

namese to have all the different groups participating in the war to form some kind of coalition to solve the problems will the problems ever be resolved and America be able to withdraw.

**Sen. Young:**

I don't think the government of South Vietnam is a popular government. This is another problem — trying to get a decent government over there. As time goes on, I agree more and more with General Gavin's position.

**Sen. Ellender, (Dem., Louisiana):**

I agree with the witness that the war ought to be ended. Suppose you were Senator, what would you do?

**Mr. Armstrong:**

... I would strongly urge the President to announce immediately that the United States was going to end its participation in Vietnam. Several things would follow from that. One is that we would immediately obtain the support of all our ... European allies.

**Sen. Ellender:**

How? Moral support?

**Mr. Armstrong:**

Political and moral, yes. Europe is where our ... interests, to a very considerable extent, lie.

Secondly, we would unite America ... it would end the dissidence of the young people who do not enjoy the prospect of fighting in this war. We would unite America. I would be urging the U. S. Senate that the President announce that we ... have decided ... that we are not going to use it (our military power) ... in this situation.

**Sen. Ellender:**

We would have to walk out, would we not?

**Mr. Armstrong:**

Sure we would walk out, leave the country to the Vietnamese. It is their country ...

**Sen. Ellender:**

... I would like to get out of there. I would like to find a way whereby we could get out honorably and not just run out.

**Mr. Armstrong:**

I believe it would be with great honor ...

**Sen. Symington, (Dem., Missouri):**

... I was in Vietnam back in 1961 and have been there many times since. In 1965, after two visits that year, I recommended we get on with the war or get out of it ...

In 1966 ... I was asked whether we should get out. I said I didn't know ...

In 1967 ... when I was asked which, I replied I would get out of it on the best basis possible, but I would get out.

In the fall of 1967, when there was additional talk of a bombing pause, I recommended a cease-fire of all offensive action, ground as well as air.

... The sooner we now reach some agreement in this matter, the better for the United States, as I see it ...

I am impressed with your emphasis on what this war is doing to us economically ... 95% of the thinking (in Washington, D. C.) has to do with the political and military implications of Vietnam; less than 5% with the economic implication.

We are in deep trouble economically. Today, for the first time, we have the highest interest rates in history at the same time as we have continuing inflation ... The people of my state are beginning to worry about the value of the dollar. They are beginning to worry about the fact that every American of today is being asked to pay some \$1000 per year for defense.

Also, in my opinion, they are becoming increasingly less impressed with this war, one not being run by the military; rather the State Department and the White House over a period of years.

... The young people I know are increasingly disillusioned about this war. If that continues, we can only expect an increase among the young people of restlessness.

I have ... apprehension from the standpoint of what it is doing to our economy; and, therefore, I am glad to see that business men are interested ... There are other places around the world where we also have problems, some more important to the security of the United States than Vietnam.



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**APPROPRIATION REQUEST  
FOR  
THE VIETNAM WAR**

Testimony of J. Sinclair Armstrong on behalf of Business Executives Move for Vietnam Peace before the Senate Appropriations Committee, September 25, 1969.

*Mr. Armstrong, a member of the National Council of BEM, is a New York banker and lawyer. He was educated at Milton Academy and Harvard where he took his A.B. and LL.B. degrees. A Republican, he served under President Eisenhower for two years as Assistant Secretary of the Navy and for four years as Commissioner (two as Chairman) of the Securities and Exchange Commission.*

*Extracts from Mr. Armstrong's testimony and the discussion with the senators which followed are given below.*

**Mr. Armstrong:**

As business executives, we see the War as unwinnable. As financiers, we see the destabilization of our domestic and international finances that it has brought about.

As citizens, . . . , we see the blight that its excess costs visits on us in curtailment of resources for housing, education, health facilities, mass transport facilities and productive employment.

As taxpayers, we feel the burden of its cost . . . the enormous cost of restrictive monetary and fiscal measures, and the record high interest rates . . . drastic curtailment of vital housing and other construction . . . monthly increases in the cost of living, steadily up half of one per cent a month, with no end in sight . . . On June 9, I mentioned the destabilizing effect of the excessive Vietnam and other defense costs, and predicted that, if they continued, there might have to be direct wage and price controls and allocation of materials . . . President Nixon said "no" to wage and price controls. But how else, except by curtailment of war spending, can inflation be curtailed? Tight money and surtax have not succeeded . . . The economics of the situation tell us that the Vietnam War should be ended now, in the vital interests of our free American society . . .

The U. S. has no vital strategic or economic interest in Vietnam. That tiny country is no threat to U. S. security. We continue to waste our resources — men and materials — there for no vital security reason . . .

