American Taxpayer—
What Is He Paying for in Foreign Aid?

(Text of Joint Statement by Senators CLIFFORD CASE and WILLIAM PROXMIRE)

Two years ago we introduced an amendment to the foreign aid act which required that the Administration list in one place all the funds that our country is paying out for foreign aid through a multitude of programs.

We said in a joint statement at the time, "The American taxpayer who is footing the bill for foreign aid should at least know what he's paying for."

Our amendment was passed into law in 1972, and we have just received the first report from the Administration on what the bill actually was for for FY 1972. In that fiscal year our government paid out $11,343,900,000 in grants and loans for military and economic aid to foreign governments ($5,274,800,000 military and $6,069,100,000 economic).

In addition, various agencies of our government guaranteed and insured $4,910,200,000 worth of loans and investments of foreign countries, contributed $163,400,000 to international organizations, and turned over military facilities to foreign governments worth $631,200,000.

These figures are staggering, and they should be carefully scrutinized in light of our pressing domestic priorities.

Our intention in originally introducing our amendment was to bring some order out of the chaos of various foreign assistance programs being run by at least six different government agencies.

Admittedly, as with the problem of adding apples and oranges and getting fruit salad, all the figures cannot be brought together into a grand total.

Few of us will forget the spectacle two years ago, in an appearance before the Joint Economic Committee, of several high government officials frantically trying to add up all the foreign aid totals in order to give the Committee an idea of how much the country was spending overseas. Then, we noted that "the most alarming fact is that nobody seems to know for sure exactly how much is being spent.

Now we know, and the figures are not reassuring.