

IBM Chief
Says Stop
The War

SF CHRONICLE
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Washington

Thomas J. Watson Jr., board chairman of the International Business Machines Corp., told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee yesterday that the Vietnam war presents "a major obstacle" to the economic health of the Nation and is threatening "irreparable" damage to society.

Watson urged a complete military withdrawal from Southeast Asia "as soon as possible" because, he said, "we must end this tragedy before it overtakes us."

The executive said he foresaw little chance of fully curbing inflation or restoring the Nation's economic health so long as the Vietnam involvement continues.

As an interim step, pending withdrawal from Viet-

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nam. Watson urged that the Administration return at once to the guideline approach to wages and prices, which he observed "worked reasonably well" in the early years of the Kennedy Administration.

HEALTH

The Vietnam war, he said, has been "the major factor which has turned our healthy economy into an unhealthy one." So long as the involvement in Vietnam continues," he said, "it will be a major obstacle to both the short and long-term economic health of the country."

But the burden of Watson's testimony was not on the economic effects of the war but on the "disaffection" and "demoralization" that he saw it causing among the Nation's youth. Noting that 50 per cent of the Nation's population is under age 25, Watson, the father of six children, said:

"The longer the war continues, the more it broadens the gap between the elder generation, sometimes called the establishment, and our young men and women, who will soon be responsible for the leadership and destiny of this country."

YOUTH

"Indeed, the prolongation of the war may well set up a continuing revolution of our youth through which they may become sufficiently demoralized so that the progress of our country will be appreciably slowed."

"To continue as a great Nation, our country must be drawn together again," he said. "I doubt that this can be done while we're in Vietnam."

"The longer we continue," he said, "the more chaotic the Nation will become. The damage we have already seen will take decades to repair, and if we continue... we will soon reach a point where much of the damage will be irreparable."

Watson, one of a series of witnesses that the committee has been hearing upon the economic and oral effects of the war, also cautioned that "our actions in Vietnam, are losing us valuable and traditional friends in the West."

PICTURE

"We present a picture of a terribly powerful, awe-inspiring Nation unable to manage itself in a disciplined manner," he said.

Watson acknowledged that probably there "isn't any comfortable way to withdraw" from Vietnam. But he said it is only compounding the problem "by staying there simply because we can't find a good, orderly way of disengaging."

In appearing before the committee he said he wanted to voice his conviction "that we stand at crossroads of decision, with all comfortable routes closed off; that we must end this tragedy before it overwhelms us; and that we must therefore face up squarely to a tough decision and see it through with courage and dispatch."