66 period. These higher expenditures provided the increases in forces summarized in Table I.

In the Army, the number of combat maneuver battalions will have increased from 141 on June 30, 1961 to 192 on June 30, 1966. The number of Army aviation companies (primarily helicopter units) will have more than doubled during the same period, from 70 to 161. But equally important, Army procurement of equipment and ammunition was increased from a level of about \$1.5 billion a year in the FY 1955-60 period to almost \$2.5 billion a year in the FY 1962-65 period.

In the Navy, the number of General Purpose Forces ships will have increased from 781 on June 30, 1961 to 912 on June 30, 1966 and the Navy General Purpose Forces ship construction program has virtually doubled.

In the Air Force, the number of tactical fighter wings will have increased from 16 to 21, and the number of tactical reconnaissance squadrons from 14 to 17.

Procurement of the kinds of equipment and consumables required for non-nuclear war was vastly increased in the FY 1962-65 period as compared with the four preceding fiscal years. For example, contract awards for ammunition for all the Services were virtually doubled -- from \$1,682 million in FY 1958-61 to \$3,227 million in the FY 1962-65 period. Contract awards for weapons, i.e., rifles, machine guns, artillery, etc., were increased from \$663 million to \$945 million, or about 43 percent, and contracts for tanks and automotive equipment doubled from \$1,828 million to \$3,672 million.

Finally, our airlift capability to Southeast Asia will have just about tripled between June 1961 and June 1966, and, on the basis of the program planned for the FY 1966-71 period, it will increase ten-fold by FY 1972 as compared with FY 1961.

It was these increases in our military strength, achieved over the last five years, that made possible the tremendous feat of deploying within a matter of months a combat ready force of 300,000 men some 10,000 miles away and supporting them in combat -- without calling up the reserve forces, without a general extension of tours on an involuntary basis, and without invoking the usual economic controls. It was this performance that led Charles Burck in the current issue of Fortune magazine to conclude that "Probably no comparable war has ever been mounted as swiftly and as efficiently."

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 2,600 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.

But the question still remains: Why, if we had acquired what we needed, do we now have to increase our procurement so substantially in order to support our military effort in Southeast Asia? The answer to this question has three parts.

First, we are increasing the size of our active forces because we do not wish at this time to call up the reserve forces. These new forces must be equipped and supplied.

Second, we do not normally provide idle inventories of such major weapon systems as aircraft and ships in advance for combat attrition. Rather, we find that we can get far greater total effectiveness for the resources invested by providing active combat-ready forces in peacetime of sufficient size to allow for attrition at the beginning of a war, and then relying on new production to offset continuing attrition. Accordingly, additional aircraft must be procured as soon as the decision is made to commit the forces to combat, and this was one of the largest items in our FY 1966 Supplemental request.

Third, we provide in our war reserve stocks only those quantities of combat consumables needed to tide us over until additional stocks can be acquired from new production. This means that as soon as we start to consume significant quantities of war reserve stocks in combat, we

must start to procure replacement stocks. For such items as ammunition, wartime consumption rates are many times peacetime rates. It would be entirely impractical to attempt to carry in stock the huge amounts required when our forces actually engage in combat.

Furthermore, there is no need to do so, as long as we have on hand the essential margin between consumption and production. This margin we have, except in those few cases where newly developed items (e.g., the 40mm air-launched grenade) are being added to the inventory or where materiel (e.g., the 2.75 inch rocket with fragmentation head, fired from helicopters) is being used in ways which were never anticipated.

This is not to say that every one of the tens of thousands of Defense Department supply points is without a single "inventory shortage". Anyone who has had experience with large supply systems knows that somewhere, sometime, something will be lacking. No matter how much we spend for defense, someone, somewhere in our far flung organization will be short some item at any particular time. This has nothing to do with the amount of funds requested and appropriated. It simply reflects the fact that no system involving literally hundreds of thousands of people and millions of different items and operating around the globe can be one hundred percent perfect.

Mistakes in distribution or requirements calculations will be made, and these mistakes will be reflected in an inventory shortage, or overage, somewhere in the system. This is true of private industry as well as government, and it is up to management at all levels to see to it that these mistakes are held to a minimum and corrected promptly when discovered.

Accordingly, the entire question of shortages must be viewed in perspective. The acid test of our logistics system is the ability of our forces to take the field and engage in combat, and that ability has been demonstrated in full measure during the last six months. It can be stated categorically that no shortages have impeded our combat operations in Southeast Asia or affected the morale or welfare of our men. This fact has been attested to by General Westmoreland, our Commander in South Vietnam; Admiral Sharp, our Commander in the Pacific, General McConnell, Chief of Staff of the Air Force; and by General Wheeler, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Johnson, the Army Chief of Staff, and General Greene, Commandant of the Marine Corps, all three of whom recently visited Vietnam and talked with commanders down to the battalion level.

Indeed, we are moving more than 700,000 measurement tons per month to Southeast Asia by ship and these ships are now being unloaded promptly. In November of last year we had 122 ships with military cargoes awaiting

unloading in South Vietnam ports or in holding areas. This total is now down to 41 ships, well within the normal range for an operation of this size. The cargo backlog, which rose as high as 257,000 measurement tons on the 27th of November, is now down to less than 100,000 tons, the equivalent of four days of work at the current unloading rate.