We Business Executives see little progress on the military or diplomatic fronts. The U. S. stated condition of peace is free elections in Vietnam, supervised by an international authority. We are business executives, not diplomats, by profession. But we believe that North Vietnam will not accept that condition, in the light of U. S. failure to follow through on the similar 1954 commitment. Peace will wait a long time if the U. S. waits for supervised elections — Western style — in the rural Asian country. What is needed is a broadening of the Saigon regime and then a true coalition government of all Vietnam parties to the conflict.

We believe that the only course that will bring this about is announced, complete, total U. S. withdrawal, beginning now. Only then will the recently narrowed South Vietnam Government be broadened. Only then will it have to enter into coalition and make peace.

President Nixon could be a great President if he would act to bring this about. Former President DeGaulle's withdrawal of French forces from Algeria led to a decade of French greatness. World opinion, of our allies, neutral states, the great leaders of the U. N., such as U Thant, and of religion, such as Pope Paul, would acclaim the President, should he do the

same for the U. S. in Vietnam. Congress should spur him on, encourage him, support him, in his effort to end the War now . . .

The Vietnam War keeps us from confronting the domestic crisis which has split the country. Young people cease to respect our generation when we offer them no way out of a useless, unwinnable war, but expect them to fight and die in it.

And what a terrible waste of our most vital national asset — our young men — it is, with 45,000 killed and missing, and 250,000 wounded, and the pace of casualties continuing well over a thousand a week. A country that alienates its most sensitive, highly trained, and productive youth is critically weak . . .

As long as U. S. policy continues to underwrite the Thieu regime and insists upon a settlement that the South Vietnam generals will accept, North Vietnam and the NLF are furnished no inducement to make peace, and have no alternative but to continue the War.

Business Executives appeal to the Congress to end this stalemate. The making of War is Congress's responsibility.

The Congress has the power to "lay and collect taxes", "to provide for the common defense", "to raise and support armies", and "to declare war" (none has been declared against Vietnam). U. S. Constitution, Article I, Section 8, "Powers of the Congress".

The President is "Commander-in-Chief of the Army and Navy" and "shall from time to time give to the Congress information on the state of the union and recommend to their consideration such measures as he shall judge necessary and expedient". Article II, Sections 2 and 3.

Constitutional responsibility for the War clearly falls on the Congress.

The decisions of the Congress on whether to continue the Vietnam War will have vital implications for the future. If the Congress says "no" to continuing the War, and denies the appropriations for it, free enterprise in a free economy will survive and prosper in America.

So we, Business Executives Move for Vietnam Peace, urge the Congress to review the Defense Posture and Budget for Fiscal Year 1970 and revise the Budget so as to cut out the appropriations with which to continue the Vietnam War. We urge this in the vital interests of the United States.

Respectfully submitted,

J. Sinclair Armstrong

Member, Committee of Sponsors  
and National Council, Business Executives  
Move for Vietnam Peace

The following are extracts from the question period immediately following Mr. Armstrong's prepared statement:

**Sen. Russell, (Dem., Georgia), Chairman:**

You have made an interesting statement . . . the present members of the Committee are, I am confident, as anxious to end the war in Vietnam as any member of your group . . . For my part, I was vigorously, almost violently, opposed to ever going into Vietnam. I never saw where it had any economic or strategic value to the United States. When it was first broached . . . in 1954 . . . I said, "I am tired of seeing American G.I.'s treated like Roman gladiators of old and thrown into every ring of conflict all over the world where there is fighting." But they did send them and they have increased the numbers from time to time.

We have all wanted to get out. The only question is how to do it. I cannot say that I can accept your suggestion that we just deny all the appropriations. What are you going to do about the 500,000 boys who are there?

**Mr. Armstrong:**

There is no such suggestion involved here at all.

**Sen. Russell:**

You don't suggest it but that is the inevitable consequence of cutting off appropriations.

**Mr. Armstrong:**

. . . The suggestion is that the appropriations be adapted to a planned program of withdrawal of our forces. It would be unthinkable to appear before your Committee, Senator Russell, suggesting that we do not support the forces . . . the purpose of cutting off (funds) is to force the President to bring them (the troops in Vietnam) back . . .

In providing for the common defense, it would be more in the interest of the strategic and tactical defense of America, if the President were not provided by the Congress with armies to fight in Vietnam. That is the essence of the view of the business executives whom I represent.

**Sen. Young, (Rep., North Dakota):**

My thinking is the same as the Chairman's . . . At two meetings at the White House, when President Johnson was making the decision whether to send the first combat battalions over there, I tried to persuade him not to.

Like the Chairman, I am at a loss to know how to get out of this entanglement.

**Mr. Armstrong:**

. . . The difficulty with the Administration's position in support of the Thieu-Ky regime is that it is very corrupt . . . Only through compelling the Viet-