

# Vietnam War

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## McNamara's Vietnam: Were We Terribly Wrong?

by Fr. James Thornton

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In his 1961 book ***The Conduct of War***, renowned strategist and military historian General J.F.C. Fuller remarked of Dwight Eisenhower that he was “the complete non-Clausewitzian soldier” and that his much-vaunted strategy in the Second World War “revealed the poverty of [his] generalship.” Fuller makes clear that these critical remarks have to do with what was Eisenhower’s predilection for a style of warfare that was ponderous, unimaginative, and very costly in terms of destructiveness and in terms of the blood of both soldiers and civilians. We won that war, of course, but if Fuller is correct in his assessments, it could have been won more quickly, less destructively, and with far less loss of life.

### Liberal Lunacy

Had General Fuller lived long enough to read Robert S. McNamara’s new book, ***In Retrospect: The Tragedy and Lessons of Vietnam***, his opinion of the former Secretary of Defense would doubtless have been much harsher than even his somewhat stinging judgment against Eisenhower. The Vietnam War pitted the greatest military power in the world against a fifth-rate, Third-World despotism, yet it dragged on unnecessarily for over a decade, was enormously costly in lives and in the devastation wrought both to Vietnam and to the social fabric of the United States, and, ultimately, despite the heroism and sacrifice of our soldiers, sailors, Marines, and airmen, was lost.

Moreover, thanks to conniving politicians like Robert McNamara, that loss, while it can never reflect on the resourcefulness and bravery of our fighting men, left a deep stain on the honor of the United States, a stain which McNamara’s book does nothing to efface. McNamara declares that “we were wrong, terribly wrong.” Yet, reading his book we quickly realize that this does not signify any admission as to where he went wrong, why the U.S. lost, or what it means to be a Secretary of Defense in wartime. And, it definitely does not signify an enhanced understanding of the art of war on the part of the author.

When McNamara writes that “we were wrong, terribly wrong,” he refers not to the manner in which he supervised the war in Vietnam, but to the very idea that America should have opposed the innate expansionism of communist ideology. Apart from Vietnam, we must note that, during the years he served as Secretary of Defense, Robert McNamara worked diligently to weaken America’s defense posture. He forbade the development and deployment of an anti-ballistic missile (ABM) defense system, even though he was fully aware that our enemy, the Soviets, were doing precisely that. He drastically cut the number of strategic bombers and slowed the production and deployment of nuclear aircraft carriers at a time when the Soviets were mobilizing for world hegemony. He stated publicly before the press in 1965, “War is waste and the preparation for war is waste .... I think that it would be a tremendous opportunity for us economically and socially to eliminate defense entirely. It would be a social good.”

With that sort of record and those kinds of comments, can we be in the least surprised that McNamara, a dedicated, lifelong liberal, would fail in Vietnam?

Despite the preachments of numerous idealists and pacifists, no age has ever been totally peaceful, least of all our own. Even the Holy Scriptures tell us that the period just prior to the end of time will be marked by “wars and rumors of war.” To those of us who are believers, this is a revelation that mankind will never be free from war in this world.

Religion has never brought total peace to this world since there are always those who choose to war against

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God. Reason and rational planning will not bring total peace since men are not basically reasonable and rational creatures. And even the most tyrannical form of world government will not bring total peace since men cannot live forever under the repression of a cosmopolitan totalitarianism and will ultimately fight to regain freedom.

No, warfare is part of human life and will always remain so. There will always be men who seek glory in conquest and who seek to extend the frontiers of their rule. Greed, too, is a constant in human nature and is one of the contributors to the ubiquitousness of war. On the other side, there will always be men who will forcefully resist foreign conquest and who will resist the destruction of their liberties.

## The Nature of War

According to General Fuller, warfare, considered in an historical sense, may be said to have two causes: 1) biological/cultural, and 2) economic. To these two I believe that we must add a third cause, one which has arisen in the last 200 years, particularly since that explosion of hatred and degeneracy known as the French Revolution: ideological.

The biological/cultural causes of war relate to the hostility and suspicion with which dissimilar cultures often view one another. In prehistoric and early historic times especially, war was sometimes sparked by such hostility that some biological and cultural entities disappeared forever from the historical record after failing to prevent their conquest and extermination. Antipathy today between groups such as Serbs and Croats or Turks and Armenians can be said to exemplify the kinds of motivations that result in biological/cultural wars.

