

S. 2791.

Yesterday, we observed the birth anniversary of George Washington. He was our first Commander-in-Chief. He was made General and Commander-in-Chief of the United Colonies on June 15, 1775.

In that capacity, he had his problems with the Continental Congress in securing supplies, weapons, pay, and other necessities for his army.

Those experiences were a factor in making the President the Commander in Chief when the Constitution was written.

One hundred ninety one years later a similar problem confronts us.

The Commander in Chief, based on estimates which have been prepared and supported by our Field Commanders in Vietnam, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the National Security Council and the Budget Bureau has presented a request for \$4.8 Billion dollars for aircraft, missiles, naval vessels and other items.

The request has been carefully processed by the Armed Services Committee and the Defense Department Appropriations Subcommittee. They heard 11 witnesses. From 16 to 24 Senators were present at all of those hearings.

The Bill which the Committee reported is not a

policy measure. It is a Bill to authorize funds for needed equipment and research.

After it was reported to the Senate, the Foreign Relations Committee began hearings on another measure. It triggered a broad discussion of our policy in and toward Vietnam.

In and out of Committee, on and off the Senate floor, a diversity of views and viewpoints have been freely expressed - to withdraw, to pause longer, to escalate, to deescalate, to limit the struggle.

And all this time, the request for weapons and equipment languishes. Virtually no speeches have been directed to the measure before us.

There have been allegations and fulminations that ~~we~~ "we are spread dangerously thin" and that "shortages appear" but the request of the Commander In Chief for authority and funds to procure weapons and supplies reposes in the Senate without action. Until this authorization is approved, no money can be appropriated. If the Commander In Chief because of urgent necessity should obligate funds without this authority, the Congress would be the first to castigate him.

The time for more talk on this pending measure is past. The time for action is here and now.

The well being of more than 200,000 American troops, 12,000 miles from home is involved.

The continued and successful prosecution of the present struggle is at stake. To delay further action on the pending request means that Congress must accept responsibility for failure to act.

It has been said that in the 10-year struggle of the French with the Viet Minh, that the war was lost not at Dien Bien Phu but in Paris. I trust it may never be recorded that if we fail in our objectives, that the failure occurred not at Da Nang or in the Highlands of Vietnam but in Washington.

To seek cloture on a measure involving our national security, our pledges to Vietnam, and our obligations under the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization would be incredible. The impact of such action on troop morale could scarcely be measured. Its impact on world reaction could scarcely be evaluated.

The time has come to close the debate and act. I believe I speak for the vast majority of the Republican minority when I say we are ready to act now and approve the requests which is before us.