

AS WE SEE IT . . . . .



## 1960 - YEAR OF EVASIONS?

ONCE again, the issue of Dollars for Defense is before Congress and the Public, as it has been many times before.

This time, however, there is a much greater evident uneasiness and a reluctance to accept at face value the statements of official Defense spokesmen who would make it appear that all's well: we're so modern, we're so scientific, we're so militarily strong, that once more we safely can cut back our active and reserve forces, throttle-down our missile development, stretch-out production of modern materiel.

Unfortunately, many have the uneasy feeling that the truth is being badly stretched, that there are glaring inconsistencies between one day's testimony and the next, that policy is so changeable that no one can tell which end is up. Doubt arises as to whether such terms as "military necessity" and "requirements" mean just that—or whether they're bent to follow the curves of a dollar sign.

There's a great deal less than complete frankness in the picture as presented by responsible leaders. Congress is told that the Joint Chiefs of Staff have approved of an enormously complex and detailed Defense Budget to which, in its final form, they have had but 24 hours' access. It is not explained how it can have the unanimous concurrence of the members, jointly, while each, individually, has indicated grave reservations whether the amount portioned-out for his own Service will permit it to accomplish its own heavy mission.

For example, the Army's Chief of Staff, Gen Maxwell D Taylor, has indicated a requirement for \$15,000,000,000 to be spent over a five-year period for modernization of the Army's weapons and equipment. Arbitrarily, only a token amount is provided. Without the needed "tools," the scant 14 Divisions of the Regular Army can be only phantom versions of the vaunted power-packed Pentomic Divisions they are set up to be. The 27 Divisions of the Army Guard can have the form but not the substance.

The Army National Guard provides an example of Defense leaders' failure to "play it straight" with either Congress or the Country. Most glaring is the failure to meet guarantees that the Guard would be maintained in this Fiscal Year at an average strength of 400,000. As explained elsewhere in this issue, the Guard started below that minimum strength and has been going down ever since, largely because, in another breach of faith and defiance of Congressional will, Defense authorities have refused to turn loose funds for an input of 55,000 six-months trainees. Spokesmen have admitted that they have held back funds, indicating they *might* release them only at the last minute. Less frankly, they have given Congress the impression that the Guard is *over-strength*. Their

words have been chosen carefully: pressed to explain why the Guard's *paid drill* strength has been let slide, they have noted that there are 40,000-some men in the Inactive National Guard. These are personnel who temporarily are not participating in training. They are akin to the hundreds of thousands of non-paid Army Reservists who are not considered in the *paid drill* strength of the USAR. Nevertheless, the effect is to attempt to divert Congressional attention from evasion of DoD's commitment.

Credibility is strained, too, by contradictions in other fields. As all will clearly remember, only recently strong pitches were made to the effect that a 600,000-man Army Guard was a requirement for adequate defense; that more, not fewer, units were needed; that the Guard's training left something to be desired; that it needed immense numbers of six-months trainees. But the Guard has been forced down to fewer rather than more units; its strength has been pushed back, and will be dropped still further if Defense planners have their way; it will get even fewer RFA trainees. Why? The new policy line: the Guard is so much better trained that the loss of 40,000 men won't hurt its capability; it's not desirable to have too high a proportion of six-months trainees!

At the moment of this writing, virtually all units are going through the upheaval of drastic reorganization pressed upon them as a matter of urgent military necessity. The plan is based upon a strength of 400,000. Each unit in the Troop Basis, and its strength as related to its required degree of mobilization-readiness, has been carefully calculated against that figure. Yet even before the reorganization is well under way, the same Defense authorities who urgently called for that reorganization, propose to throw it into further turmoil by cutting the basic strength to 360,000. Inevitably, if that were to be carried through, there would be one of two courses open: eliminate still more of the reduced numbers of units, or trim still further the strength of many units. It would be interesting to see by what rationalization the Defense leaders then would maintain that the National Guard and defense of the Nation again were being strengthened!

The Commander-in-Chief, in opposing Congress-imposed "floors" under Guard and USAR strength, and even more vehemently objecting to possible extension of such "floors" to the Army and the Marines, has stressed the need for "flexibility" and the disadvantages of "rigidity."

Recognizing that they can not be frozen forever into one pattern, Guardsmen who have been and are subjected to the yo-yo ups-and-downs of shifting policy, contradictory statements, distortion, evasion, and misrepresentation, nevertheless yearn for a spell of stability, frankness, straight-talking, and complete honesty.

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