Economic warfare has also been with us since ancient times. General Fuller quotes from a passage in Plato's *Republic* to illustrate the antiquity of the economic motivation in warfare. It amounts to this: A nation outstrips its ability to provide adequately for its own people on its own land and, so, desires a piece of a neighboring country's land. In the age of absolute monarchies, France, Austria, and the German principalities often vied with one another in this manner for bits of territory. In modern times, great trading nations have made war to buttress their economic positions in the world or to prevent the rise of other, younger, more vigorous nations that might threaten to intrude into international markets. The creation of great overseas empires in the 19th century was directly connected to this phenomenon. Let us add here that it was once fashionable to blame all wars on economic factors and to explain the entire course of history from this perspective. A more conscientious study of history shows, however, that this view is valid only at certain times and in certain places.

In our own time ideology has played a tremendous role in fomenting wars. Yet, we err if we believe that this circumstance is unique to our time. In many respects the Thirty Years' War of the 17th century and the Napoleonic wars of the early 19th century presaged the ideological wars of the 20th, since in all of these instances terrible and blood-drenched conflicts were fought over the most fundamental issues having to do with how men should live.

The rise to power of various ideologies in the years between the two world wars set the stage for tremendous carnage, demonstrating beyond question that great numbers of men will happily give their lives not only for God, family, and country, but also for ideas. The great military contest that is the subject of this commentary, the Vietnam War, is a prime example of a 20th century ideological conflict.

It is curious that Robert McNamara has changed his mind, the same man who professed to believe in the early 1960s that the war in Vietnam was an ideological war initiated by an international communist conspiracy and aimed at the destruction of freedom in South Vietnam and, eventually, throughout Southeast Asia. Though he supported the deployment of American military personnel to that country to defend it against a savagely aggressive ideology, he now claims that this was a mistaken view.

Vietnam was not really an ideological war but an internal Vietnamese matter, a civil war, according to McNamara, in which a great nationalist leader, Ho Chi Minh, merely fought to win the unification of his country. This opinion, of course, should be familiar to anyone who lived during the 1960s since it was repeated endlessly

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by the liberal press and by such professional leftists as Jane Fonda (known by our troops as “Hanoi Jane”), who (may we never forget) visited our enemy during the war and was filmed sitting on one of the very same anti-aircraft guns used to down American jets.

## Red Kudos

The anti-anti-communist theory of modern history should also be familiar to those who remember the political climate of the 1940s and '50s, since egghead leftists painted virtually the same flattering portraits of Mao Tse-tung and Fidel Castro. The only reason, according to this line of thinking, that Ho, Mao, and Castro finally turned to communism and became rather indecorous in their use of lethal force against hundreds of thousands (and in some cases millions) of their own helpless citizens was that the United States failed to grasp that each was a harmless “agrarian reformer” and the “George Washington” of his respective country, and frightened these wonderful humanitarian souls by our wicked militarism.

Significantly, the Vietnamese Foreign Ministry issued a statement on April 13, 1995 saying that Hanoi is delighted with McNamara’s book and wholly agrees with his appraisal of the war. “We hold that Mr. McNamara’s opinion saying that the United States was ‘terribly wrong’ in the Vietnam War is a judgement suitable with the reality,” a communist Vietnamese spokesman observed. President Clinton, a war protester and draft evader during the Vietnam era, also drew strength from the book, claiming that he and the others who took to the streets to oppose the war have now been “vindicated.” (Where, in Mr. Clinton’s opinion, that leaves those who served loyally, who fought, and who died is anyone’s guess.)

Putting that whole “blame America” school of thought in succinct, guarded, implicit terms, McNamara states that we “underestimated the nationalist aspect of Ho Chi Minh’s movement.” Predictably however, he places a large measure of blame for these misapprehensions on “the McCarthy hysteria of the 1950s.” That “hysteria,” he writes, deprived otherwise brilliant men such as himself of the wisdom and the “sophisticated, nuanced insights” of experts like “John Paton Davies, Jr., John Stewart Service, and John Carter Vincent.”