With regard to ammunition, the buildup of stocks and production over the last five years has placed us in a position where we could plan on annual rates of consumption in Southeast Asia, in the month of February, of:

- . 1.7 million bombs
- . 4.8 million 2.75 inch rockets
- . 88 million rounds of air-to-ground fire
- . 1 billion rounds of small arms ammunition  
(including 30 caliber machine gun)
- . 16 million 40 mm grenades
- . 11 million mortar and artillery rounds

Our consumption in February of air-delivered munitions alone will be running at about 2-1/2 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. The \$7.8 billion included in the FY 1966-67 Budgets for ammunition will not only support these higher rates of consumption, but will also provide substantial additions to stocks.

The decision not to request a call up of the reserve forces and an unlimited extension of active duty tours does demand some special effort and ingenuity on the part of our military leaders to build up our forces as rapidly as required. But the task can be accomplished, while at the same time preserving our ability to meet contingencies elsewhere in the world. In fact, it will enhance our ability to do so since we will be leaving our reserve forces intact and available to meet new emergencies. Indeed, we have undertaken a number of measures to increase the strength and readiness of those reserve forces.

In summary, including the three new division forces which are being added to the active force, we will have a total of 22-1/3 active division forces -- 18-1/3 Army and four Marine Corps. In addition, we will have ten high priority division forces in the reserve components, one Marine Corps and nine Army -- with six divisions and supporting forces manned at 100 percent. Including both the active and reserve division forces, we have today a substantial "central reserve" of ground forces upon which we would be able to draw to meet contingencies anywhere in the world, and we will have more in the future. Simply by calling up the reserves and extending tours we could make ready for deployment over approximately the next three months a total of nine additional combat ready division forces.

With regard to tactical air power, we now have a total of about 4,700 tactical aircraft, including both the active and reserve forces of the Air Force, Navy, and Marine Corps. Only a fraction of these have been committed to Southeast Asia. In an emergency, we could deploy into combat 2,300 tactical fighter and attack aircraft within 90 days, in addition to those now in Southeast Asia, Korea and Europe.

The major increase in our production and logistics base, achieved during the last six to eight months, will enable us to support in combat forces considerably larger than now deployed. The gearing up of this production base was financed from the \$700 million Supplemental added to the FY 1965 Budget last spring and the \$1.7 billion added to the FY 1966 Budget last August. The higher levels of production thus made possible are financed in the FY 1966 Supplemental and the FY 1967 Budget transmitted to the Congress this January.

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, and our production and logistics base is being vastly increased -- all without calling up the reserve forces, generally extending involuntarily active duty tours of military personnel or imposing price, wage and material controls on our economy. The very fact that we have not taken these steps means that we still have great untapped resources upon which we can quickly call to meet any other major contingencies which may confront us in the future.

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 commitments anywhere in the world and to safeguard our national security and other vital interests.

**TABLE I**  
**INVENTORIES OF SELECTED ACTIVE FORCE COMBAT UNITS AND ITEMS OF MAJOR**  
**EQUIPMENT AND AMMUNITION**

	<u>6/30/61</u>	<u>6/30/66</u>
<b>Army:</b> Combat Maneuver Battalions	141*	192
Artillery Battalions	102	125
Air Defense Batteries	101	157
Aviation Companies (primarily helicopter)	70	161
<b>Air Force:</b> Tactical Fighter Wings	16	21
Reconnaissance Squadrons	14	17
Airlift (thou. tons per mo. capability to Asia)	14.7	44.3
<b>Navy:</b> Combat Ships (General Purpose, including support)	781	912
<b>Equipment:</b> Army: UH-1 Helicopters in Units	145	1,373
Total Aircraft in Units	2,316	4,293
Air Force: Tactical Aircraft in Units	1,179	1,458
Special Air Warfare Aircraft	0	327
Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force Tactical Aircraft:		
Bomb Carrying Capacity	-	70% over 6/30/61
<b>Ammunition:</b> Army: Surface-to-surface Missiles	3,560	7,778
Air Defense Missiles	4,380	11,824
Anti-tank Missiles (ENTAC)	0	31,236
175 mm Projectile (in thou.)	0	421
Hand Grenade, high frag. (in thou.)	734	1,182
2.75" Helicopter Rocket (in thou.)	0	419
Navy: Anti-Sub Warfare Torpedoes	4,104	11,930
Modern non-nuclear Bombs (thou. tons)	34	161
Nuclear Warheads: In Strategic Alert Force	836	2,623
On Soil of Western Europe	-	100% over 6/30/61
Total Inventory	-	50% over 6/30/61

\*In 1961, there were a total of 70 Battle Groups and 53 Maneuver Battalions.  
Each Battle Group is equated to 1.25 battalions for the totals shown here.

**Note:** The U.S. Army and Marine Corps are currently operating in South Vietnam more troop-carrying and cargo helicopters than are operated by the military forces of all the Communist nations, or all other Free World nations, combined.

3/2/66