Elsewhere, he laments that “if we had had more Asia experts around us, perhaps we would not have been so simpleminded about China and Vietnam.” For the sake of younger readers, let us recall that John Paton Davies Jr. was one of the State Department luminaries that gave us the communist victory in China in 1949 by consistently pressing the view that Mao was great, good, humane, and honest, while our ally, General Chiang Kai-shek, was bad, corrupt, cruel, and incompetent. Thus it is that U.S. General Albert C. Wedemeyer, in his memoirs, **Wedemeyer Reports**, characterizes Davies and his comrades by their obvious “sympathy for the Chinese Communists” and their “invariably ... favorable views of the Communists.”

Indeed it is true that, thanks to the efforts of Senator Joseph McCarthy and other anti-communists, our government was denied the “expertise” of the aforementioned men. Had that “expertise” been available, it is very likely that all of Southeast Asia, including Thailand and Indonesia, would have fallen to communism by the mid-1960s, much as China did in 1949.

**Wars**, as we noted earlier, come in many shapes and sizes, and their causes are manifold. But irrespective of the many facets of war, there is one thing that is absolutely certain — “there is no substitute for victory,” to borrow the famous words of General Douglas MacArthur. This was true in the ancient world, where defeat meant generations of servitude, at best, and utter obliteration, at worst. In this age of ideological wars, what was valid for the ancient world is *doubly* true.

Many observers in the 1960s believed that if we committed U.S. forces to assisting the South Vietnamese in surviving the onslaughts of their hostile, communist neighbors to the north, we should have done everything in our power to assure their victory. Instead, during the Administrations of Eisenhower, Kennedy, and Johnson, our stated objective was always a negotiated settlement. Victory, in the true meaning of that word, was not a part of our government’s calculations.

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## Wasted Opportunities

We could have defeated the communists with relative ease in 1954, before Vietnam was partitioned, by supporting our French NATO ally in maintaining its dominion over Indochina. Some comparatively moderate U.S. air strikes against communist guerrillas around Dien Bien Phu would have assured a French victory and crippled the Reds for years, if not decades. A unified anti-communist Vietnam, under the leadership of Emperor Bao Dai, would then have been possible and no Vietnam War, as we now understand those words, would ever have taken place. Instead the U.S., under the Eisenhower Administration, sponsored the division of the country into a communist North and a free South, thus setting the stage for disaster.

A second chance to prevent a communist triumph in Southeast Asia presented itself during the period in which President Ngo Dinh Diem led South Vietnam. There is some reason to suspect that Diem was not everything he appeared to be and that his regime had suffered some degree of communist infiltration. But he was the leader of the country when the war commenced and he apparently possessed some capabilities insofar as running the country is concerned. We certainly might have done better than Diem, but it was sheer lunacy to promote, as our government did, the overthrow and murder of this man in the middle of a life-and-death struggle.

Since that happened in 1963, during the Kennedy years when Robert McNamara was in charge of our Department of Defense, he is fully culpable, though in his book he claims that he was on vacation when the idea first surfaced. As predicted by astute observers of the situation in Southeast Asia, after Diem's murder the government of South Vietnam sank into a state of the most abysmal chaos and corruption. Such fighting spirit as the South Vietnamese Army possessed plummeted sharply, as even McNamara admits. McNamara says that after the coup "the most shocking thing was that we faced an utter political vacuum in South Vietnam and had no basis for proceeding on any course compatible with U.S. objectives."

One wonders, then, since that was the case, and since a number of men had warned of the disarray that must follow any successful coup against the legitimate government of the country, why it was ever done. Our first failure, in refusing to support the French at Dien Bien Phu, assured the partition of the country, giving the communists a base of operations to launch an attack on the South. Our second failure, in plotting the overthrow of the Diem regime, thrust Vietnam into such utter confusion that direct American military intervention, in the form of air and ground forces, became inevitable. But, even at that point, all was not yet lost. The U.S. and its South Vietnamese allies could still have won the war in a comparatively short period of time. We still had a third chance to achieve victory.

Though he claims he did not believe so when the war began, McNamara says that by 1967 he came to accept that the war could not be won. And why did he lose faith in victory? First of all, he questions the basic character of the South Vietnamese people, evidently believing that they were incapable of the sustained effort necessary to maintain their independence. The mystery in that argument is that the North Vietnamese people (ethnologically no different from their southern brothers) were capable of a sustained effort, which demonstrates that the argument by McNamara is self-serving nonsense.

Second, he contends that the American bombing campaign against the communist North had virtually no effect on the North's infiltration of communist troops and supplies into South Vietnam. What he fails to say is that, while the bombing was seemingly impressive from the standpoint of the sheer tonnage of explosives dropped on the North and over infiltration routes to the South, it was so restricted by political decrees from Washington that it could not indeed have been ultimately decisive in winning the war. Many military professionals advocated hitting the North at its Achilles' Heel, the system of dikes, dams, and canals on which its primitive agricultural infrastructure was built. That was absolutely forbidden by McNamara and his entourage.

Additionally, transportation corridors running towards China and the port of Haiphong, both of which were responsible for the massive supplies coming in from communist allies, were never struck hard for fear of grievously irritating our Soviet and Chinese adversaries. We might consider, in that connection, that in the 1960s

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the U.S. possessed a nine-to-one superiority over the Soviets in intercontinental atomic missiles and a technological superiority in nearly every class of strategic weapons. China possessed no strategic weapons delivery systems at all, and had only just tested an early, crude atomic bomb. In other words, despite liberal statements to the contrary, neither of the communist giants at that time constituted a serious threat to the U.S.

In our war with North Vietnam, a patriotic U.S. government might have issued statements to both China and the USSR that this country would brook no interference from either of them, and there is every reason to assume that they would have backed down. But McNamara holds that he feared war with the Soviets and the Chinese and for that reason limited the air campaign over Vietnam.

Few Americans at that time understood just how heavy the shackles were on the courageous men who piloted American planes over the North. In his superb essay on the war, *The Tragedy of Southeast Asia* (THE NEW AMERICAN, February 1, 1988), Vietnam veteran R.D. Patrick Mahoney writes that in the air war over North Vietnam, American pilots were heavily restricted by an ever-changing series of complex rules, set in place by Washington politicians. Among the many outrageous and ridiculous restrictions were these:

- SAM missile sites could not be bombed while they were under construction and while they remained relatively harmless to our planes. They could be bombed only after they became operational and therefore lethally dangerous.
- Pilots were not permitted to attack communist MIGs parked on enemy runways. They could only be attacked after they were in the air, had been carefully identified, and had shown hostile intentions. Even then, enemy air bases could not be attacked.
- U.S. pilots could not attack enemy military truck depots located more than 200 yards from a road. Trucks traveling on roads could be attacked, but the moment they left the roadway it was forbidden for American pilots to molest them in any way.
- Enemy troops could not be bombed unless a South Vietnamese forward air controller was with attacking aircraft. This was true even if communist troops were clearly visible and were being pointed at by an officer on the ground.

## Intentional Defeat

These are only a few examples of what the liberals and leftists of the Kennedy and Johnson Administrations thought an anti-communist air campaign should be. Clearly; McNamara is absolutely correct that the sort of bombing campaign he and his cohorts devised had little impact on our enemy. Many observers of that arena wonder if it was deliberately designed that way. General Curtis LeMay, the first leader of the United States Strategic Air Command and a true authority in air warfare, said of McNamara's War, "It is a war in which we are attempting to win without winning, trying to destroy without destroying. It is an Alice-in-Wonderland war." Another U.S. General, Ira C. Eaker, writes, "The enemy was told ... that we would not bomb populated areas, heavy industry, canals, dams, and other critical targets — and thus sanctuaries were established by us along the Chinese border and around Haiphong and Hanoi. This permitted the enemy to concentrate anti-aircraft defenses around the North Vietnamese targets that our Air Force was permitted to attack — 'greatly increasing our casualties. Missiles, oil, and ammunition were permitted to enter Haiphong harbor unmolested and without protest...."

A truly efficient air campaign against our communist adversaries could have eliminated their ability to commit troops and deliver equipment and supplies to South Vietnam. Proper, comprehensive attacks against the enemy port of Haiphong would have brought 70 percent of the flow of war supplies from abroad to a dead halt. Similar attacks against the country's transportation corridors to the north, towards China, would have eliminated the remaining 30 percent. The destruction of the North's system of dikes would have wrecked the ability of that nation to feed its troops and its own population. With that kind of air campaign, followed immediately by an



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invasion of the North (preferably by South Vietnamese troops, with air support from the U.S.), the war would have ended in total victory and a united, free Vietnam.

But a prerequisite to a winning campaign would have been that our government declare its determination to win. Instead, McNamara, his bosses, and his immediate civilian subordinates declared a willingness to negotiate! "These leaders made such frequent and pleading proposals to the enemy to come to the peace table," writes General Eaker, "that Ho Chi Minh drew the natural conclusion that he was winning...."

Robert McNamara suggests that any really concerted air war against the North would have been "genocidal"; he tries to frighten or horrify us with this bogeyman at least three times in his book. That, needless to say, is pure liberal eyewash. McNamara's straight-jacketed air and ground campaigns assured a protracted, seemingly endless conflict that caused maximum loss of life and destruction of property on all sides, especially in the South, and slowly wore down the patience, confidence, and morale of the South Vietnamese and American peoples.

During the Vietnam War, U.S. Major General Gilbert L. Myers addressed the concerns of those people who thought, like McNamara, that effective warfare means greater casualties: "You can't win wars necessarily by killing people. You've got to *overwhelm* the enemy. And when you overwhelm him, you kill fewer people than you do by picking at him day after day — as we do now."

McNamara's book is shot through with expressions such as, "we often did not have time to think straight," "our government lacked experts for us to consult to compensate for our ignorance," "we failed to consider," "we badly misread," "we lacked experience," "we had failed," "we still failed," "we never realized," "we were wrong," "we might have acted differently," "a signal and costly failure to foresee the implications of our actions," and so forth.

One would wish that what McNamara means by all of that negativism is that we should have given communism so sound a thrashing in Southeast Asia that it would have crumbled then and there, but that we failed to grasp our opportunity. Alas, what he actually means is that we should never have attempted to stop communism, in Southeast Asia or anywhere else. The motley melange of hard-core communists, radical "hippies," drug peddlers, anarchists, young wackos (including, at the time, young Billy Clinton), vacuous movie and music entertainers, and other openly subversive elements set out in the mid-1960s to wreck our war effort and, in the process, to undermine and radicalize American society. What most Americans did not know then was that the thinking of Robert S. McNamara, the man in direct control of our armed forces, was apparently in harmony with these revolutionaries and mutineers.

## "Conflict Resolution"

McNamara's mind-set is fully realized near the end of the book. In his final chapter he decries U.S. defense spending "at its current exorbitant level" since such spending slashes into "the financing of domestic programs equally vital for our security." He refers, naturally, to various federal welfare schemes of the sort launched by his mentors, Presidents Kennedy and Johnson, which programs, elsewhere in the book, he praises highly. He then proposes a system for "conflict resolution" based on "a reorganized and strengthened United Nations together with new and expanded regional organizations." But this mind-set is hardly surprising, in view of his membership in the Trilateral Commission and Council on Foreign Relations.

In conjunction with this ever-so-slightly veiled demand for world government, McNamara has placed an appendix near the end of his book entitled "The Nuclear Risks of the 1960s and Their Lessons for the Twenty-first Century." In this brief addendum he calls for the total elimination of nuclear weapons throughout the world. "I believe we can indeed 'put the genie back in the bottle,'" he writes. Like his blather about "conflict resolution," the former Secretary of Defense's notion that "the genie" can be "put back in the bottle," assuming he means what he writes, shows that he "has learned nothing and forgotten nothing," as an old aphorism says.

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***In Retrospect*** is ostensibly a volume about the “tragedy and lessons of Vietnam.” Reading it at face value would convince one that Robert McNamara, through all his experiences, has never comprehended the nature of mankind, the nature of history, and the nature of warfare. More than anything else about his latest work, this perception looms like a great mountain in the midst of a desert wasteland.

However, it is difficult for a thoughtful reader of McNamara’s book to imagine that a man in his highly sensitive position during the war would not have realized that the very policies he supported as Secretary of Defense not only made the war unwinnable for the U.S., but resulted in the needless sacrifice of tens of thousands of American lives. Undoubtedly, General Curtis LeMay had Robert McNamara in mind when he spoke in 1968, while the war still raged: “The real war mongers are right here. They are the men who needlessly prolong the war by failing to win it. They are the men who make future wars inevitable by appeasing and aiding those who wage wars today.” General LeMay’s bitter words speak the truth of the *real* tragedy of the Vietnam War.

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## Defeat in Vietnam: Incompetence or Willful Intent?

Much of the U.S. news media virtually celebrated, rather than lamented, the recent 20th anniversary of communism’s Vietnam victory. Rather than remind Americans of communism’s ruthless record, and the extent to which U.S. policy fueled *both* sides of the war while hamstringing our military forces, many journalists and commentators opted to highlight such issues as the supposed desirability of full U.S. diplomatic and economic relations with Hanoi.

The liberal media has virtually ignored the incredible cruelties that accompanied communism’s rise to power in Vietnam. For example:

- North Vietnam’s President, Ho Chi Minh, dispatched his enemies on occasion by burying them alive in fields, so only their heads were above ground, then having harrows driven back and forth to, in the words of one report, “scratch and tear and chop those living heads like so many small tree stumps....”
- A teacher accused of holding secret religious classes for some of his students had his tongue cut off, while the children who had listened had wooden chopsticks rammed into their ears, splitting the ear canal and tearing the ear drum.
- The chief of a small hamlet near Da Nang had his tongue cut out as his pregnant wife and four children were forced to watch. Then his genitals were sliced off and sewn inside his bloody mouth. As he died, the Vietcong slashed open his wife’s womb, then murdered three of his children by ramming bamboo lances through one ear and out the other.

During the war, it was well known that North Vietnam was receiving most of its assistance from the Soviet Union and other communist nations. Yet our government, through massive aid to and trade with the Soviet Union and other Red nations, indirectly stocked and replenished the enemy’s war machine. During a news conference on March 4, 1969, President Richard Nixon acknowledged that the Soviets were furnishing “80 percent to 85 percent of the sophisticated military equipment for the North Vietnamese forces. Without that assistance, North Vietnam would not have the capability to wage the major war they are against the United States.” Yet U.S. trade with the Soviet Union actually *increased* during his first term, even as the war escalated.

Remember the State Department’s infamous Publication 8117 (*Private Boycotts vs. The National Interest*), which brazenly asserted: “All American citizens should know that any American businessman who chooses to engage in peaceful trade with the Soviet Union or Eastern European countries and to sell the goods he buys is acting within his rights and is following the policy of his government.”

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On the other hand, the State Department publication asserted that “any organization, however patriotic in intention, that undertakes to boycott, blacklist, or otherwise penalize or attack any American business for engaging in peaceful trade with Eastern European countries or the Soviet Union, is acting against the interests of the United States.”

That was August 1966. A few months later, it was announced that our government had agreed to relieve communist Poland of the need to repay about \$17 million in debt owed to the United States. That very day (April 12, 1967), a Polish merchant ship was spotted in Haiphong Harbor unloading supplies for an enemy busily engaged in killing and maiming Americans. There are hundreds, possibly thousands, of similar incidents that combine to reveal a willful U.S. policy of dragging out the war, making it as destructive as possible (especially for American society), then letting the communists have what they wanted in the first place.

Some observers have concluded that our Vietnam policy, as conceived and implemented by Insiders such as McNamara, was *de facto*, if not *de jure* (since the war was undeclared), treason. Is that term, with its implication of willful intent rather than mere bumbling, too harsh? Consider one final example:

On February 1, 1968, President Lyndon Johnson stated, in response to anti-war critics who were urging him to stop bombing the North Vietnamese, that it was “clear” to him what would happen if he did. He asserted: “The enemy force in the South would be larger. It would be better equipped. The war would be harder, The losses would be greater, The difficulties would be longer. And one thing you can be sure: It would cost many more American lives.”

His evaluation was obviously and unquestionably correct. Yet, less than two months later, he announced (March 31st) that he had “ordered our aircraft and our naval vessels to make no attacks on North Vietnam” in an area that he said “includes almost 90 percent of North Vietnam’s population, and most of its territory.” Later in the year he halted all bombing of the North.

Within months, the North Vietnamese had rebuilt all important airfields, railroads, ports, highways, and bridges that had been damaged or destroyed by U.S. bombers. They had improved their air defense network to the point that the anti-aircraft systems were better than a year earlier. During the year following the President’s announcement, U.S. casualties (killed and wounded) increased by a staggering 68 percent.

President Johnson and his policymakers were not mistaken in this instance. They did not blunder. They knew (because the President said so in advance) that the bombing halt would prove disastrous to our military personnel and helpful to the enemy.

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Robert McNamara stepped down as Defense Secretary on February 29, 1968 to become president of the World Bank. The previous day, as a going away present, President Johnson awarded him the Medal of Freedom, the nation’s highest civilian award. The accompanying citation stated, in part, that “you have brought a new dimension to defense planning and to decision-making.”

He surely had!